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KOHLBERG, RANDY BRYAN
HARRISON KERR: PORTRAIT OF A
TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICAN COMPOSER.

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA, PH.D., 1978

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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

HARRISON KERR: PORTRAIT OF A TWENTIETH-
CENTURY AMERICAN COMPOSER

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
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BY
RANDY B. KOHLENBERG
Norman, Oklahoma

1978

HARRISON KERR: PORTRAIT OF A TWENTIETH -
CENTURY AMERICAN COMPOSER

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DEDICATION

This study of the life and music of Harrison Kerr
is dedicated to the memory of Karen Louise Mernitz
Kohlenberg.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This study would have been impossible without the support and assistance of Harrison and Jeanne Kerr who provided many documents, unpublished manuscripts, clipping files, musical scores, musical recordings, and photographs. The author is especially grateful to the Kerrs for their hours given during the personal interviews and for the written permission to use quotations and musical examples in this study.

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PREFACE

Harrison Kerr, born 1897, is a living American composer who in recent years has received little acclaim for his musical and administrative accomplishments. Although Kerr probably is best known for his efforts to foster an understanding of twentieth-century American music, his achievements as teacher, administrator, and composer are equally important.

From 1946 through 1949, Harrison Kerr held the highest and most prestigious position in fine arts for the United States Government. After leaving that post, he became the Dean of the College of Fine Arts at the University of Oklahoma. Kerr also served as the first administrator of both the American Composers Alliance and the American Music Center. Earlier in his career, he edited an arts magazine, managed a major non-profit music press, supervised the New Music Quarterly Recordings project, and held several teaching and administrative positions.

Kerr has composed nearly a hundred works, but because of self criticism, has allowed fewer than half to be performed. The works released for performance include a four-act opera, four symphonies, five other works for

orchestra, three works for mixed chorus, a dance suite for two pianos and percussion, three string quartets, two trios, as well as works for flute and piano, voice and piano, voice and chamber ensemble, violin and orchestra, violoncello and orchestra, solo piano, organ, solo guitar, flute duet, and trombone ensemble. Approximately forty-eight works have not been released by Kerr for publication.

Despite his significance as a composer, teacher, and administrator, the only critical study of Harrison Kerr's life and work is an article written in 1959 by Alexander Ringer. No comprehensive biography has been published. The following chapters detail the events of Kerr's life and the significance of his works.

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HARRISON KERR: PORTRAIT OF A TWENTIETH-
CENTURY AMERICAN COMPOSER

CHAPTER I

THE LIFE AND WORK OF HARRISON KERR

Childhood, Youth, and Early Maturity:
1897-1928

Ancestry

Harrison Kerr was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on October 13, 1897, the son of Elizabeth Rettig Kerr and Harrison Henry Kerr. Research by a distant cousin, Doris Kerr, determined that Kerr's forbears lived in southern Scotland, near the English border in the Midlothian area. The family probably was Protestant since Kerr's ancestors along with thousands of other Scots were forced to flee to Northern Ireland during the religious wars in seventeenth-century Scotland. Although the family remained in Ireland for several generations, no Irish names have been discovered in the Kerr family ancestry. In all probability the Kerr family came to America from Ireland before 1800 and settled in Virginia. A letter mailed from Williamsburg, Virginia to a family member in Ohio dated 1803 suggests that a portion

of the family did not remain in Virginia. No evidence exists to determine the exact date that a portion of the family moved to Ohio. Since all information regarding the Kerr ancestry was recorded in a family Bible that has been lost, Kerr knows little about his father's parents except that his grandfather was killed at the siege of Vicksburg during the Civil War. He also knows that either his grandfather or great grandfather married into a family named Shisler.¹

His Father

On November 24, 1839 Kerr's father, Harrison Henry Kerr, was born in North Georgetown, Ohio, located between Canton and Salem. Probably his parents were engaged in some form of agriculture since North Georgetown was primarily a farming and dairying area. Kerr suspects that his father grew up on a farm. The first recorded date regarding Kerr's father, other than his birthdate, is November 21, 1861, when at age 21 he enlisted in the 58th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. Records indicate that Kerr's father, his father's brother Ezra, and his grandfather all enlisted in the 58th Ohio regiment on the same day. Ezra and Kerr's father were part of Company D, although his grandfather was not. Kerr's father wrote home regularly and kept a diary, which he illustrated with skillful pencil sketches. These documents serve

¹Harrison Kerr, personal interview, Norman, Oklahoma, November 15, 1977.

as the major source of information regarding the army years. Kerr's father, his grandfather, and Ezra were sent west to join Grant who was campaigning in the Mississippi River Valley. On one occasion, Kerr's father entered a burning mansion somewhere in the Vicksburg area and rescued a valuable edition of the complete works of John Milton. The large and heavy volume was carried in his knapsack for the duration of the war and is still in the possession of the Kerr family. After their father's death at Vicksburg, Harrison Henry and Ezra were moved down the Mississippi River as the Union forces fought their way to New Orleans. On December 28, 1862, a battle took place at Chickasaw Bayou in which Kerr's father was wounded in the chest and captured by the Confederate forces. He was sent to Vicksburg to recover from his wounds and then to a prisoner of war camp in Jackson, Mississippi.¹

Kerr's father and uncle were mentioned in a poem entitled "Roll Call" by Nathaniel Graham Shepherd, another soldier in Company D. Although the original date of publication is unknown, the poem reappeared in the ninth volume of the Photographic History of the Civil War published in 1911. Most of the photographs in this volume were taken on the battlefields by Matthew Brady. In the poem, Kerr's father's first name was given as "Hiram." Either Shepherd misunderstood Kerr's father's first name or the name

¹Kerr, personal interview, November 15, 1977.

Harrison may not have fitted the metric scheme. Kerr's father was also known as "Harr" to his closer friends and possibly "Harr" was the only name the author knew.¹ Kerr's father was thought to have been killed in action at the time this poem was written.

Roll Call

"Corporal Green!" the Orderly cried;
 "Here!" was the answer loud and clear,
 From the lips of a soldier who stood near,--
 And "Here!" was the word the next replied.

"Cyrus Drew!"--then a silence fell;
 This time no answer followed the call;
 Only his rear-man had seen him fall;
 Killed or wounded--he could not tell.

There they stood in the failing light,
 These men of battle, with grave, dark looks,
 As plain to be read as open books,
 While slowly gathered the shades of night.

The fern on the hillsides was splashed with blood,
 And down in the corn, where the poppies grew,
 Were redder stains than the poppies knew,
 And crimson-dyed was the river's flood.

For the foe had crossed from the other side,
 That day, in the face of a murderous fire
 That swept them down in its terrible ire;
 And their life-blood went to color the tide.

"Herbert Cline!"--At the call there came
 Two stalwart soldiers into the line,
 Bearing between them this Herbert Cline,
 Wounded and bleeding, to answer his name.

"Ezra Kerr!"--and a voice answered "Here!"
 "Hiram Kerr!"--but no man replied.
 They were brothers, these two; the sad wind sighed,
 And a shudder crept through the cornfield near.

¹Kerr, personal interview, November 15, 1977.

"Ephraim Deane!"--then a soldier spoke:
 Deane carried our regiment's colors," he said,
 "When our ensign was shot; I left him dead,
 Just after the enemy wavered and broke.

"Close to the roadside his body lies;
 I paused a moment and gave him to drink;
 He murmured his mother's name, I think,
 And Death came with it and closed his eyes."

'Twas a victory, yes; but it cost us dear:
 For that company's roll, when called at night,
 Of a hundred men who went into the fight,
 Numbered but twenty that answered "Here!"¹

Kerr's father was held prisoner for only three months. After he was exchanged in accordance with the agreements between the Confederacy and the Union, he was placed on a ship and sent to New York, and soon thereafter rejoined his regiment. When the peace treaties were signed, he was released from service and returned to Ohio, where he located in Cleveland. During the period after the war until the time he met Elizabeth Rettig, little is known about his activities except that he taught school and that he was a contractor who specialized in finishing the interiors of new buildings.²

His Mother

The maternal side of Kerr's family is of German ancestry. Both his grandmother and grandfather were born in Alt Heppenheim, a suburb of Darmstadt. Although as children

¹Nathaniel Graham Shepherd, "Roll Call," in The Photographic History of the Civil War, vol. 9 (New York: The Review of Reviews Co., 1911), pp. 136-140.

²Kerr, personal interview, November 15, 1977.

they must have been neighbors in Germany, they did not meet until Kerr's grandmother's family settled in Cleveland where his grandfather had chosen to live. His grandfather was the only forbear that Kerr really knew well. Kerr's grandfather had left his home in Germany at age sixteen. He explained, perhaps humorously, that he left home as a rebellion against attending Roman Catholic Masses every day of the week and kneeling on the cold stone floors on dark winter mornings. When he left home, he boarded a schooner, and after six weeks at sea, he arrived in New York City. Although the exact date he moved to Cleveland is unknown, it is known that he became a masonry contractor. Before Kerr was born, his grandfather had constructed a large number of public buildings in Cleveland. Kerr's grandparents had three children, Elizabeth, George and one child who died in infancy. Their mother died when the children were young and they were unhappy when their father remarried. The second wife, whose daughter from a previous marriage seemed to be more highly favored, ignored George and Elizabeth and caused George to leave home at almost the same age his father had left his family in Germany.¹

Because of his reputation as a landscape architect, George Rettig was contracted by the city of Indianapolis to design and supervise the completion of a large park. Later,

¹Kerr, personal interview, November 15, 1977.

he was engaged by the City of Cleveland to plan and supervise the development of the Municipal Parkway, a series of parks and boulevards that encircle the city. The Municipal Parkway was approximately 75 miles long and generally followed the boundaries of the city. The series of parks began at the west end of Lake Erie and extended to the east end, also on the lakeshore. During the earlier stages of this project in Cleveland, Kerr spent much time with Rettig and came to know him well. Kerr believes that Rettig was a great influence upon the visual aspects of his creativity. After he completed his work in Cleveland, Rettig was commissioned to lay out and maintain a new park in Sharon, Pennsylvania. This position kept him occupied until he was no longer able to work.¹

Kerr's mother, Elizabeth Rettig, was born in Cleveland on November 18, 1872. She left home at an early age to study to be a secretary, a very unusual profession for a woman in the late nineteenth century. She later became the first female secretary to L. E. Holden, owner and editor of the Cleveland Plain Dealer. When Holden retired, Kerr's mother assumed a similar position with a large lumber firm, Woods, Jenks, and Company. She was sent at first to Wilmington, Delaware, and later to New York City where she began to develop an interest in music. Elizabeth Rettig

¹Kerr, personal interview, November 15, 1977.

joined the choir at the First Presbyterian Church, then under the direction of Dr. William Carl, a well-known choral director and organist. Elizabeth Rettig enjoyed her choral experience, possibly the only musical involvement in Kerr's ancestry. Before she left Cleveland to go to Wilmington, she had become acquainted with Harrison Henry Kerr. They probably were engaged before she left, but she may have postponed marriage because of the great difference between their ages.¹

Kerr's parents were married on Wednesday, February 5, 1896 in Cleveland. Harrison McKinley Kerr was born the next year on Wednesday, October 13. Kerr's father was 33 years older than Elizabeth when they married. He lived less than six years after the marriage.

His death was said to have been the result of the shrapnel that never had been removed from his chest wound. Kerr believes his father was ill for a long period but "it was a period when no one spoke of death or serious illness to a child. I was, in fact, only four years old. It was much later that I first learned about the shrapnel theory."² When he died on November 29, 1901, he was taken to North Georgetown for burial. Kerr's mother died in Norman, Oklahoma, April 3, 1954, at the age of 81 and her ashes are

¹Kerr, personal interview, November 15, 1977.

²Ibid.

are located in the Rose Hill Cemetery, Oklahoma City.

Childhood

Although Kerr remembers little before his father died, he has been able to recall his physical surrounding:

Certain aspects of my physical surroundings are reasonably vivid in my memory. I wonder sometimes if I really remember and how much is heresay and impressions gathered from photographs. I have too clear a picture of my surroundings to believe that they are all actual recollections.

We lived in a rather large house built in the style of the last years of the nineteenth century. There was, of course, a basement, two floors, and an attic. I am not certain that I was ever in the basement but the attic does bring a clear picture. This is due primarily to the awesome collection of books and magazines to be found there. Many had been specially bound in red or black leather. There were the usual living rooms on the first floor and there was a rather stuffy parlor used only when guests were present. The house faced Quincy Avenue. On the second floor there was an oversupply of bedrooms so that the front one, which was very large, became my real living room. I think that I spent much time there. The front windows gave an excellent view of Quincy Street; all the important parades passed by, including the solemn processions of Memorial Day, the bombastic parades of July Fourth, and, best of all, circus parades. The parades do stay in my memory.

The house stood in the front of the lot, which was really four lots combined. The longer dimensions were on Edwards Street, now East 82nd Street. Toward the rear of the lot and facing Edwards Street was another house, much like the one we lived in. This my father rented to a pleasant family by the name of Diehl. There was a daughter who taught in one of the public schools. I used to watch for her return at the end of each day and I would immediately attach myself to her until dinner time or until my mother thought my welcome might be wearing thin. The four lots, aside from the houses, were mostly lawn and trees. They were completely surrounded by a white picket fence, which I could not climb, with gates that I could not open.

Thus, I had free movement within the fence.¹

Kerr recalled that on one occasion a fire erupted in a coal stove in the kitchen. Although the house was not heavily affected, many of his father's books in the attic were burned or damaged by the smoke. Another vivid recollection from Kerr's childhood was a perennial visitor to the household, Hanna Shisler, an unmarried second cousin to Kerr's father. She stayed with various relatives until she ceased to be welcome and "then moved on to the next available refuge."² Kerr was instructed to refer to this visitor as "Aunt Hannah." She, unlike Kerr's mother who was soft spoken and mild mannered, "scolded and snapped at" young Harrison. Kerr recalled that one day during his father's final illness the bedroom door was open and his father called him into the room. Aunt Hannah immediately appeared, scolded the younger Kerr, banished him from the room, and closed the door. This episode remains Kerr's most vivid recollection of the elder Kerr and was the last time he saw his father.³

At age six, Kerr was ready to enter school. His birthday came only a month after the fall term would begin but his mother had succeeded in enrolling him. The

¹Kerr, personal interview, November 15, 1977.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

Cleveland schools required a small pox inoculation, then a new practice. Kerr received a vaccine to which he had such a violent reaction that he was refused permission to attend school. During the following year he recovered and a month before his seventh birthday he entered Wilson Public School. He stayed in this school for only one year. After his father died, Kerr and his mother moved into Grandfather Rettig's spacious house on Luther Street. His grandfather, now twice widowed and severely injured while supervising a construction site, decided to sell the large house. Another house was purchased on Shepherd Street, later numbered as East 92nd Street. Kerr was transferred to Doan School.¹

Youth

After graduating from Doan School, Kerr enrolled in East Technical High School. In addition to the usual school subjects, Kerr studied architecture and designed and built complex models and furniture. George Rettig, encouraged Kerr's interest in architecture but was less enthusiastic about his intense interest in marine architecture. "In all of these I excelled and was happy, but music had begun to be important and finally became an overwhelming necessity."² Kerr has recalled several of his early musical experiences:

I then knew no one except my mother who had any interest in music. Aside from my toys when I was very

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

young, there was no musical instrument in the house. I was ten or eleven years old when my mother gave me a rather sophisticated toy trumpet. It must have had vibrating metal reeds, each being playable by depressing a valve--as far as I can remember, it had five valves. My mother taught me the standard bugle calls by humming them to me. It was a year or two later that I discovered I could make music mentally. Some time later it was my habit to take long morning walks in a nearby park. I would accompany these with mentally heard music that I composed as I walked. I greatly fear that what I produced mentally had a great resemblance to Sousa marches. By this time my mother had taken me to an occasional symphony concert. Cleveland then had a pick-up orchestra which made several appearances each season under the conductorship of a Herr Christian Timmer.

From early on I used to spend summers on a large dairy farm owned by a distant relative, Theodore Stark. He had married the sister of Aunt Hanna. Of his sons and daughters, only the eldest daughter and the youngest son remained on the farm. The daughter was the only member of the family that I knew with a musical interest. Esther Stark owned an extensive collection of records. She had studied piano for some time at the Wooster Conservatory but had been forced to relinquish her studies because of a failing left arm and hand. This had been brought about by excessive practice. Probably tense muscles, due to the lack of necessary relaxation, brought on her trouble.¹

From her record collection, Kerr learned a standard yet extensive musical repertory although, as he says, "nothing unusual."² Kerr has explained that his family allowed him to make his own decisions about pursuing musical study:

In respect to my own interests, I was a free agent from my earliest school days. I was never pressured to follow one career or another. Only my Uncle George betrayed disappointment when I turned toward music. He had hoped that I would be an architect, especially since he believed that I had an unquestionable talent for structural design. He expressed doubt, especially

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

to my mother, concerning music as a career, but said little to me. He never pressed me to accept his judgment.¹

At the age of fourteen Kerr began to study piano.

My late beginning as a music student was not due to a lack of interest. I had no access to a piano and, in fact, could not have practiced because of the illness of my grandfather with whom we lived. My interest in music was evident as far back as I can remember, and rapidly became dominant. A recently married couple lived across the street. He was a skilled flutist and she was an excellent pianist. They played together nearly every evening. To hear them it was necessary to be on our front porch. I would stand on the porch, in near zero weather, to listen. Not being acquainted with them, I was too shy to ask to go into their apartment. Obviously music was not an interest that had to be artificially propagated. It was always there.²

Before Kerr was fifteen, he began to study piano with Claus Wolfram. Wolfram who once had been a performer, was a student at the Stuttgart Conservatory in Germany under the teachers Lebert and Stark. He was later a professor at the Conservatory. When Kerr studied with the elderly Wolfram, he worked through a famous method for the piano by Lebert and Stark. As Kerr says, "In those days everyone had methods."³ Regarding his early composition, Kerr explained that he began to compose almost as early as he began to play, although "Wolfram didn't teach composition. He was strictly a piano teacher and as I look back, a very good one indeed."⁴ During that same period, Kerr also

¹Kerr, personal interview, October 25, 1977.

²Kerr, personal interview, July 2, 1976.

³Ibid. ⁴Ibid.

studied organ, harmony, and counterpoint with a well-known Cleveland organist and choirmaster, Vincent Percy.

Kerr continued his study of piano and began to study composition with James Hotchkiss Rogers, a native of New Haven, Connecticut, who was teaching in Cleveland and was the music critic for the Plain Dealer. Rogers, whom Kerr considers his principal teacher, was educated at Lake Forest Academy in Illinois. He received his musical training in Berlin where he studied piano and organ and later in Paris where he studied piano with Fissot and organ with Guilmant. He also studied composition in France with Charles Marie Widor. Rogers, a composer of some five hundred works, instructed Kerr for about five years in harmony, composition, and piano. "Undoubtedly Rogers encouraged my desire to compose and his manner of teaching excluded any cut and dried approach to its multiple problems."¹

For three months in the summer of 1919, Kerr studied organ at Concord, Massachusetts on a scholarship with the Canadian organist, W. E. Tattersall. During those student days, Kerr composed twenty-five works for piano, five songs with piano accompaniment, two organ works, and four works for violin and piano. None of these compositions is available because Kerr felt that they were strictly student works and never allowed them to be published.²

¹Kerr, personal interview, February 8, 1978.

²Kerr, personal interview, July 16, 1976.

When World War I began in 1914, Kerr was seventeen and nearing the eligible age for military service. He tried to join the Air Force, but because he was underweight, he was refused. "The way planes were in those days, I think they should have welcomed me because I was underweight."¹ Kerr then tried to enlist in the Canadian Air Force. A Canadian recruiting center had been established in Cleveland but on the very day that Kerr arrived to enlist, the American government ruled that the Canadian government could no longer recruit American citizens. He finally decided to enlist in the Bandmaster's Training School of the East. The school, which was founded approximately six months after the United States entered the war, was located on Governor's Island in New York harbor. The mastery of a band instrument was a requirement for enlistment. Kerr, at Rogers' suggestion, chose to study the clarinet and was advised to study with Joseph Narovec, a retired orchestral player. "Narovec was a top-notch teacher who had played in various symphony orchestras for years."² Although Kerr continued his study of the clarinet and later found the experience to be invaluable, the World War I Armistice was signed before Kerr could actively become involved in military service. During that time, Kerr played clarinet in the Cleveland Youth Orchestra, which met at the Epworth Memorial Methodist

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

Church.¹

Kerr described the environment of music and music education in Cleveland during his youth, late teens, and early twenties:

Previous to the opening of the Cleveland Institute of Music, there was no music school of standing in Cleveland or, for that matter, in most of the United States. Cleveland was not a musical center of importance during my student days and there was no reason to enroll in the music schools that were in existence. It was necessary to seek private teachers of experience and merit. Fortunately, they were available. Oberlin College Music School was acquiring a good reputation but that developed too late for me. Yale and Harvard had some outstanding composers on their faculty but both of those prestigious colleges were beyond my means. By the time that the Cleveland Institute was opened, I was past my student days. These situations will explain why, except for Fontainebleau, my musical training was entirely private.²

Fontainebleau

In gratitude for American assistance during World War I, the French government began in 1920 to award to American students scholarships to the newly founded Conservatoire Americain de Fontainebleau. The conservatory, located near Paris, was staffed with a faculty largely from the Paris Conservatory. James Rogers encouraged Kerr to apply for admission to the conservatory in Fontainebleau because of the "exposure and sophistication that I could acquire there and thus gain a new perspective."³

¹Kerr, personal interview, July 24, 1976.

²Kerr, personal interview, October 31, 1977.

³Ibid.

The French government awarded two scholarships to the conservatory to two American students from each state. In addition to musicianship of a professional calibre, the requirements for the scholarship applicants included a positive personality and reliable character. To complete the application, eight to ten references were necessary. Among Kerr's references was Newton D. Baker, the Secretary of War, a close friend of Claus Wolfram's son. The younger Wolfram obtained an appointment for Kerr with Baker. "After a long conversation, Baker wrote me a letter of recommendation to the French government."¹ Kerr knew that Baker's son-in-law was a fairly well-known pianist of the time and that Baker was quite interested in music. Other references included the father of a childhood friend, George A. Exline, and the pastor of the Hough Avenue Congregational Church where Kerr played the piano for a one-hundred-member men's Bible class. Since there were not enough qualified applicants from all of the states, approximately seventy American students received scholarships to Fontainebleau. Almost all students were teachers in colleges or conservatories. The other Ohio student who received a scholarship was John Walsh.²

In the spring of 1921 Kerr went to France where he studied piano with Isidor Phillip, Director of Piano at the

¹Kerr, personal interview, December 15, 1977.

²Ibid.

Paris Conservatory, and Camille Decreus, Phillip's assistant. Phillip encouraged Kerr toward a concert career.

He was rather disappointed that I didn't follow through. He later came to America while I was in New York. I had one great drawback--I had a small hand span and it has always been difficult for me to play a minor third with an octave at the same time--rapid passages with three tones, one of which is a minor third. My hand was not adequate for facile technique but he changed that quite a bit during the time I was with him. He said that if I could study with him another year he could probably expand my hand without damage. I believe that he could have done it because he was a terrific technician.¹

Kerr's first composition teacher at Fontainebleau was Paul Vidal. "I did not choose Vidal but was assigned to him. He was the head of the composition department at the Paris Conservatory." When Kerr went to France, he took with him several shorter compositions: an early trio for violin, violoncello, and piano, and a series of variations for piano and orchestra which "were very conventional in an unconventional sort of way. The unconventional part of it was my natural resistance to imitation. It was very crude."² The variations, which were composed for Rogers, were based upon a theme taken from the musical magazine, Etude.

Rogers had been impressed a great deal more than Vidal. Rogers said that they had a certain breadth in them that he hadn't found in the music of any of his other students. The movement was broad and architectural even though at the time I hadn't arrived at any clear conception of what I wanted to do formally.

¹Kerr, personal interview, July 2, 1976.

²Ibid.

I must say Vidal didn't show any enthusiasm at all for my variations, but he detected in the theme I used, which wasn't my own, a quality that resembled the slow movement of the Seventh Symphony of Beethoven. I had not thought of that resemblance myself. Several of the faculty immediately had a celebration because they thought I had discovered an unknown theme by Beethoven. I couldn't make them believe the theme was out of a magazine and not by Beethoven at all.

As I look back, I was in an immature stage at that time. I have included nothing on my list of works that date from that period. It wasn't until after I came back that I found myself and was gradually working toward a style that became increasingly more dissonant.¹

Although Kerr was assigned first to Vidal, he was soon transferred to Boulanger.

For composition, I had been assigned to Paul Vidal, but was able to transfer to Nadia Boulanger. I am not certain that this was more than a half-bright move. But what choice was left? Nearly every one was deserting Vidal as being an "old fogie" addicted to the most reactionary and meaningless music. In her way, Nadia Boulanger likewise suffered from musical myopia. She had a very limited viewpoint about contemporary music and sort of an unappeasable appetite for composers that wrote trivial and glittering music. She pushed several composers at us that were almost salon-composers but they had a lot of technique and the music was popular.²

Reflecting upon Boulanger's teaching technique, Kerr has been critical of his experience at Fontainebleau.

First of all, she was more interested in analysis--which seems to be a weakness of most composition teachers--than she was in what I was doing. For one thing, I had started with Vidal and I think that annoyed her. The material she chose was interesting but I don't think of even elementary importance to a composer today. Why did we have to analyze all of Boris Godunov? I think Boris Godunov is a great opera. It is one of my favorites. But I don't think I see that I gained

¹Kerr, personal interview, July 2, 1976.

²Kerr, personal interview, August 27, 1976.

anything as a composition student by analyzing the entire opera--especially the Rimsky-Korsakov version, which didn't present Mossorgsky's own style. It is often referred to as Rimsky-Korsakov's greatest work.

Nadia Boulanger loved her orations so much that almost every session ended after about fifteen minutes of attending to business. She would get on a point--sometimes a bit thin and immaterial--and she would hold forth for an hour, not talking about the subject but she was reminded of one thing and another. She was very fluent and her enthusiasm was so great that you were carried away by her verbiage.

She was a very charming person and had a certain brilliancy about her. If you didn't look too closely, she gave you the impression of being very much in the know. She discovered Bartok while I was there. But what she discovered was the Allegro barbaro and that seemed to be all she knew of his work. We had to listen to an endless explanation of its merits. Practically speaking, she didn't do any actual teaching. She just talked about one thing and another. She never made any attempt to rewrite anything that we presented.

Her great passion was her sister Lili whose music seems to me to be very pallid. Lili died in her late twenties traveling in Europe with a French pianist, Stephane Raoul Pugno. We heard a great deal more about her than we did about any other composer. She wrote some nice things, but they weren't of special merit.

It took me a long time to realize that my study with Boulanger contributed very little to my musical development. This was true of Fontainebleau as a whole. The experience was a little too social for one thing. As a cultural experience, being in France was very valuable. As far as musical training was concerned, I think it was of doubtful value.¹

One thing that Boulanger learned quickly was that American students had money or could get it. Of course, we didn't have any financial dealings with her at all because we were on scholarship. American students commenced to crowd in on her after we got back. They began to hear about her and it became the fashionable thing to study with Boulanger. She charged ten dollars per lesson, which was large at that time, especially in France. It is reported that her secretary sat at a

¹Kerr, personal interview, July 2, 1976.

table and took the ten dollars before you got your lesson.

Boulanger was an inspiring person in many ways to a student that didn't have very much background. She knew a lot of little things, was a passable organist, and was very hospitable.¹

While at Fontainebleau, Kerr studied music history under Jacques Pillois, conducting under Albert Wolff, and although he did not study with them, he became acquainted with Camille Saint Saens, Andre Bloch, and Charles Marie Widor.²

Before returning to Cleveland, Kerr traveled in France, Switzerland and Italy.

I was able to arrange for my transportation home about a month or six weeks after the term was over during which time I went to Switzerland and on through to Italy. I didn't get any further than Florence for the simple reason that I went broke. I had arranged to have my mother send me a draft. I didn't realize that Italy was in turmoil. The draft never got there. I went to the American consul and he asked, "Where did you ask to have it sent?" and when I told him, he said, "It may not get here for six months or a year. It may not get here at all." I was staying in a quite good hotel. Fortunately they didn't ask for any payment. I was down to about four or five francs when the American consul said, "I can lend you the amount you need from now until you get home." He took just my word and nothing else. He gave me enough money--in cash--to pay my hotel bill and pay my transportation back to Paris. The people at Fontainebleau took care of the transportation from there on. He also gave me enough money to pay my railroad fare from New York to Cleveland. Of course, I sent back the money right away. In the letter he wrote acknowledging it, he showed genuine surprise. I don't think he ever expected to get the money back.

I encountered a number of riots in Italy. As I was going into the mountains, the train stopped and the

¹Kerr, personal interview, July 16, 1976.

²Kerr, personal interview, October 25, 1977.

crew walked off. We sat there for nearly twelve hours. This was the time when Mussolini was coming to power. Later we were stopped by gunfire between the fascists and government forces as we neared the city limits of Torino. The battle kept us there most of the night before we could get through.¹

Early Teaching Career

When Kerr returned from France in March 1922, he resumed his piano teaching in Cleveland. "Students sort of drifted in, and by that time I was enough advanced to do a fair job of teaching,"² Kerr taught in homes at first and later shared a studio near his home. This private instruction led to his first formal teaching position at the Ashtabula Conservatory in Ashtabula, Ohio in 1922. Kerr traveled the hour's trip from Cleveland to Ashtabula one day a week to teach piano. Since the conservatory was strictly instrumental, there were no composition students. Teaching in Ashtabula soon led to Kerr's next position at Cleveland City College. In late 1922, Kerr was approached about forming a music department at the college. "I contacted the best people I could find in the city."³ The Cleveland City College directed by S. R. Boyer was located in the Commonwealth Building on Euclid Avenue at East 102nd Street. A one-page printed bulletin issued in 1922 announced Kerr as

¹Kerr, personal interview, October 25, 1977.

²Kerr, personal interview, July 2, 1976.

³Ibid.

the Director of the Department of Music as well as instructor in piano, ensemble, and theory. Other faculty listed included Carl Piepenburg, piano; Vincent Percy, organ; Anne Semmelroth, voice, vocal ensemble, solfeggio; Harold Berkley, violin and viola; Samuel Salkin, violin and string ensemble; and Erwin Goetsch, violoncello. On the bulletin was the statement, "Elementary and advanced students may enroll at any time." On the reverse of the announcement was stamped, "New Address, 327 The Superior Arcade." Shortly after the school opened, a major fire destroyed a large portion of the music facility. Kerr's studio also was burned in the fire. However, when he went to investigate the damage, he found his Steck piano covered with ice from water that firemen had used to extinguish the fire. The piano had been saved by a large oil cloth cover made by Kerr's mother and was barely out of tune.¹

Kerr maintained his position as director at Cleveland City College until it merged with Cleveland College in 1925. During those years of his teaching and administrative responsibilities in Cleveland, he composed regularly, although few of those compositions exist. That period was a time of transition when Kerr's style became increasingly dissonant. Alexander Ringer has offered an explanation for the relatively few compositions that exist from that period:

¹Kerr, personal interview, July 2, 1976.

Kerr's merciless self-criticism must be blamed for the fact that very little music has survived the decade following his return from France.¹

From 1918 through 1927, Kerr withdrew from publication the Suite for String Orchestra, the Variations for Solo Piano and Orchestra (1920), the Trio for Violin, Violoncello, and Piano (1921), the Nocturne for Orchestra (1924), and the Divertimento for Chamber Orchestra (1927). The only works available from that period are Three Songs to Poems by Omar Khayyam (1919), Six Songs to Poems by Edna St. Vincent Millay (1924-1928), Poem for solo piano (1926), Six Songs to Poems by Adelaide Crapsey (1913-1921), and the First String Quartet (1926). The First String Quartet, later revised in 1934, was not withdrawn by the composer but was lost during the thirties. Although at least two and perhaps three copies are believed to be extant, none has been located.

Greenbrier

Encouraged by the pianist Lester Hodges late in 1926, Kerr accepted an attractive position at Greenbrier College in Lewisburg, West Virginia. By 1927 Kerr was not only responsible for the administration of the music department, but also taught counterpoint and harmony. At the school, Kerr also coordinated an active musical concert series. Performers on the series included Metropolitan Opera star, Reinhold Werrenrath, violinist Yelli D'Arnyi, and the

¹Alexander L. Ringer, "Harrison Kerr: Composer and Educator," ACA Bulletin, VIII, No. 2 (1959), 10.

Berkshire String Quartet from New York City.¹ Because of the time demands at Greenbrier, Kerr was forced to make an important decision: whether to perform or to compose.

I found that not only was I in charge of the music department but also I had to teach. There again they had no composition. I did teach some advanced harmony and counterpoint but no one was studying to be a composer. I also had charge of the concert series. We had some very good people in that series. Lewisburg was a little place on the border between Virginia and West Virginia where you would not expect any audience. However, the series was attended by capacity audiences and consequently a lot of work.

I knew that if I was going to do any composing I would have to support myself teaching or doing administrative work, one or the other. I decided there was no way I could be a composer and a performer. I used to practice seven and a half hours a day--I never could do eight--and I just stopped cold as far as the piano was concerned.²

During his stay at Greenbrier, Kerr began his Symphony No. 1. Completed in 1929, this symphony is the earliest large work that exists today. The First Symphony later underwent extensive revision in 1938.

Before going to Greenbrier, Kerr was engaged to marry Jeanne McHugh, a former piano student. Kerr met Jeanne McHugh in 1925 when she began to study piano with him in Cleveland while he was teaching at the Superior Arcade. Since the age of six, she had studied piano and theory Kathryn Collins and her assistant Earl Freeman. When McHugh became dissatisfied, Freeman introduced her to Kerr. She

¹Kerr, personal interview, October 31, 1977.

²Kerr, personal interview, July 2, 1976.

studied with Kerr until 1927 when he went to Greenbrier. Kerr recommended her to Rogers with whom she studied until they were married on August 30, 1928.¹

Jeanne McHugh received a degree in education from the Junior Teacher's College, which was affiliated with Western Reserve University in Cleveland. Although she never liked teaching, she spent a year as demonstration teacher of the sixth grade because "it was the thing to do."²

The New York Years: 1928-1949

The Chase School

Kerr resigned from Greenbrier prior to his marriage to Jeanne McHugh because "we wanted to get married and I knew that she wouldn't be happy there. So I accepted a position in Brooklyn as head of the music department at the Chase School."³ A well-known pianist and teacher in New York City, Grace Hoffheimer had urged Kerr even while at Fontainebleau to come to start a music department at the Chase School, a private day school and junior college for girls. Through her recommendation, Kerr became Director of Music and Art at the Chase School in 1928. Immediately after their marriage in Cleveland, they left for Brooklyn

¹Kerr, personal interview, November 10, 1977.

²Ibid.

³Kerr, personal interview, July 2, 1976.

where they resided in a large brownstone house on St. Mark's Avenue, which was adjacent to the school. Although Kerr was appointed as the initial member of the music faculty, the school was able to offer a full range of courses within only two years.¹

The Chase School Department of Music "Catalogue" for 1930-1931 listed Kerr as "Instructor in Pianoforte and Ensemble Playing and Teacher of Music History and Appreciation and of the Theoretical Branches of Music." Other members listed in that edition of the catalogue included Helen von Ende, an extensively trained violinist and fellow student of Kerr at Fontainebleau, and Alberto Sciarretti, "Instructor in Pianoforte Playing and Vocal Coach." A notation at the end of the catalogue stated "This year's Instructor in Voice had not yet been selected at the time this catalogue went to press."² The vocal instructor was Berthé Erza, a French vocalist who was the first to sing Kerr's earlier songs in New York City.³ Plate VII in Appendix A contains a statement of purpose of the Department of Music at the Chase School, illustrating Kerr's early and intense interest in music education.

¹Kerr, personal interview, November 10, 1977.

²"Catalogue," The Chase School, New York, 1930-1931.

³Ibid.

While at the Chase School, Kerr was also active in other endeavors. Grace Hoffheimer may have had an ulterior motive in encouraging Kerr to come to Brooklyn. Since she did not feel qualified to teach counterpoint and composition, she taught only piano in her large studio in the Osborne Building located at the corner of 57th Street and Seventh Avenue near Carnegie Hall. Hoffheimer convinced Kerr to teach counterpoint and composition in her studio. She publicized this association extensively, although he taught for her only two afternoons per week. Kerr also taught two evenings per week for the pianist Frederick Bried in his studio located at Eastern Parkway, the "Fifth Avenue" of Brooklyn. Bried, another highly successful teacher, believed that the repertory of contemporary music in teaching was weak. He organized the American Society for Teachers and Composers (SOTAC) of which Kerr was a director. Bried felt that all members of the organization should also be composers. During that time, Kerr also taught privately at Sciarretti's studio in Carnegie Hall.¹

National Broadcasting Company

In 1929 when the stock market crash wrecked the nation's economic system, the Chase School suffered severe cutbacks in finances and in enrollment. Shortly after the onset of the depression, the faculty salaries at the Chase

¹Kerr, personal interview, October 31, 1977.

School were cut in half. This placed a financial hardship upon the Kerrs, who both taught at the Chase School and depended upon it as their major source of income. Josephine Chase, the director of the school and a member of the family that had started the school, introduced Kerr to a Brooklyn organist whom Kerr remembers only as Mrs. Hurley. She in turn introduced Kerr to her personal friend, Milton Cross, the head of the announcing staff at the National Broadcasting Company. Cross was a popular announcer for broadcasts of opera and symphony programs, including the series conducted by Toscanini and Stokowski. Cross introduced Kerr to Henry Gerstle, composer and head of the arranging staff. Kerr showed Gerstle some of his work and Gerstle hired him to arrange for the General Motors Symphonic Program, which was broadcasted live each Sunday afternoon. The orchestra, which was conducted by Cesare Sodero, occasional conductor of the Metropolitan Opera, never played original symphonic compositions. The philosophy of the program directors was that the greatest success could be achieved by enlarging a smaller chamber work or piano work to symphonic proportions. Thus, copyright obligations could be ignored and fees would not have to be paid to composers. Moreover, the symphonic versions produced by Kerr and other staff arrangers were later sold by NBC. Several years after his work for NBC, Kerr sat in a movie theater on Fifth Avenue and heard one of his arrangements as background music for the film he was

viewing. NBC had made no contract with Kerr to issue his arrangement of the work.¹

Kerr's tenure at NBC was challenging. As late as Friday afternoon, he would be given a score of as much as sixty pages that had to be completed by the Monday morning rehearsal for the following Sunday afternoon performance. Often he would have to work during the entire weekend in order to complete an arrangement. As he would finish arranging a portion, a copyist would pick up the music and bring another score. According to Kerr, "the program directors could never decide on a program until the last minute."² Although the arranging paid well--his first check during the height of the depression was nearly \$300--Kerr had to leave NBC in 1930 because of the amount of time the arranging consumed.³ According to Alexander Ringer,

It was the quest for new socio-economic solutions, so typical of musical circles in those depression ridden years, which absorbed an increasing amount of youthful energy.

In answer to the basic social challenge of his time Kerr exchanged the privileged sanctuary of the creative artist for the stormy and thankless task of administering a number of private and public ventures designed to further the cause of contemporary music and art in America.⁴

¹Kerr, personal interview, October 31, 1977.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ringer, "Harrison Kerr," p. 11.

Trend

In 1932, shortly after Kerr left NBC but was still teaching at the Chase School, Kerr and his wife Jeanne McHugh became co-editors of Trend, a fine arts quarterly published by the Society of Teachers and Composers. The illustrated magazine was conceived by the Kerrs, Samuel Loveman, and Percival Goodman.¹ Kerr has recalled the beginning of the quarterly:

One evening someone said, "Why don't we start a little magazine?" It turned out to be considerably more than a little magazine. The magazine at first was financed by the group but soon after the first issue, it began to pay for itself since all of the contributors volunteered their services.²

Three months later, in March 1932, the first edition of Trend appeared; it was actually designed, typeset, and printed by Kerr. The quarterly, which received enthusiastic response and steady growth, boasted a long list of contributors that reads like a "who's who in twentieth century arts." Articles addressed to contemporary art were contributed by Martha Graham, Arnold Hoffman, Frank Lloyd Wright, Percival and Paul Goodman, William Saroyan, Beatrice Atlas, Eric Ely-Estorick, Marchal Landgren, Arthur Berger, Henry Cowell, Samuel Loveman, Robert Thompson, Paul Rosenfeld, Cary Ross, Herbert Elwell, Edward Perry, Winfield Scott, Lehman Engel, Mary Whitney, Arnold Hoffman II, Norman McLeod,

¹Kerr, personal interview, November 10, 1977.

²Kerr, personal interview, January 23, 1978.

Gervaise Butler, Amelia von Ende, Prentiss Taylor, Buckminster Fuller, Emanuel Eisenburg, Dorothy Norman, Robert Whitcomb, Albert Edward Clements, Estelle Safrier, Charles Speers, Jeanne McHugh, and Harrison Kerr, as well as many others. The articles were organized into the seven categories of the arts, followed by announcements of current art events. Included were photocopies of original art and photographs, individually mounted on the pages of the publication.

Kerr resigned from his position at the financially deteriorating Chase School at the end of the spring term in 1934 and moved to Manhattan. By then, Trend had begun to consume almost all of the Kerrs' time, because its rapid growth had turned the quarterly into a full-time bimonthly production. Anxious to reduce his commitment in time, Kerr contacted several publishers about assuming the full responsibility for editing and publishing Trend. However, all of the publishers insisted that the magazine would fare better as a popular periodical. Rather than let this happen, the editorial board--Percival Goodman, McHugh, Atlass, Ely-Estorick, Landgren, and Kerr--decided to discontinue the magazine completely in 1935. Following the March-April 1935 issue, the editorial board spent the remaining financial resources on a large party held in New York at the home of Mischa Levitsky.

All who had contributed articles to the magazine were invited, and they arrived from all parts of the United States.¹ Volumes of Trend are now located in libraries throughout the United States and have been taken into European literary collections. The artistic issues discussed remain interesting and vital even today.

In addition to teaching privately, teaching at Chase, and editing Trend, Kerr served as co-editor of the American Society of Teachers and Composers publication series that primarily included instructional pieces for piano. He also wrote several small works for piano and arranged and edited other teaching pieces.² Through the 1930's, Kerr's activities with SOTAC and Trend overlapped.³

During his years at the Chase School, Kerr composed the Symphony No. 1 (1929), the First Piano Sonata (1929), I Am Your Song for voice and piano (1930), and Fugue on "Entre Le Boeuf Et L'Anegriss" for piano (1933). Passacaglia for Orchestra (1931) and Prelude, Air, and Fugue for Small Orchestra (1933) were later discarded by the composer. In 1934 Kerr revised the First String Quartet, and in 1935 he composed Notations on a Sensitized Plate, a work for voice and chamber ensemble based on a poem by Cary Ross. After

¹Kerr, personal interview, November 10, 1977.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

the years at Chase and Trend, he wrote the Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano (1936), the Second String Quartet (1937), and the unaccompanied Study for Violoncello (1937). In the same year a third work was composed, Wink of Eternity for mixed chorus and chamber ensemble. The Movement for String Orchestra (1936), composed for the Saratoga Spa Music Festival, based upon Movement IV of the First String Quartet (1934), has been lost. Two other works from this period were discarded by Kerr, a Contrapuntal Suite for Orchestra (1936) and a Symphony (1937), originally listed as Symphony No. 2.

New Music Quarterly

Financed by Charles Ives, the first issue of New Music Quarterly, a publication of new compositions by progressive composers, was initiated by Henry Cowell in October 1927. The New Music Quarterly was an outgrowth of several earlier attempts to make music by American composers available to the public. In an article written in 1944, Kerr described this problem:

The European composer seldom had any difficulty, even if he was still comparatively unknown, in obtaining publication, and this rather gratifying state of affairs had been existent for a long time. Even American composers, resident in Europe or with European connections, have in the past found it easier to achieve publication abroad than at home. This condition has resulted in a vicious impasse for the composer entirely dependent on the facilities provided by our own musical economy. By and large, our composers have been unable to reach more than a very small part of a potentially small audience because they have not been able to get

their music into the hands of the few performers who are willing to bring it to a public hearing. Moreover, except in a few exceptional cases, the composer's search for an interpreter is virtually never ending. Only when a considerable number of performers have found a place in their repertoire for the works of a given composer can he hope to begin to reach the larger and more substantial public.¹

New Music Quarterly was not the first in the field of non-profit publications. One of the first attempts to publish serious American music occurred in 1901 when Arthur Farwell founded the Wa-Wan Press, a non-commercial publisher which issued mostly shorter works. Many of the works later became standard in publishing catalogues. Twenty-four years later, the Composers Press, Inc., was founded by Charles Haubiel. This press, which functioned through the forties, began to issue works of a more extended nature. Founded by Bernard Tuthill in 1919, the Society for the Publication of American Music (SPAM) in which Kerr was actively involved, was the first real effort to publish larger works. Kerr has explained the inception of New Music:

As before mentioned, the first issue of the New Music Quarterly appeared in October 1927. The idea, however, had the assumption that if subscribers could be obtained, the music of the unknown "modernists" would at least reach a modest public. During the summer of 1927, Mr. Cowell sent out 8500 circulars, on each of which he wrote an individual message. This resulted in more than 750 paid subscriptions. Associated with Mr. Cowell at this stage was Dene Denny of Carmel, California. Hazel Watrous, a partner of Miss Denny, designed the very individual cover...The project was housed in the apartment of Olive Thompson Cowell in San Francisco, who lent

¹Harrison Kerr, "The American Music Center," Notes I, No. 3 (June, 1944), 34-35.

the project some money and addressed letters. Henry Cowell personally kept the books, did the editing, saw to the printing and mailing with the later assistance of Olive Cowell and Dene Denny. The Executive Board, in addition to some of the above, included Bruce Buttlers, Henry Eichheim, Arthur Hardcastle, Winifred Hooke, Dane Rudhyar, and Adolph Tandler. New Music has always been a non-profit organization, and no one has ever received any salary for any of the work connected with the project. During the depression, subscriptions decreased and for several years, beginning in 1929, the project received outside financial assistance from interested individuals, including Mr. Cowell himself. This method of conducting the venture is strongly reminiscent of "little magazine" procedure and, in essence, New Music was a member of that interesting clan. We all remember how literary publications, founded and operated by aspiring writers, sprang into being after the last war. To these non-commercial, and sometimes hare-brained manifestations, we owe the early recognition of some of our most important literary lights.

New Music was a much sounder and far more important contribution than was the case with the general run of the literary papers, but essentially it fell into the same category--the non-commercial, somewhat esoteric field of "advanced" expression, having . . . a small but important following. It is difficult to see how, at that time, any other course would have been open. The need for such a medium was great, but tangible and practical interest was small.¹

Kerr's earliest connection with New Music occurred when his Notations on a Sensitized Plate (1935) was published. In 1937 when Cowell took a leave of absence, Otto Luening, Edwin Gerschefsky, and Kerr were given the responsibility of managing New Music until Cowell returned three years later.² Cowell, along with Charles Seeger, Ruth Crawford, and Martha Beck Carragan, recognized the possibility of issuing recordings on a quarterly basis to subscribers.

¹Kerr, "American Music Center," 36.

²Kerr, personal interview, January 23, 1978.

Kerr described the details of the early venture:

At that time, the situation in regard to contemporary American music, insofar as commercial recordings were concerned, was in a more deplorable state than in the field of publication. Actually, no serious works, especially if they were in a contemporary idiom, had any chance of being put on discs. Obviously, the availability of recorded music was highly important to composers, and so the idea was a sound one. By this time, a large number of internationally known musicians had endorsed the publication venture of New Music, and most of these lent their names to the new venture which was first known as New Music Quarterly Recordings (NMQR). For the new project, first publicly announced in January 1934, Mrs. Carragan was treasurer and Mrs. E. F. Walton housed the project at her residence in New York City. She, the composer, Adolph Weiss, his wife, and Henry Cowell took care of the correspondence, the circularization, and the mailing of the records. Mr. Cowell made the editorial selections, arranged for the performers, supervised the recording, lent the project money, and advertised it through New Music. Around 1936, the recording project was moved to Bennington College and functioned from there until the opening of the American Music Center.¹

From October 1, 1939 through October 1, 1944, Harrison Kerr served as chairman of the NMQR project committee and assumed the responsibility of supervising all of the recordings issued during that time.² While he served as NMQR project chairman, Kerr reached a large audience when his Dance Suite for two pianos and percussion (1938), also referred to as the Dance Sonata, was performed on a coast-to-coast tour during the 1938-1939 season. The work was commissioned by the Bennington School of Dance in Vermont and was performed by the Hanya Holm dance group. The Dance Suite was arranged

¹Kerr, "American Music Center," 36-37.

²Kerr, personal interview, August 27, 1976.

into an orchestral version in the following year. Also composed in 1938 was the Trio for Violin, Violoncello, and Piano.

Arrow Music Press

Arrow Music Press, a non-profit cooperative venture that published American music, was organized in 1938 as a logical successor to Cos Cob Press, which had become inactive because of financial difficulties. Cos Cob Press had been founded in 1929 by Alma Wertheim Weiner and a number of prominent American composers. Kerr believes that Cos Cob Press occupies a central role in the history of non-commercial publishing ventures:

This organization started out with the assumption that a non-commercial publisher could best function along the same lines as the commercial houses. The great difference could be found, of course, in the fact that no profit would be expected and that no salaries would be paid to the officers of the organization. For nearly a decade, Cos Cob filled a very important place in the field of contemporary American music, being responsible for the publication of an impressive number of important American works. However, in order to function in a business-like manner, it was forced to operate through commercial publishers. While this had its advantages over the strictly non-commercial handling of New Music, it also had very serious drawbacks. Being non-commercial and unprofitable to operate, it was always a stepchild and only too frequently was shoved aside and allowed to get along the best it could. This is a rather ironic commentary on the whole field of publishing. What was, a decade ago, just another attempt to bring new and generally unwanted music to a rather indifferent public has now become one of the soundest publishing ventures of the day.¹

¹Kerr, "American Music Center," 37.

In order to continue the work of Cos Cob, Lehman Engel, Marc Blitzstein, Virgil Thomson, and Aaron Copland organized Arrow Music Press in 1938 which assumed the Cos Cob catalogue.

Arrow Music Press is probably the only serious attempt at least in this country, to form a composers' cooperative venture. The four composers who conceived the organization, acted as an Editorial Board to insure a standard of selectivity in regard to publication, and raised a sufficient amount of money to launch the press and pay for the routine office expenses. Having the experiences of the Cos Cob group to guide them, they wisely established the new press on business-like lines. The beginning was very modest and facilities were limited, but the idea being a sound one, Arrow Press rapidly grew in importance.¹

In 1939 Harrison Kerr was chosen to be the manager of Arrow Music Press. Arrow Music Press, which later in the 1950's was sold to Boosey and Hawkes, became one of the leading publishers of American music during Kerr's six-year tenure.²

Varèse, Paneyko, Calder, and Ives

During the late 1930's and early 1940's, Kerr came into close contact with a number of well-known artists and musicians. In later years, he came to know almost every living American composer whose works were being published or performed. He has recalled that four of his most memorable associates during that time were Edgard Varèse, Alexander Calder, Mirko Paneyko, and Charles Ives.

¹Kerr, "American Music Center," 37.

²Ringer, "Harrison Kerr," 11.

One of Kerr's closest friends and a source of constant encouragement was the Paris-born composer Edgard Varèse. After his discharge from the French army in 1916, Varèse came to the United States and became a naturalized American citizen. Their first meeting occurred some time during the late fall of 1934, about a week after the Varèses had returned from a five-year stay in France. In the lobby after a concert in New York, Varèse happened to recognize Kerr; he approached him and introduced himself. At the time, Varèse knew of Kerr possibly through Wallingford Riegger and had heard several of his compositions. Kerr had heard only Varèse's Ionization, played at Town Hall by a small pick-up orchestra conducted by Nicolas Slonimsky. At the meeting, Varèse invited the Kerrs to visit his home where they met his wife Louise. Louise Varèse was not intensely interested in music but became very close friends with the Kerrs.

Kerr has recalled his relationship with Varèse:

I was Varèse's only close friend who was not French or foreign. Our friendship was spontaneous and very few days passed that we did not see one another. We were always meeting at one or the other of our apartments and would talk sometimes until 2:00 or 3:00 o'clock in the morning. We had a most cordial relationship.

Varèse was very difficult to understand because he spoke so fast. He had a very sophisticated vocabulary. Varèse lectured at Columbia University but I was never able to hear him. He knew foreign artists, composers, and musicians and a very select group of American composers--Wallingford Riegger and Carl Ruggles were part of that group.

Varèse got me a lot of performances both here and abroad. People always accepted his judgment because he never yielded to the critics or popular opinion. He had nothing to do with the critics circle. He was responsible for the first performance in Paris of my first string quartet, which doesn't exist any more, and was responsible for a program at the New School for Social Research devoted entirely to my music. For these favors, he never expected anything in return.¹

Varèse delivered a lecture at Columbia University devoted to the music and philosophy of Harrison Kerr. He asked Kerr to make a statement of philosophy for this lecture and Kerr wrote the frequently quoted "Statement for Edgard Varèse:"

If, as a composer, I have what may be called a credo, it is to ignore every musical "ism." Undue sensitivity to the fashionable taste in musical idiom has been the downfall of many a composer. Fortunately, it is usually the second rate talent that succumbs to this weakness. A writer who has no personal idiom must, perforce, adopt one (or perhaps several), from some source. The temptation is to find a method of expression that is most likely to appeal to the immediate circle around one. If that circle is made up of conservative minded people, the style will be one that makes predominant use of musical materials long accepted as pleasing. The music will be prevailingly consonant and will abound in melodic, harmonic and rhythmic cliches.

If the composer associates with a circle that predominantly believes in "modernism" his style will be reflective of their collective taste in respect to whatever it is they choose to consider to be "contemporary." One course is as bad as the other. Adherence to the conventional brings only atrophy. Following the dictates of a group of self-styled "avant garde" enthusiasts may just as easily bring on musical myopia. Being stylish, whatever the origin of the fashion, never produced a significant work of art.

¹Kerr, personal interview, January 5, 1978.

Yet, the temptation is great. Adherence to a line of conduct, laid down by a more or less powerful group, will lead to performance and to at least limited acceptance of your work. Conversely, to go your own way will certainly make the achievement of recognition difficult. But to yield to the pressure of surrounding opinion is to forfeit your honesty as a composer. Punishment for this will certainly follow. For the creative individual, artistic morality is of far deeper significance than social morality. You may possibly go to jail for a breach of the latter, but a violation of the former will consign you to oblivion.

Style, if you like, is the precipitate formed by the addition of your personal prejudices to the sum total of your knowledge. Or, in music, it is what remains if you strain all of the tonal material you have assimilated through the screen of your taste. The trick here is to have enough knowledge and a sufficiently developed discernment. Of course, it will also help to have an independent mind. Since style derives from a reservoir of musical background, it follows that it is merely a form of selectivity. This selectivity can be on the basis of genuine personal reference in the matter of sounds and their assembling into an intelligible musical pattern, or it can be a self-conscious arrangement of sounds known to be acceptable to a certain public and so assembled as to assure this acceptability. The latter is dishonest musical practice and cannot by any chance lead to a significant expression. Therefore, it follows that it is "my credo" to take whatever I find in musical tone resources and arrange this material so that it most nearly expresses my intention. If I do not find suitable material within my "repertory" of musical sounds, I then try to conceive of the sounds that will best serve my purpose.

If one subscribes to a theory of this kind, it follows that one must believe in the acceptability of many different idioms. The criterion will be not the stylishness we found in the manner of the composer's speech, but in how personally, truthfully and accurately he says what it is he has to say. If a composer adopts this attitude, his worries are reduced to the following few: Do I have any musical ideas to express? Do I have the technical means, including the intellect, to express them? Am I sufficiently self-critical to know whether or not I have succeeded? Have I the intellectual capacity to cope with so complex an art as the tonal language? If you can answer all of these questions in the affirmative, you have nothing to worry

about except the small matter of finding a public for what you have to say.¹

Kerr expressed his friendship for Varèse by encouraging the performance of his music. In the late 1940's when Varèse was particularly depressed about the lack of performances, Kerr suggested to Louise Varèse that several composers form a committee in support of her husband's music. The committee agreed that Kerr should contact the conductor Leopold Stokowski to persuade him to program the music of Varèse. Although in Philadelphia Stokowski had been the first to perform almost all of Varèse's music, he responded negatively, "I cannot find a position that will allow me to play his music."² According to Kerr,

Stokowski and Varèse shared a common trait. Stokowski might greatly admire a person as a composer but might not take to him personally--so he didn't know a lot of people personally. This was much the same with Varèse. He knew a lot of people but not on a close basis except in the case with the sculptor Alexander Calder. We saw the Calders quite often as the Varèse's--Louise and Luisa. Varèse was a great believer in Calder. In those days he knew only the mobile and the early stables.³

In the unpublished second volume Varèse: A Looking Glass Diary, Louise Varèse also emphasizes the mutual understanding between Kerr and Varèse in a reference to an April 15, 1934 performance of Ecautorial in Town Hall:

¹Harrison Kerr, "Statement for Edgard Varèse," unpublished statement written for Edgard Varèse, n.d.

²Kerr, personal interview, January 5, 1978.

³Ibid.

Only Harrison Kerr--a composer, let it be noted--sensed the essential quality of the music through the disarray of the performance. He wrote in the magazine Trend, "No description could convey any idea of the primordial cataclysmic power of the work. Certain imperfections in the still new theremins marred the ensemble now and then, and technical difficulties muddied occasional passages. But these were faults in performance, not in conception."¹

Kerr has recalled his last meeting with Varèse:

Our close friendship continued until we came to Oklahoma and then we saw the Varèses only on occasion. I remember that the last time I saw him was when the New York orchestra played Ameriques. Bernstein conducted it. I was in New York interviewing a candidate for a position at the University. I phoned him and Varèse sent me two tickets to the concert, so John Ardoin and I went to the concert. That was the last time I saw him. We heard that Varèse became ill and later that he died.²

Another friend and associate of Kerr's in the 1930's and 1940's was Mirko Paneyko. Paneyko was responsible for much pioneering work in the development of high quality reproduction equipment to achieve realistic sound. Kerr wrote about Paneyko:

One of the younger and more gifted electrical engineers, Mr. Paneyko first became interested in radio and phonograph as a medium for satisfying performance while studying at the Sorbonne in Paris. He continued his experiments after coming to the United States in 1926 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Originally approaching his problem from the standpoint of equipment for the home . . . he later saw that educational institutions were especially in need of high quality sound reproduction. Since this involved,

¹Louise Varèse, Varèse: A Looking Glass Diary, vol. 2, unpublished biography of Edgard Varèse. The quotation used also appears in an excerpt, "Varèse in New York," High Fidelity, February 1977, 76.

²Kerr, personal interview, January 5, 1978.

in a number of cases, installations in auditoriums, he turned his attention to this angle . . . and designed and built in his Connecticut laboratory a number of large machines¹

Kerr described the soundsystem Paneyko constructed for Hanya Holm's programs in Mecca Temple:

This equipment reproduces the music so naturally, in regard to timbre, dynamic contrasts, and pitch range, that even the trained musical ear might readily be deceived as to the presence of an orchestra. No revolutionary engineering principles are responsible for these results, but rather a delicate balance between the diverse elements of the apparatus and a design meticulously planned to fit the use to which the instrument is to be put. This is a principle rigorously and² successfully followed in all of Mr. Paneyko's designs.

Kerr recalled his association with Mirko Paneyko:

Paneyko owned a brownstone house in New York City where he didn't have to worry about the neighbors because the old buildings were soundproof. All people who were interested in music eventually wound up at Paneyko's. Because he was so well known for the installation of high quality sound reproduction systems, we asked him to install one in our New York apartment.³

In his work with Trend Kerr met many contemporary artists. "Trend attracted a lot of attention because it was one of the only magazines for contemporary art. Very few magazines of that type were in existence."⁴ One of his most notable associations was with the American artist, Alexander Calder. Kerr has explained the circumstances of his

¹Harrison Kerr, "Reproduced Music for the Dance," Magazine of Art, March 1938, 143, 184.

²Ibid.

³Kerr, personal interview, January 5, 1978.

⁴Ibid.

friendship with Calder:

Through Varese, I came in close contact with Sandy Calder. Martha Graham and Calder were collaborating on a work for dance and sculpture that needed music and Varese recommended me. I went to Sandy's studio. He wasn't yet recognized and was pinched for money. So he rented an old grocery store on Lexington for his studio. We discussed the possibilities of the work. However, before I could write the music, Calder said, "I've decided that sculpture and dance are not compatible." Martha Graham had a terrible temper. She didn't like what Calder was doing so he just shrugged it off.¹

Calder gave the drawings, dated 1934, to Kerr, but the project was never completed. The Kerrs maintained their friendship with the Calders for many years:

We kept in touch with Calder even after he moved to Connecticut. The Calders were always coming and going. The last time we saw them was when we went to the studio in Connecticut after we moved to Oklahoma.²

Another of Kerr's friends was the American composer Charles Ives. Although Kerr had known Ives and his family some years before the American Music Center was established, Kerr became close to him during the time in which Arrow Music Press was publishing his music. Kerr has stated that Arrow Music Press was

the first to publish Ives other than the works he published himself or had published by Schirmer at his own expense. We published quite a lot of music by Ives. He was really quite a character--a most interesting person. I didn't know Ives as well as I knew his wife. By the time I became acquainted with him, he was more or less an invalid and didn't go out. She would be the one to come into my office to transact business. I talked to him quite often on the telephone. Through New Music we

¹Kerr, personal interview, December 12, 1977.

²Ibid.

were also the first to issue recordings of his music. I remember the recording of the Fourth Violin Sonata which has since become frequently played. When I asked Ives about how long the work lasted he said, "It depends on whether it's morning or afternoon, raining or shining, whether you got up early or late. I'd say on the whole, half an hour." Well, on the recording it was eleven minutes. It was very amusing.

He enjoyed trying to startle you. He had to walk with a cane. He would be sitting across the room and all of a sudden he would jump up and brandish the cane as though he were going to hit you on the head while he was trying to make a point on something or other. You had to bear in mind that he wasn't really violent. Ives was a wonderful musician. That man could play any combination of notes against each other without any trouble at all. He could play, for example, eleven against thirteen without any unevenness in tempo. He believed that a work of art belonged to all and consequently never allowed his compositions to be copyrighted.¹

Most of his contact with Ives during the later years had been through Mrs. Ives. Kerr had wanted to visit with Ives in his New York apartment, but because of Ives' poor health, the meeting had been postponed several times. Finally Kerr was able to make an appointment with Ives for about thirty minutes. The visit lasted for more than two hours. Kerr found that they shared many of the same opinions about music and agreed on many of the problems that the American composer faced. Ives did not want Kerr to leave that afternoon until he agreed to make another appointment in the near future. Shortly after the meeting, Ives' health worsened and Kerr never saw him again.²

¹Kerr, personal interview, July 2, 1976.

²Kerr, personal interview, February 13, 1977.

American Composers Alliance

Because several prominent composers of serious music had been refused membership in the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP), a letter was sent out to composers inviting them to meet and discuss the current discrimination problems against the American composer of serious music. At the first meeting in 1938, The American Composers Alliance (ACA) was formed and a temporary executive board, including Harrison Kerr, was elected. The constitution and by-laws of ACA, as well as the articles of association, were drafted by Kerr and Goddard Lieberman, later the president of Columbia Records. They were assisted by a prominent lawyer, Morris Ernst, who provided his services without charge because of his sympathy for the American composer. At the first formal election, held on September 30, 1939, Kerr was elected secretary of ACA. He was re-elected biennially to this non-compensatory post until his resignation in 1950. Lieberman and Kerr also edited the early editions of the ACA Bulletin.¹ At Kerr's suggestion, an extensive library of printed music composed by ACA composers was established. The ACA Composers' Rental Library made unpublished American music available at a nominal rental fee to performers and performing organizations.²

¹Kerr, personal interview, January 23, 1978.

²Kerr, personal interview, July 25, 1976.

Kerr sustained his membership in ACA until he resigned in 1977 because of his disagreement with administrative policy. Although Kerr agreed that he would remain active in the organization if the executive board would endorse several of his recommendations for reform against favoritism, the board refused to meet his demands and accepted his resignation.¹

The American Music Center and
BMI

Perhaps a logical succession to Wa-Wan Press, Cos Cob Press, SPAM, New Music Quarterly, Arrow Music Press, and the formation of ACA was the establishment of an American Music Center. Kerr has explained the early organization of the American Music Center (AMC) in the following excerpt from an article published in 1944:

It immediately became apparent that these scattered, somewhat conflicting and frequently overlapping endeavors were losing many opportunities because of inadequate organizational handling, especially in the matter of routine. At that time, New Music Recordings was still at Bennington College, and I had several conversations with Mr. Otto Luening, then head of the Music Department at that college, in relation to these problems. Just when or where or how the idea of the American Music Center came into existence, it would be difficult to say. It probably arose out of the troubles of the people who were connected with the various projects. At the beginning, the idea was to establish a New York office to be shared by all of the non-commercial publishing and recording enterprises. Mr. Luening pursued the matter in discussions with Quincy Porter and other people connected with the publishing groups. A committee was formed consisting of

¹Kerr, personal interview, January 23, 1978.

Marion Bauer, Aaron Copland, Howard Hanson, Otto Luening as chairman, Quincy Porter, and myself. At a later date, Philip James, Douglas Moore and Oscar Wagner were added to this committee. Henry Allen Moe has been advisor throughout, but not a member of the committee. Through the Council for the Advancement and Diffusion of American Music (CADAM), funds were raised to establish the projected Center. It was recognized from the beginning that this would have to be a non-commercial non-profit enterprise, as were all of the other efforts above described. The new element was to be the coordination of the various activities, so that the business affairs of the organizations could be managed more efficiently, and their activities consequently expanded. It was contemplated that each publishing group would retain its identity and maintain its own policies, and this has been consistently carried out. As plans matured, it was realized that another element would have to enter into the activities of the new organization. Although, primarily, the original purpose of providing facilities for the non-commercial groups has been adhered to, it became necessary, even before the Center was opened, to make some provision for the serious American publications in the catalogues of the commercial publishers. Therefore, an effort was made to assemble all available material in this field, regardless of where published. Another project that occurred to the directors at an early date was the compilation of a complete catalogue of published serious American contemporary music. The plans took shape during the Fall of 1939 and the new organization opened under the name of American Music Center in February of 1940.¹

When the American Music Center opened, Otto Luening, on behalf of the committee, asked Kerr to become the Executive Secretary, for which he was paid a part-time salary. When Kerr assumed the position, there was no music, no staff, not even an office. At first the AMC was located on 42nd Street in New York City. Later the decision was made to rent a suite and divide it between the ACA and the AMC with a common reception room and an office. Except for sharing the

¹Kerr, "American Music Center," 38-39.

building space and the administrator, the staff and the organizations were independent. The AMC included a display room for the examination of scores and a library of American music. The following was excerpted by Kerr from a statement of conditions that made the establishment of the center necessary:

American composers have been gravely handicapped in their struggles toward more widespread recognition by the lack of central distribution facilities. Unhampered by the promotion problems that necessarily beset the average music publishing house, the Center has been organized as a non-commercial enterprise, primarily to make the works of American composers easily available. The Center will have for reference and distribution the publications of many of the important music publishers, and thus can offer a comprehensive literature of serious music by modern American composers In addition, an integral part of the Center's work will be to act as reference bureau and to furnish information on questions pertaining to all published American music of serious character Data on playing time, prices, publishers . . . is readily accessible, as part of the Center's plan to give every possible impetus to activity on the part of composers and performers alike.¹

In September 1942 the American Music Center was incorporated as a non-profit organization under the laws of the State of New York and was certified as such by the State Board of Education at Albany.

During the first year New Music Edition, New Music Recordings and Arrow Music Press, including Cos Cob Press, were taken into membership in the Center. Other of the non-commercial ventures were under contract elsewhere and therefore could not become full members, but a complete stock of² their publications was assembled and made available.

¹Harrison Kerr, "American Music Center," Music Clubs Magazine XXIII, No. 3 (January-February 1944), 4.

²Kerr, "American Music Center," Notes, 39.

Soon after the American Music Center began to function in the early 1940's, the problems of broadcasters, publishers, and composers grew to such proportions that Broadcast Music Incorporated (BMI) came into existence. The new organization approached ACA about giving to BMI all of the rights to works controlled by ACA. For this association, BMI would pay to ACA \$30,000 and the operating expenses of the office and secretary. The contract would make BMI the agent for the broadcast and television rights of music controlled by the ACA. When ACA signed the contract in the spring of 1944, a point system patterned after a similar method used in England was initiated in order to pay each composer a proportionate share according to the amount of music he had assigned to ACA.¹ Kerr has reflected upon these circumstances:

Some years ago, American composers rather dimly, but certainly, came to realize that they were being subjected to economic pressure. The jazz men and operetta composers knew this first, and they flocked into the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, when that organization was founded by Victor Herbert, and a group of his friends. Fortunately coming into existence at a time when the radio was springing up, ASCAP soon made itself a strong entity in the musical economy of this country. However, it was primarily an organization for the popular composers and it had, as well, most of the music publishers as members. Since no publisher's interests are even approximately parallel to those of a composer, the serious composer has never found a complete answer to his problems in ASCAP. Therefore, in 1937, some two hundred serious composers formed an organization of their own which became the present American Composers' Alliance. The formation of

¹Kerr, personal interview, December 15, 1977.

this latter group resulted in greater activity in the serious field on the part of ASCAP and other collecting agencies, and today the possibility of economic security for the composer seems to be recognizably nearer. The last two years have likewise seen progress toward the more immediately important goals of the Alliance. Licensing arrangements now in force or in the process of negotiation will assuredly have the effect of easing the way for all composers in the United States insofar as performances in the radio and symphonic field are concerned. Ironically enough, this advance has resulted from the controversy between ASCAP and the radio networks which came to a head several years ago, after ASCAP had made demands considered unreasonable by the radio interests. It will be remembered that this dispute resulted in a rather serious reverse for ASCAP and the formation by the networks of a new licensing body known as Broadcast Music, Inc. The new organization, having a forward looking policy, realized that the serious composer must be included in the radio licensing field and soon made an offer to the Alliance. A natural reluctance on the part of the 250 serious composers who were then members of ACA, to bring about a division of interests caused the Alliance to try for three years to come to terms with ASCAP. When it seemed useless to negotiate further, the Alliance assigned its radio performing rights to BMI, and thereby opened up the new possibilities above indicated. Whether ASCAP's reluctance to join forces with so large a proportion of American serious composers will, in the end, prove to be another of the older organization's miscalculations, and whether, in the end, it will prove detrimental to the interests of composers in general, must be left to the future. Certainly, at the present time, the formation of BMI and its contractual arrangements with ACA have given promise of progress.¹

Many publishers transferred to BMI and many new publishing organizations were started because of BMI's support.²

Kerr continued to be perplexed by the reluctance of radio stations to broadcast twentieth century music over the

¹Harrison Kerr, "Creative Music in America," Angry Penguins, July 1946, 53.

²Kerr, personal interview, December 15, 1977.

air. Because of his positions with ACA and the AMC, Kerr addressed the annual conventions of BMI during the 1940's and early 1950's concerning the broadcast of contemporary serious American music.¹

While actively engaged in his administrative duties with ACA and ACM, Kerr supported himself primarily by teaching privately for Hoffheimer and Bried as well as in his own home. Throughout the years in New York, Jeanne Kerr was supportive of her husband's endeavors while at the same time pursuing her own career. Her active interest in twentieth-century music was demonstrated by her attendance at concerts of new music and by the encouragement she gave to Kerr. After Jeanne Kerr resigned from the Chase School at the same time as her husband she enrolled in a business school in New York City to study filing systems. Because Mrs. Kerr had become adept in organizing filing systems, she was employed by the American Iron and Steel Institute. An outgrowth of the American Iron and Steel Association, the Institute was established in 1910 as the statistical and information center of the iron and steel industry. Shortly after the National Industrial Recovery Act was passed by Congress in 1933, the National Recovery Administration (NRA) was organized. Under the provisions of the NRA, the American Iron and Steel Institute was founded and housed in the Empire

¹Kerr, personal interview, January 23, 1978.

State Building. Jeanne Kerr's job was to organize the filing system at the Institute. Every product of the industry had to be organized by price, geographical location, company, and classification of the article. At the Institute Mrs. Kerr discovered the nucleus of a library but found no system of organization. She made a survey of the larger libraries in the New York area as well as other Eastern centers to study their holdings of documents relating to the fields of iron and steel. She found it evident that the Institute library should emphasize both American and European history and statistics of the iron and steel industry, as well as the recent advances in production methods.

Mrs. Kerr wrote a memorandum to the President of the Institute, Walter S. Tower, indicating a need for the establishment of a library. She included in her proposal that a collection of books and information relative to the manufacturing of steel might help to dissolve the "questionable reputation" of the steel industry at that time. About the same time that the NRA had passed out of existence, Mrs. Kerr drew up the plans for a one-room library to be housed in space formerly occupied by the NRA. The idea was approved and Mrs. Kerr was given the responsibility of establishing the library. To augment her knowledge of processes used in the industry, she began to study metallurgy at night at Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute. Under her guidance, the library grew to be a most complete collection of rare and

highly specialized books in the field of steel manufacturing. Mrs. Kerr was the first woman at the Institute to achieve an executive position, a position that she actually created and maintained until 1949: "Librarian of the American Iron and Steel Institute and Assistant to the Vice-President of Science and Technology."¹

Jeanne Kerr's success in her own career was significant not only because of her independence but also because of the positive encouragement she was able to give her husband. The period from 1939 through 1946 was particularly productive for Kerr. During that time, he composed the Symphony No. 2 (1943-1945), Carol on a Fifteenth Century Text for soprano and string quartet (1940), Suite for Flute and Piano (1940-1941), Sonata No. 2 for piano (1943), Four Preludes for piano (1943), and Prelude V for piano (1945). The Overture, Arioso, and Finale for violoncello and orchestra was begun in 1944 but was not completed until 1951.

Chief, Music and Art Section

In addition to his many other activities in the 1940's, Kerr wrote reviews for the music column in the American Magazine of Art. One day in 1946 the editor of the publication called Kerr at home explaining that a military officer from Washington, D.C. had come to his office looking for Kerr. After speaking to the colonel by telephone, Kerr

¹Kerr, personal interview, November 10, 1977.

made an appointment to meet with him. Kerr learned that the Army was about to launch a new program in Europe that would emphasize the artistic achievements of Americans in music, art, and architecture rather than their commercial activities. The officer informed Kerr that he had been named as the first choice to head the program.¹

Kerr surmises that he was probably recommended by Henry Allen Moe, an official in the Guggenheim Foundation and an associate during the formation of the AMC. Shortly afterwards, Moe telephoned Kerr and urged him to accept the appointment. In July 1946, Lt. Col. R. B. McRae was appointed director of the Reorientation Branch, a part of the Army's Civil Affairs Division headed by General Daniel Noce. Programs in many fields, including radio, films, theatre, music, art, literature, education, and religion, were formulated and implemented by a staff of experts. The Reorientation Branch operating in Washington and New York City functioned in cooperation with the American Military Government in each of the occupied areas, Austria, Germany, Japan, and Korea.²

Kerr went to Washington where he met with the heads of programs in the Office of Information. He returned to New York to discuss the proposition with his associates at the AMC and requested a leave of absence. In the December 3,

¹Kerr, personal interview, January 23, 1978.

²Ibid.

1946 issue of the New York Times the following announcement appeared:

The Music Unit of the Civilian Affairs Division of The United States Army's Reorientation Branch has been established with offices at 292 Madison Avenue. Harrison Kerr, on leave of absence from the American Music Center, has been appointed chief of the unit, which will coordinate the Army musical activities in occupied territories.¹

Kerr's official title was "Chief of Music, Art, and Exhibits section of the Civil Affairs Division, Reorientation Branch, Department of Army." The following memorandum detailed Kerr's responsibilities:

Under general direction of the Chief of the New York Field Office.

a. Initiates, formulates and coordinates policy to implement United States programs with respect to the establishment of music libraries and collections of art reproductions and slides in occupied areas.

b. Recommends and acquires exhibits dealing with the fields of music and art and related subjects, such as architecture and general American culture. Negotiates for materials for exhibits and supervises the production of exhibits, including the translation and lay-out of texts in German, Japanese, and Korean.

c. Responsible for policy and planning functions relative to the most effective execution of the Section's responsibilities. This Section is responsible for:

(1) Selection and procurement of orchestral material for music libraries in all occupied areas; rental of non-purchasable orchestral material and establishment of small libraries of non-orchestral and popular music, together with material incident to the appreciation of this music; selection and procurement of

¹"Army Music Unit Established," New York Times, December 3, 1946.

art reproductions, slides and books dealing with fine arts and related subjects for the libraries in all occupied areas;

(2) Direction, administration and management of activities of music and art libraries in occupied areas;

(3) Review and evaluation of activities, programs and projects undertaken by music and art libraries;

(4) Planning and initiation of new programs and revision of existing ones;

(5) Determination of the needs, budget and material, of the music and art libraries;

(6) Allocation and control of funds expended to fill such needs.

d. Drafts State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee, Combined Chiefs of Staff and Joint Chiefs of Staffs studies, policies and action papers for the guidance and control of military government activities concerning the reeducation and reorientation of occupied areas.

e. Attends State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee and Joint Civil Affairs Committee meetings and serves as Division representative on working groups and sub-committees that deal with problems which fall within the functional responsibility of the Music and Art Section.

f. Prepares and supervises the preparation and coordination of directives to implement established policies.

g. Establishes and maintains liaison with members of government agencies, music publishers, associations, institutions and cultural societies such as the Federation of Music Clubs, the National Music Council, art museums and individuals in the fields of music, art and related subjects in order to carry out the objectives of the Section.

h. Acts as sole expert of this division in the fields covered by the Section. Is responsible for the establishment and implementation of copyright protection in the occupied areas and advises proper procedure in the organization or reorganization of collecting societies and professional groups; drafts proposals for articles of association of such organizations; deals

with technical aspects of the foregoing.

i. Exercises administrative and technical supervision over 1 CAF-8 and 1 CAF-4.¹

Harrison Kerr traveled for two months surveying the musical and artistic activities in the occupied areas of Germany and Austria. On the tour, Kerr met Brigadier General Robert A. McClure, Director of Information Control in Germany, who gave Kerr, as he stated, "carte blanche." Later General McClure was transferred to New York, where he took charge of all occupied areas. When Kerr returned from Europe in 1947, an article entitled, "Kerr Reports on Conditions in U.S. Zones," pronounced the cultural level in Germany and Austria to be substandard.²

While Kerr was in New York functioning in the Reorientation Branch, Music and Art Section, he was contacted by Paul S. Carpenter, a professor at the University of Oklahoma, who was collecting information for a book entitled Music: An Art and a Business. In 1938 Carpenter had organized the Festival of American Music, designed to encourage the composition and presentation of contemporary American music. Because Carpenter had not received the information from ASCAP that was needed for his book

¹Department of War memorandum describing duties of Chief of Staff Group, Civil Affairs Division, Reorientation Branch, Music and Art Section, Washington, D.C., 1946.

²"Kerr Reports on Conditions in U.S. Zone," New York Herald Tribune, April 20, 1947.

concerning the collection agencies, he sought Kerr's help. Kerr in turn contacted an acquaintance at ASCAP who was able to help Carpenter. Carpenter was also interested in the problems of the American composer and mentioned Kerr several times in the book. A review of the book included the following statements:

Kerr, who is recognized in the field of music as one of the leading composers of the day, is mentioned several times in the book as Carpenter writes that the only way to become a famous composer in America is to be dead a hundred years or more.

"America's music culture is retarded by conductors and performers who shamelessly exploit our artistic innocence," Carpenter asserts. "The consequence is twofold: the public is denied the right to hear music by its living composers, and the separation of the composer from his audience leads to the twisting and withering of his creative powers."¹

Paul Carpenter, newly appointed Dean of the College of Fine Arts at the University of Oklahoma in Norman, invited Kerr to lecture and conduct the University of Oklahoma orchestra in April 1947 at the sixth annual Festival of American Music. Kerr conducted his Symphony No. 1 (1938) that recently had been premiered in the Symposium of American Music at the Eastman School of Music by Howard Hanson. Kerr's lecture discussed the situation of the arts in Germany.²

¹"Press Box," Norman Transcript, February 28, 1950.

²"Music Proposed as Peace Aid," Norman Transcript, April 15, 1947.

After his visit to Norman, Kerr traveled to the Orient and found the Japanese to be advanced in their knowledge of Western music. A report of Kerr's visit to Japan was interpreted by Lee Patterson in Stars and Stripes:

Considering the fact that the Japanese have been playing serious Western music for only a short time compared to the Americans and the Europeans, they are doing a good job of interpreting it, according to Harrison Kerr, a well known contemporary composer, who is now in Tokyo in his capacity as chief of the Department of the Army's Music and Arts Section.¹

In his position as Chief of the Music and Art Section, Kerr traveled extensively, met many musicians and artists, and contributed significantly to reestablishing artistic ties with the occupied areas. Several of Kerr's noteworthy activities have been summarized by Samuel Travers:

In 1948, in his position as Chief of the Music, Art and Exhibition Section of the Civil Affairs Section of the United States Army, he spearheaded the program by which American performing artists were sent to Germany and Austria for the purpose of acquainting the civilian population in those countries with the cultural achievements of outstanding American performers.

Since no government funds were available for such an activity, he obtained, with the cooperation of other interested musicians, money from foundations to pay the expenses of the artists who contributed their services to the program.

The first artist to participate was Patricia Travers, who played 32 concerts in 50 days, appearing both as soloist with orchestra (frequently playing the demanding Sessions Violin Concerto) and in recital. These programs included, as well, the rarely played Second Violin Sonata of Charles Ives. Other artists who contributed . . . were Ralph Kirkpatrick, Tom Scott, the

¹Lee Patterson, "Japan Musical Adaptation of Style Lauded," Stars and Stripes, December 1, 1947.

Walden String Quartet, and the late Mack Harrell. All were American-trained and American music occupied an important place on their programs.

This was soon after the United States Information Centers were established in the occupied areas, and American music and recordings were placed in all these libraries, as were scores and parts for the use of German and Austrian orchestras and chamber groups.

In addition, Mr. Kerr was responsible for sending many outstanding exhibitions of American art to the occupied areas in Europe and in Japan and Korea¹

National and International Music Council

Because of his positions with ACA and AMC and later with the U.S. government, Kerr also was affiliated with the National Music Council and the United Nations Educational, Social, and Cultural Organization's International Music Council. Kerr recalled, "At that time I was on everybody's committee."² The National Music Council was formed by Howard Hanson in the early 1940's to coordinate the several fields of the music industry including recording companies, music publishers, piano manufacturers, musicians, music educators, and others. When the organization was begun, Kerr, at Hanson's request, represented the ACA, a charter member of the organization. Later he also represented the American Music Center.

In 1947 Kerr was contacted by the State Department while he was in Germany. A meeting was to be held in the

¹Samuel A. Travers, "Altruistic American," Musical America, July 1961, p. 4.

²Kerr, personal interview, January 23, 1978.

UNESCO Paris headquarters to discuss the formation of an International Music Council. Kerr was asked to be an observer for the United States Department of State and to represent the National Music Council for the United States. Carlton Sprague Smith represented the International Music Fund established by the International Society of Contemporary Music (ICSM), and Charles Seeger represented the Pan-American Union. The meeting convened on January 25, 1948 in Paris with representatives attending from England, France, Belgium, Italy and the United States. The purposes of the International Music Council were stated as follows:

1. To strengthen co-operation between musical organizations, both national and international;
2. to encourage the foundation of new international organizations in fields of music where none exist;
3. to encourage the foundation in all countries of associations of musical organizations with a view to the formation of National Committees;
4. to promote, co-ordinate, and encourage the organization of musical congresses, festivals, competitions, and meetings of experts, both regional and international;
5. to facilitate the dissemination of musical works, the distribution of musical instruments, and the exchange of persons and groups;
6. to examine any proposals submitted to it in whatever domain of musical activity;
7. to study the social and economic status of musicians;
8. to encourage the inclusion of all forms of music in general education and to promote the exchange of views upon the various methods of musical

instruction.¹

The members of the council included:

1. a representative of each international organization accepting the Statutes;
2. an equal number of musicians or musicologists selected on grounds of their great international reputation in the various fields of music activity;
3. a representative of each National Committee, if National Committees are created.²

After an organizational meeting that included "a great deal of discussion over the headquarters and the drafting of a constitution that was dictatorial and undemocratic," Kerr wrote to the State Department and the National Music Council opposing the constitution.³ Several of the proposed activities of the International Music Council included a compilation of a world catalogue of recorded music, the subsidization of recordings to be added to the catalogue, the study of a universal tone pitch, the distribution of the International Music Fund, and a musical memorial to Chopin.⁴

¹Luiz Heitor Correa de Azevedo, "UNESCO's Activities in the Field of Music," Pan Pipes, XLII, No. 3 (February 1950), 187.

²Ibid.

³Kerr, personal interview, January 30, 1978.

⁴Azevedo, p. 186.

The Oklahoma Years: 1949-1971The Early Years in Oklahoma

In 1949 Paul Carpenter died unexpectedly. He had been instructor of violin since 1914, but had assumed the deanship of the College of Fine Arts at the University of Oklahoma only in 1947. In a search for Carpenter's successor, the President of the University of Oklahoma, George L. Cross, wrote a letter to Kerr in New York requesting him to consider taking the position. Kerr responded to Cross saying, "I'd like to consider the position you offer but I shall need time to think about it."¹ Initially Kerr did not take the offer seriously. However, after he had been contacted several times by Cross, Mrs. Kerr traveled to Norman to meet with Cross and to discuss a prospective move.² During the years 1946-1949, Kerr had been able to compose little because he had been very busy traveling abroad to Europe and the Orient, and shuttling back and forth from New York to Washington, writing, lecturing, organizing concerts, establishing repositories of books, recordings, and scores, and facing endless paperwork.³ In fact, no compositions appeared during the years 1946-1950. Cross assured Kerr that, should he accept the deanship at the University of

¹Kerr, personal interview, July 24, 1976.

²Ibid.

³Kerr, personal interview, July 26, 1976.

Oklahoma, weekends and a half-day per week would be free to compose.¹

Kerr was finally persuaded to accept the deanship of the College of Fine Arts. Organized in 1899, it was the oldest and one of the largest colleges at the University of Oklahoma. An official announcement of his appointment was made on June 15, 1949. In the same year, four new deans were appointed at the University of Oklahoma: John Ralph Rackley, Dean of the College of Education, Horace B. Brown, Dean of the College of Business Administration, Ralph Clark, Dean of the College of Pharmacy, and Kerr, Dean of the College of Fine Arts. An article entitled, "Great Future Awaits the Southwest Four New University Deans Believe," appeared in the Norman Transcript on December 11, 1949. Kerr was described in the article:

He is especially interested in the annual spring festival of contemporary music, originated by the late Dean Paul Carpenter. An easterner for about 20 years, he says that the New Yorker's idea of the middle west is changing. He came to O.U., he said, because of the great promise of the University and he likes "not only the place, but also the people."²

When Kerr actively assumed the position as Dean in the fall of 1949, only six houses were available in Norman. In a telephone conversation with the housing representative

¹Kerr, personal interview, July 26, 1976.

²"Great Future Awaits the Southwest Four New University Deans Believe," Norman Transcript, December 11, 1949.

at the University who helped new faculty members to locate suitable living accommodations, Kerr decided that the best of the six should be purchased. During Mrs. Kerr's brief stay in Norman, prior to Kerr's acceptance of the position, she had been disappointed in her survey of houses. Therefore, she was reluctant to leave both New York and her apartment. However, when she was convinced that the position was in their best interest, their belongings were shipped from New York, while they began to travel as far as possible down the eastern seaboard in their boat. Their planned solution to the problem of moving the boat to central Oklahoma was to sail farther down the coast each summer until the boat finally could be docked someplace on the Gulf coast of Texas. However, the boat was sold two summers later because of the difficulty of finding suitable winter quarters along the Eastern seaboard.¹

When they arrived in Norman, the Kerrs found their belongings piled in their house. The house, located in an addition called "Faculty Heights," is still their residence. At the time they moved into the house, it was about three years old. The modest three-bedroom home is located about one mile from the University. Kerr designed, built, and installed numerous cabinets for books, recordings, and objects collected during their travels. Kerr's study is a

¹Kerr, personal interview, August 27, 1976.

proliferation of cabinetry, with filing holes, drawers, shelves, filing cabinets, and sound reproduction equipment. A large working area surrounded by organized trays of writing implements, ink, rulers, and a wide selection of paper is a prominent feature of the room. Mrs. Kerr's study area abounds with books concerning metallurgy and the steel industry along with magazines, journals, and other publications that have significance in their careers. Many of the books in the room are rare first editions and many are old and fragile.

In Kerr's first year as Dean, many receptions and celebrations honored him. As he stated, "Anything I wanted, I got." One of his first duties was to find a director for the School of Music. In searching for the director, Kerr contacted Carlos Mosley who had been with the State Department and had become an officer in Germany while Kerr was in the Reorientation Branch, Department of Army. Mosley, who later became manager of the New York Philharmonic and is now president of the orchestra, was offered the directorship and accepted.¹

Kerr's early activities in Oklahoma included a series of lectures in February, 1950, over the University radio station WNAD entitled, "Music Trends Abroad." The lecture series was divided into four segments: Germany, Austria; Italy, France, and England; and Japan and Korea. Also in

¹Kerr, personal interview, October 31, 1977.

1950, Kerr was re-elected to the executive committee of the National Music Council for the tenth consecutive year.¹

Kerr was also involved with establishing a Paul S. Carpenter Library of the College of Fine Arts that was planned to contain "collections of books and other library items for the schools of art, drama, and music."²

In Kerr's early years as Dean of the College of Fine Arts, about 7,000 students attended the University of Oklahoma. The School of Music was one of the largest schools in the University. Kerr believes that some of the finest students attending the University during these years "were veterans of the Korean Conflict who had received help from the GI Bill to go to school. They were mature and very interested."³ The School of Music grew rapidly in size and quality as did the School of Art and the School of Drama. The Department of Dance, later a well-known part of the College of Fine Arts, was then part of the Department of Physical Training.

During the first four or five years, there was very satisfactory progress. All kinds of things were started here that had not been done before. For instance, opera was begun as a project of the three schools during those early years.⁴

¹"Kerr Re-Elected Music President," Norman Transcript, June 20, 1950.

²"People," University of Oklahoma News of the Month, November 1950

³Kerr, personal interview, January 29, 1978.

⁴Kerr, personal interview, February 6, 1978.

Among the artists and teachers appointed during Kerr's tenure were Robert Gerle, violinist, and Gabriel Magyar, cellist. Composer Halsey Stevens, composer and conductor Howard Hanson, violinist Patricia Travers, composer Edwin Gerschefsky, and the Walden String Quartet appeared in concert or presented lectures during these years. Each spring a symposium of contemporary music was held. In addition to the works of American composers, particularly those of the Southwest, works by students at the University were included on the programs.¹

When a new director for the School of Music had to be found, Kerr contacted Gilbert Chase, who was then employed by the State Department as Director of Cultural Affairs in Buenos Aires. Chase, author of America's Music, was offered the position and accepted the directorship. Also during Kerr's tenure as Dean, musicologist Alexander Ringer became a faculty member at the University. Ringer was one of the first to write extensively about Kerr's life and music. Ringer, who later became the head of the musicology department at the University of Illinois, and has contributed articles to many scholarly journals. Like Kerr, Ringer has a reputation for being uncompromising and has insisted that "one who refuses to experience the present thoroughly and passionately will never succeed in making the past

¹Kerr, personal interview, December 15, 1977.

meaningful."¹

During the early years at the University of Oklahoma, Kerr maintained his association with UNESCO's International Music Council, the National Music Council, and ACA. However, as the demands of his position at the University became greater and the traveling from Oklahoma to New York became too exhausting, Kerr resigned these positions.² In a reflection of those early years of transition in Oklahoma, Kerr saw both the positive and the negative:

The move to Oklahoma did lead to certain frustration because of the fact that I came here primarily because I felt that I would be able to compose again. During the four years with the government, I had virtually no time to compose except when I was traveling and had perhaps a day or two on a train or a boat. I wasn't able to compose anything significant. Most of the time I was occupied from early in the morning until late at night. It was no easy job. Many wished to see me and I couldn't refuse these people. Especially the Germans, Austrians, Japanese and Koreans made great demands on me socially. I had virtually no time at all to compose. This was the deciding factor that caused me to consider coming here.

Actually when I first came to the University, there was much to attend to. That didn't bother me. I knew that this would be the case when I accepted the position. But, I had this verbal agreement with Cross that I was to have one morning during the week and Saturday and Sunday free. I think that some of the other deans resented that and they made it a point to have emergency meetings during those times. They would call me persistently on the weekend when there was a problem. Cross didn't bother me personally and neither did the Vice President. It was usually somebody down the line. They didn't give me any peace. So I actually had very little time to compose, although I succeeded in writing a

¹Ringer, "Harrison Kerr," ACA Bulletin, 10.

²Kerr, personal interview, January 29, 1978.

considerable amount of music during the first several years.¹

However, in spite of those problems and his rigorous schedule, Kerr was able to compose a significant number of works including Symphony No. 3 (1953-1954), Concerto for Violin and Orchestra (1950-1951, revised 1956), Sonata for Violin and Piano (1956), Sonata for Solo Violin unaccompanied (1954), and three works for voice and piano, She Tells Her Love (1950), A Terrible Night (1951), and Darkness (1952). Kerr also completed the Overture, Arioso, and Finale for Violoncello and Piano (1944-1951).

Another problem occurred when Kerr moved to Oklahoma. The number of performances of his works began to decrease gradually. He has explained this phenomenon:

For the first four or five years, performances were frequent and I often obtained leave to go to those held in New York. But it became more and more difficult. Finally, I couldn't attend the meetings of various national organizations that were not directly connected with education or my compositions. I had to forego many and gradually I lost contact with a good many people I knew. If you are out of sight, you are out of mind. If performers were contemplating a program, they would usually think of programming something of yours if you were available. But, if you are halfway across the continent, the idea would not necessarily occur to them. Performances of contemporary music were not frequent in this area. New works were often first presented on the east or west coasts. Gradually performances of my works decreased in number. From time to time I heard of performances that I hadn't known about. People don't realize that the composer would appreciate knowing when a work of his was played. At least he would be pleased to to receive a program.

¹Kerr, personal interview, January 29, 1978.

The move to Oklahoma didn't have any real effect on me as a composer. The problem was that I never had more than a fraction of the time I had hoped for. Jeanne hadn't wished to come to Norman but, nevertheless, she came willingly because she believed that I would be able to compose more here.¹

The Tower of Kel

In 1956 the Board of Regents at the University of Oklahoma approved a sabbatical leave for Kerr to research the legendary background of his opera and complete the work.² The libretto of the proposed opera, was based on a story, "The Tower," written by James Reynolds, which appeared in the January 1952, edition of the Atlantic Monthly. Kerr wrote the libretto in less than three weeks. Before his sabbatical, Kerr had completed part of the opera. Sets and costumes had been designed by John O'Neil, who at that time was the Director of the School of Art at the University. The twelfth-century Irish legend "of lovers and a tower that held their tragic fate"³ led Kerr to travel to Ireland. On an earlier visit to New York, Kerr had met James Reynolds, who invited him to visit the standing tower near Reynolds'

¹Kerr, personal interview, February 6, 1978.

²"Harrison Kerr's Leave Approved by OU Regents," Norman Transcript, December 8, 1955.

³Aline Jean Treanor, "Eire's Charms Felt by Kerrs," Daily Oklahoman, August 25, 1957.

birthplace. When the Kerrs landed in Ireland, Reynolds was not there but in Istanbul buying race horses.

He had left a note at the hotel in Cork where he knew we had reserved a room. He thought he had told me how to find the tower and expressed regret that he would miss us. His memory was faulty and had only a faint notion as to the tower's location.¹

The residents of Cork could not direct the Kerrs to the tower. During an extensive search for information, Jeanne engaged in a conversation with a priest while they were visiting Blarney. He knew immediately which tower she meant and gave her explicit instructions of how to get there. Nevertheless, the tower eluded them because it was nearly a half-mile from the road and was concealed by trees. The tower is located in the valley of the River Lee. A photograph taken by Kerr shows that the actual tower remarkably resembles the setting designed by John O'Neil. Although the stairway to the upper levels of the tower had been blocked by barbed wire, sheep wandered about on the first floor. When the Kerrs returned on the following morning, Mrs. Kerr discovered a way to pass the wire barrier that closed the stairway. The Kerrs were then able to climb to the top of the tower.² A photograph of the tower is found in Appendix A, Plate XII.

At the inn in Inchigeelagh, Kerr questioned the waitress and discovered that she was somewhat superstitious and even refused to discuss the legend of tower. Kerr

¹Kerr, personal interview, March 10, 1978.

²Ibid.

recalled this episode:

The natives still believed in supernatural manifestations. They spoke of fairy rings, the leprechauns, the little people, and ghosts. These were tied up in some vague way with the legends concerning the tower. The superstitions were so strong that they were reluctant to talk of the tower. They did speak of the Druids as though they had been there only yesterday. No matter how far back these things were supposed to have existed, they seemed to make no differentiation in time; a thousand years were yesterday. It was quite clear that the legends associated with the tower were accepted as actual history by the local residents. The superstitions were reinforced by a natural phenomenon. The tower was completely covered with a very glossy enlarged leaf ivy and at sunset, it reflected the light as glass windows sometimes do. Thus, to them, the tower was on fire. They believed that they saw the two lovers appear at the window near the top of the tower. Another "miracle" occurred each evening at sunset when hundreds of rocks flew into the ivy on the tower and immediately disappeared into it. It had every appearance that they dematerialized.¹

After they had completed their visit to the tower, the Kerrs drove through most of South Ireland. Then, a trip was begun to England, France, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria, and finally to Vienna. There Kerr resumed the composition of the opera, originally titled, the Tower of Longing. While in Vienna, Kerr also presented a lecture for the Austro-American Society entitled "American Indian Painting of the Twentieth Century."²

I illustrated the talk with slides, including many works from our OU College of Fine Arts collection. Europeans know a great deal about our Indians but they were amazed by the sophistication of the Indian artists.

¹Kerr, personal interview, March 10, 1978.

²Kerr, personal interview, July 26, 1976.

They seemed particularly interested in those who received art training at OU, and asked dozens of questions about their techniques.¹

Kerr also visited a number of European conservatories and universities, where he was able to observe teaching methods. He found that American students were much better prepared than their European counterparts.² During their stay in Vienna, a political uprising occurred in Hungary. Kerr was disappointed with the assistance given by the American Government:

We witnessed the care given to the Hungarian refugees as they arrived in Austria by the thousands. For several days, long convoys of trucks from surrounding countries brought supplies to the Hungarians in Vienna. The Austrians, who didn't have much to start with, shared everything they had.

The United States agencies eventually came through with substantial help, but much of it was characterized by rather unfortunate touches, such as giving the refugees small flight bags which were marked in large letters: "U.S. Escapee Program." Everyone else was quietly working to help these unfortunate people, but we almost gave the impression we were helping just for the publicity.³

While Kerr was composing his opera, Mrs. Kerr researched the history of the steel industry and the life of Alexander Holley. She was amazed and pleased with the library of the Technisch Hochschule in Vienna where she found much information about Holley, as well as the Bessemer steel

¹"Indian, 'Big Red' Lore Essential to Tourists," Norman Transcript, August 22, 1957.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

process. Before returning to the United States, the Kerrs traveled through Italy, Greece, France, Spain, Belgium, Holland, and finally to Rotterdam, their point of departure. Kerr returned to the position of Dean at the University of Oklahoma in 1957 with the opera complete except for the fourth act and the last portion of the third act.¹

Return to Oklahoma

In 1958, the year after his return from Europe, Kerr became involved in a controversy surrounding the passage of a bill "which would prohibit broadcasters from owning stock in BMI and from owning recording and publishing firms." The bill, an amendment to the Communications Act of 1934, provided that

a license for a radio or television broadcasting station shall not be granted to, or held by any person or corporation engaged directly or indirectly in the business of publishing music,² or of manufacturing or selling musical recordings.

In Washington, D.C., Kerr testified at the Senate hearing in favor of BMI, who in his opinion helped composers of serious music to have their works published and performed. He also explained the past relations between ACA and ASCAP. Several composers sent telegrams refuting this testimony, but Sidney Kaye defended Kerr's statements as being truthful. A report of his testimony and the following controversy was

¹Kerr, personal interview, January 23, 1978.

²"Discrimination Against ASCAP a Myth, Hill Committee Told," Broadcasting, April 21, 1958, 43.

presented in the April 21, 1958 issue of Broadcasting:

Dr. Harrison Kerr, dean of the College of Fine Arts at Oklahoma U., told how BMI made it possible for serious music composers to get their works published and recorded, something that was not possible under ASCAP. He explained the American Composers Alliance tried for years to negotiate an agreement with ASCAP but "finally realized that ASCAP had been merely indulging in a delaying action and that there was not . . . any real possibility of reaching an agreement."

He said ASCAP subsequently began a "campaign of destruction" against ACA and the serious music organization would not have been able to survive except for BMI, which made grants assisting ACA composers. Passage of the Smathers Bill, he said, would "react very unfavorably" to the American serious composer. "It appears to me that this bill seems to have no purpose except to open the way for an attack on BMI by various interests associated with ASCAP."

Last Thursday, four members of ASCAP (and former members of ACA) sent a telegram to Sen. Pastore disputing the testimony of Dr. Kerr. Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson, Norman Dello Joio and Douglas Moore entered a "vigorous protest" to statements ASCAP offered payments to certain serious music composers, as an inducement to resign from ACA and join ASCAP. Actually, they said, ASCAP offered to accept members of ACA without the necessity of their resignation from that group on a payment basis "consistent with the consent decree" entered into between Justice Dept. and ASCAP. "The true facts are that in return for bringing ACA into the BMI fold, Harrison Kerr was then rewarded with a salaried position subsidized by BMI," they charged.

Mr. [Sidney] Kaye countered in defense of Dr. Kerr. In rebuttal, Mr. Kaye pointed out Dr. Kerr's testimony referred to the early 1940's while the consent decree was not signed until 1950. The personal attack on the Oklahoma educator was "flatly untrue," Mr. Kaye said.¹

Another account of Kerr's testimony was published in the New York Times:

¹"Discrimination Against ASCAP," 43-44.

Dr. Kerr, former secretary of the American Composers Alliance, a BMI affiliate, expressed the belief that the position of all serious composers had improved materially since broadcasters formed the licensing agency in 1940.

He said the Smathers bill would restore the monopoly which, he said, the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers, a rival music licensing agency, enjoyed before 1940.

A further reason for opposing the measure, he added was the threat it poses to the cultural activities of many colleges and universities. Citing the provision in the bill that would bar broadcasters from engaging in the music publishing or recording businesses, he noted that the University of Oklahoma owned a radio station and had recorded serious music.¹

Later in November 1958, excerpts from Kerr's opera were performed at the eleventh annual Institute of Contemporary American Music that featured works by seventeen composers from the Southwest. The festival was held at the Hartt College of Music at the University of Hartford, Connecticut. The three excerpts from the first act performed by the Hartford Symphony Orchestra were the orchestral prelude, "The Entrance of MacCroom" and the "Friar's Sermon." The name of the opera had been changed by this time from The Tower of Longing to The Tower of Kel.

Kerr explained that the earlier title had been carried over from the original Irish tale upon which the opera is based. However, he discovered that the new title was somewhat more favorably received by critics Kel was a Danish chieftain, credited by legend with the construction of the tower in the story.²

¹Werner Wiskari, "Gene Autry Backs Broadcast Music," New York Times, April 16, 1958.

²"Kerr's Opera to be Performed," Oklahoma Daily, October 24, 1958.

Huntington Hartford Foundation

In 1960 Kerr and his wife accepted fellowships from the Huntington Hartford Foundation to live and work at the Huntington Hartford estate in the vicinity of Pacific Palisades. While Kerr completed the opera, Mrs. Kerr intended to finish her book. At the foundation, each of them had a cottage located in the heavily wooded, rolling game preserve. Breakfast and dinner were served in a dining hall, but lunch was "quietly hung on the doorknob so that the resident would not be disturbed."¹ Kerr completed the entire vocal score and Mrs. Kerr finished the major portion of her book.

During the years 1956 through 1961, the bulk of Kerr's composition was devoted to the opera. Kerr extracted portions of the opera that could be performed separately: "Three Excerpts from the Tower of Kel, Act I" for voice and orchestra (1958), "The Friar's Sermon" from the first act (1958), and "The Irish Dancer" from the second act (1959).

Composer-in-Residence

When Kerr returned to Norman in 1961, he was 65, the mandatory retirement age for administrators. Although he retired from the deanship to become Composer-in-Residence and Professor of Music, he served as acting dean until Donald Clark was appointed as his replacement. From 1961

¹Kerr, personal interview, January 30, 1978.

through 1968, Kerr taught Advanced Composition in addition to a general survey of music history. The purpose of the music history course was "to get students to understand what to listen for." For the course Kerr published an outline entitled The Understanding of Music. Kerr also designed and taught a two-semester course, Introduction to the Arts. The course encompassed a history of the arts from prehistoric times through the twentieth century. Taught in the Engineering Auditorium, each of the two sections of three hundred students met three hours per week. Kerr compiled a series of 4,000 slides and wrote an outline bearing the course title.

I developed these new courses during the first several months after we got back from California. They had been discussed for several years but no one could be found to teach them. I have to give credit for the idea to John O'Neil. It was a course that would take in all of the arts--a survey that would attempt to acquaint the general student with the relationship between the arts.

I did a great deal of research to confirm the belief that I had. I found that in each instance, as far as recorded history can be trusted, architecture was always the indicator when changes occurred. The next was the visual arts. Then came music and finally, literature, which was always the laggard in the public acceptance of contemporary styles. The changes were accepted in varying degrees. Although architecture was the keystone, the indicator, changes in architecture were less widely accepted than, for instance, in painting or in sculpture. Changes in music were the least accepted. Literature was overwhelmingly conventional at all times. There never was a contemporary trend in literature that influenced a large enough proportion of writers to be called a "movement." As you go through literature, you find that the innovators were not influential on other writers and basically literature stays on the conservative side--not the subject matter but the style in

which it is presented. Change in literature was slow when compared to the sudden outbursts in contemporary painting. Changes in the style of painting were the first to be accepted by a considerable number of people and always have been more widely tolerated than changes in music.

I also discovered that changes in the general condition of a civilization are foretold in the arts. The fall of Egypt as an independent nation is foretold by the deterioration of the arts. A decline in Egyptian art took place two or three centuries before the collapse of the empire. The same thing happened with both the Greeks and the Romans in a shorter period of time. It happened again before the so-called "Dark Ages" and between the Renaissance and Baroque although the intervals shortened each time. There was always a great political change that followed the deterioration of the arts. I think that it is phenomenal and needs to be investigated thoroughly. Artists have an instinctive feeling for the change before it actually happens. What causes that prediction of change is unknown. I think that now the condition of the arts shows that we are on the verge of a great social collapse.¹

In 1968 Harrison Kerr retired from the University of Oklahoma at the mandatory retirement age of 70. The Board of Regents conferred upon Kerr the title of Professor Emeritus of Music. A plaque was presented to Kerr that read:

The University of Oklahoma confers the title of Professor Emeritus of Music on Harrison Kerr in grateful recognition of his great contribution to the University and its School of Music since 1949. Widely known for his own creativity as a composer, he dedicated himself to providing his students with knowledge of all the art forms. As Dean of The University's College of Fine Arts and as composer in residence, he has been a source of inspiration to his students and has given added stature to the University. Issued this thirteenth day of June, 1968, by the President of The University of Oklahoma Board of Regents and the President of The University of Oklahoma. Quintin Little, President, Board of Regents; G. L. Cross, President, The University of Oklahoma.²

¹Kerr, personal interview, February 7, 1978.

²Ibid.

During his years as Composer-in-Residence, 1961-1968, Kerr composed Variations on a Ground Bass for organ or orchestra (1966), Sinfonietta da Camera (1967-1968), and Sinfonietta for small orchestra (1968).

The Musical Experience

When Jeanne Kerr discussed the publication of her book about the steel industry with an editor at Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, he also expressed interest in a book concerning the understanding of music. The editor contacted Kerr about writing the book. Kerr accepted the offer and signed the contract with Holt, Rinehart, and Winston. In 1964 Kerr began to write "The Musical Experience." The manuscript was completed two years later. In 1968 the text was scheduled to be published and the preliminary mechanics were underway but, after ten years and seven changes of editors in four of those years, the book is still unpublished. Rights to the book are still governed by Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.¹

Kerr intended for the work to be used as a text for a music appreciation course and designed it in a two-section format. The first major section includes a prologue and seven chapters. The first three chapters of the book are designed to acquaint the student with the world of music. A fourth chapter deals with melody, rhythm, and harmony as

¹Kerr, personal interview, January 5, 1978.

practiced in the classical and romantic periods, followed by Chapter 5, a discussion of how the elements combine to achieve complete musical expression. Chapter 6 deals with the fundamentals of musical form, and Chapter 7 discusses timbre. An "interlude" prepares for the second major section of the book, a chronological history of music, Chapters 8 through 38. This second portion explores

stylistic changes, social purposes, and the means of expression employed in each of the major periods. When, why, and how these changes occurred is demonstrated by carefully chosen examples. These are discussed with care and analyzed in terms that can be understood by students who have had no special musical training. This portion of the book constitutes a continuous narrative of the development of musical expression from early Christian times to the present. Changes in social purposes and public attitudes toward the arts at crucial points are explained. Structural characteristics of each period are presented through an examination of outstanding works that best represent the time and place under discussion.

In addition to a general view of a period and its style, a specific mode of expression, as exemplified in the masterpieces of the foremost composers, is discussed. Personal idioms and their relationships to the style of a period are clarified, and the emotional and spiritual content of these works are interpreted in so far as this is possible.¹

The World Tour

Following his retirement from the University, Kerr and his wife began an extended world tour. From September 1968 through February 1971, the Kerr's traveled extensively in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao, Cambodia, Thailand, India, Nepal, Ceylon, Belgium, the Netherlands,

¹Harrison Kerr, "The Musical Experience," unpublished manuscript, Norman, Oklahoma, 1968.

Germany, Austria, Yugoslavia, Greece, Turkey, Italy, Switzerland, France, Spain, Portugal, England, Russia, and Scotland.¹ The Kerrs traveled on freighters with luxury accommodations and on land by rail or rented car. The extended journey was a fulfillment of a lifetime desire to travel, first stimulated by Kerrs trip to France in 1921. The Kerrs attended concerts, dramatic productions, ballets, operas, and visited ancient ruins, museums, art exhibitions, and many of the well-known landmarks of the world.

Prior to their world tour, the Kerrs had contemplated where they would actually settle after their trip. They considered a number of places including New York, but came to the conclusion that the best decision was to stay in Norman. They were reluctant to leave their house and all of its furnishings, including the many cabinets and working areas in their respective studies, which were designed to fulfill their own special needs. They returned to their home of twenty-two years in 1971.²

The Years of Active Retirement: 1971-1978

Active Retirement

Kerr, in complete retirement, finally was able to devote the major portion of his working hours to composition. While keeping abreast of musical life in America, Kerr has

¹Kerr, personal interview, July 26, 1976.

²Ibid.

been able to compose regularly and consistently. His interest in American music and the American composer has grown no less intense. In the 1970's Kerr became involved in a project, similar in purpose to some of his endeavors of the 1930's and 1940's. The Composer in America is an organization designed to make unpublished American music available for performance and study.

The Composer in America

Lionel Nowak, composer at Bennington College in Vermont, came to Norman in the summer of 1973 to participate in a Contemporary Music Project workshop held at the University of Oklahoma. In a four-hour visit, Nowak informed Kerr that a group of prominent American composers, including Elliot Carter, Walter Piston, Normand Lockwood, and Gardner Read, were interested in the formation of an organization that would be dedicated to discovering and dispersing significant American music. The concensus was that the new organization should not be affiliated with older groups and should be administered by knowledgeable individuals who were not composers or subscribers to "musical factions." Carter had suggested that Kerr be consulted because of his experience with ACA and the American Music Center. At first Kerr opposed the idea because of the many problems that had arisen in many of the organizations of the past. Later Kerr came to realize that if indeed such an organization could adhere to the principles upon which

it was conceived, the outcomes would greatly benefit the American composer. The non-profit organization became known as the Composer in America--"a committee for the discovery and rediscovery of significant American music."¹ The Committee that carried out the purposes of the organization included George A. Exline of Ohio as chairman, Helen P. Richardson of New York as secretary, John O'Neil of Texas as treasurer, and Donald Loren Murphy of Maryland as editorial coordinator. A statement of purposes as outlined by the committee is found in Figure 1.

The organization was based on many of the ideas that Kerr had shared with other composers since the late 1920's. Kerr was consulted because of his knowledge of the technical and mechanical aspects of engraving, typesetting, printing, and distribution. Kerr agreed to serve as an advisor in June 1976, but insisted that he would act in no editorial capacity and refused to have his name appear on the stationary as a member of the Committee. One of the primary functions of the organization has been to publish American music through the non-profit Conatus Music Press. An additional project of the Composer in America has been the Conatus Educational Recording Project. This endeavor will ultimately issue representative recordings of American music accompanied by analysis, and whenever possible, the composer's

¹"Statement of Purposes," The Composer in America, New York, n.d. See Figure 1.

THE COMPOSER IN AMERICA

210 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10010

STATEMENT OF PURPOSES

Many years of cumulative experience have led to the formation of this committee. Without narrowing its purposes the following three subjects have been chosen for its first attention:

1. The discovery of exceptional works by American composers past and present.

Numerous American compositions have had passing attention and their composers have frequently achieved significant professional standing. Of the many, very few have been granted wide and enduring public acclaim. That this has been true throughout the history of music underscores the possibility that works of great merit and composers of important talent are being overlooked. We need only recall the inexcusable rejection, for most of his lifetime, of the compositions of Charles Ives.

2. To make significant works known to the American public. The musical past should have taught us that only continuing familiarity can firmly establish a work of art in the public consciousness.

At various times and especially now, there have been large scale efforts to capture public attention for certain compositions. Too often these have been chosen without sufficient regard to actual merit, rendering the effort abortive.

The American trait of ephemeral enthusiasms contributes to the failure of these efforts. Typical is the fate of most commissioned works and virtually all prize-winning compositions. Usually such works have been performed, once or even several times only to be neglected thereafter.

3. To assist the serious composer to find an outlet for his work through performances, publication and recordings.

Many are not in a favorable position to promote their own compositions and especially are unable to maintain public (and especially professional) interest in them.

There are numerous ways in which the composer may be assisted, most of which have never been tried or have been attempted and then abandoned when immediate results were not evident.

There are many reasons for the lack of genuine acceptance of native compositions. Within the scope of a brief statement these cannot even be listed, let alone explained. From time to time and in order these obstacles will be examined and if not removable will at least be attacked.

This committee and its various advisors claim no omnipotence. Most of the problems set forth above have been recognized and occasionally attempts have been made to solve them. These efforts have lacked impetus, and it is the hope of this committee to encourage practical solutions whenever possible. Your suggestions and co-operation will be welcomed.



A COMMITTEE FOR THE DISCOVERY AND REDISCOVERY OF
SIGNIFICANT AMERICAN MUSIC: Chairman, GEORGE A. EXLINE;
Secretary, HELEN P. RICHARDSON; Treasurer, JOHN O'NEIL;
Editorial Co-ordinator, DONALD LOREN MURPHY

Figure 1. Statement of Purposes, The Composer in America.

commentary. When George Exline died in July 1977, Anita Haynes Exline accepted her husband's former position as chairman of the Committee.

Kerr's Eightieth Birthday

In 1977, Harrison Kerr celebrated his eightieth birthday with a number of commemorative events. The Composer in America issued to libraries throughout the United States approximately thirty-five exhibits entitled "Harrison Kerr: Creativity at Eighty." Materials in the exhibition included works by Kerr, a photograph of Kerr, a chronology of Kerr's life and work, and a catalogue of his compositions. A more extensive exhibit of the same title was placed on display at the University of Oklahoma to commemorate his eightieth birthday. In addition to all of the previously mentioned articles, this exhibit contained photographs of Kerr, personal correspondence, and personal mementos. The University of Oklahoma's School of Music honored Kerr at a concert entitled "The Music of Harrison Kerr on His Eightieth Birthday." Representative works from Kerr's career were performed by faculty and students from the University. Following the concert, Kerr was honored at a reception hosted by the present Dean of the College of Fine Arts, Nathaniel Eek, and the Director of the School of Music, Jerry Neil Smith.

David L. Boren, Governor of the State of Oklahoma, declared October 13, 1977 as "Harrison Kerr Day." The

Governor's proclamation read as follows:

WHEREAS, Mr. Harrison Kerr, former Dean of the College of Fine Arts at the University of Oklahoma, noted American composer, and respected musician, will celebrate his eightieth birthday on October 13, 1977; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Harrison Kerr still composes every day and is dedicated to fostering the understanding of American music to the point of working with a number of organizations and individuals who are also interested in the same goal; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kerr has lived in Oklahoma since 1949 and his influence has certainly been felt in this State because of his great faith in Oklahoma, Oklahoma artists and musicians, and in American music; and

WHEREAS, among Mr. Harrison Kerr's many accomplishments is that he held the most prominent arts post in the United States Government after World War II;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DAVID L. BOREN, GOVERNOR of the State of Oklahoma, wishing to join his friends and associates around the world commemorating his eightieth birthday, do hereby proclaim October 13, 1977, as "Harrison Kerr Day" in the State of Oklahoma.

On the same day a book of some sixty congratulatory letters was presented to Kerr. The greetings were sent by Kerr's friends and associates from throughout the United States, Europe, and Japan. Three weeks later on November 3, 1977, Kerr's eightieth birthday was commemorated by Ainslee Cox and the Oklahoma Symphony Orchestra when they performed Kerr's Sinfonietta for small orchestra (1968).

The years of retirement, 1971-1978 have been particularly productive in terms of Kerr's compositional activity. He composed In Cabin'd Ships at Sea for mixed chorus, organ, and piano (1971), Third String Quartet (1973), Quasi Quodlibet for eight trombones (1974), Prelude VI, Prelude VII,

and Prelude VIII (1973) for piano, Three Duos for Two Flutes (1976), We Are the Makers of Music for chorus, piano, or organ (1976), and Carillon for bells, celesta, bassoon, sackbut, and piano (1977). Kerr also began to compose Symphony No. 4 in 1977. During these years of retirement Kerr and his wife worked together on many projects. In addition to assisting her husband, Jeanne Kerr has been in the final stages of completing the editorial revisions for her own book, "Alexander Holley and the Steel Makers," to be published by Johns Hopkins University Press in Baltimore, Maryland. Her lifetime interest and more than twenty years of research and writing promise to make this work the authoritative history of the steel industry in the nineteenth century.

The Problems of a Composer

Even in retirement, Harrison Kerr has continued to exert an active interest in the problems of the American composer. In a lecture at the University of Oklahoma on March 30, 1977, Kerr explained that a successful composer must not be an imitator:

As I grew older and more experienced and had taught a considerable number of composition students, I gradually learned that you cannot teach any one how to compose. You can teach him to imitate. He can learn all of the technical skills of previous composers and use them with reasonable success. You can guide him, you can criticize him, you can discipline him, but he still will not be a composer unless he is destined to be one. In short, he cannot escape his destiny. As soon as the gifted and genuine composer contemplates

his apprenticeship, he will no longer be content with imitation and will go his own way. It is at this point that his troubles begin and opposition replaces encouragement. Of course he may be too timid or too lacking in invention to create his own idiom. He will encounter condescending interest but no genuine enthusiasm If he commits any guacheries in his music he will be struck down and ostracized. Instances are Hector Berlioz, Claude Debussy, and Edgard Varese. In self defense may I report that I learned as I came to know them that this was the attitude of both Bartok and Varèse. Even Arnold Schoenberg, widely noted as a teacher, came in his final years to the same conclusion.¹

At the close of the lecture, Kerr emphasized that solutions to the problems composers encounter "would require cooperation, judgment, and freedom from favoritism that I have not found to be conspicuous in our society." To solve these problems

a genuine set of values would have to be developed. The composer would have to be acceptable as "a composer." He would need to be free to practice his art, which today he is not. A complete change of outlook and a new attitude toward music would be required This is not visible on the horizon.² We have not come closer than we were fifty years ago.²

At eighty Kerr reflects upon the lack of acceptance and the infrequency of performances that he and other contemporary composers have encountered:

I don't think I have become really discouraged. There have been unsatisfying periods, but I always composed just to compose.³

¹Harrison Kerr, "The Composer in America," unpublished lecture, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, March 30, 1977.

²Ibid.

³Kerr, personal interview, March 10, 1978.

CHAPTER II

THE MUSIC OF HARRISON KERR

Introduction

Harrison Kerr has composed nearly one hundred works of which only forty-eight survive and thirty-six are published. Four major stylistic periods emerge in Kerr's music corresponding generally to his place of residence or situation of employment. The earliest period extends through 1928 and includes his student works as well as those of his early maturity. Almost all of the works from that period were discarded by the composer, leaving only two collections of songs. In style and construction, the music of his earliest period contrasts most radically with the more mature compositions of the following five decades.

The second period beginning in 1929 when Kerr moved to New York concludes in 1949 when he moved to Oklahoma. Although he was involved in many diverse activities in New York during those twenty-one years, the works from this period are unified in style. An indication of impending maturity is seen in the late 1930's when more compositions began to appear each year. Although several works composed

at that time were discarded, this period produced many of his most successful compositions. During the middle 1940's, a decrease in compositional activity was a result of his attention to other duties.

The stylistic period from 1949 through 1971, the Oklahoma period, is characterized by an increase in the number of compositions and revisions of earlier works. Almost all of the music from this period has been published and recorded. Although Kerr composed continually throughout the period, his administrative activities so consumed his time that, during several of the years, no works appeared.

The fourth period of Kerr's compositional activity is the time of retirement beginning in 1971. In the latest period, compositions have appeared frequently and consistently in a mature yet personal style. Several of the compositions from this later period are among Kerr's most frequently performed works.

The works composed during the years 1921-1978 are characterized by a gradual stylistic evolution. Therefore, delineation of the the three later periods is not dependent upon abrupt stylistic changes in his music but rather upon Kerr's career situation. In Kerr's own words, "I can't say that any particular period brought about any great change stylistically or in my general attitude towards composition."¹

¹Kerr, personal interview, February 6, 1978.

By examining works from each of the three later periods, a stylistic evolution can be traced through Kerr's career. Kerr is perhaps known best today as a composer of chamber music. Therefore, to illustrate the stylistic evolution in Kerr's compositions, a chamber work from each period has been selected: Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano (1936), Sonata for Violin and Piano (1956), and Three Duos for Two Flutes (1976). Each of the works is recorded, frequently performed, and currently available in a published version. Moreover, each of the works is particularly illustrative of the elements of style that mark Kerr's music as unique. A general discussion of the elements of music and their presence in the three selected compositions will be followed by details of significant features observed in each work. Throughout this discussion, the following terms are used:

1. Element: a basic part of the whole: pitch; rhythm; timbre; intensity; form
2. Pitch: a single tone that has a specific rate of vibration
3. Rhythm: motion or movement in music in terms of beat and pattern; sound and silence
4. Intensity: degree of loudness; dynamics
5. Timbre: the acoustical property that gives distinction to a sound; quality; color
6. Form: structure in music; organization and interaction with the elements--pitch, rhythm, timbre, intensity
7. Melody: a distinctive horizontal ordering of the elements; a specific organization of pitch and rhythm

8. Harmony: a vertical combination of pitches or sounds
9. Theme: a specific ordering of the elements that is distinctive, predominant, or memorable
10. Motive: a distinctive ordering of elements, smaller in scale than a theme
11. Figure: a distinctive ordering of elements, smaller in scale than a motive
12. Counterpoint: melodies sounding against one another
13. Subject: in contrapuntal music, the theme that appears first and is restated
14. Countersubject: in contrapuntal music, a theme that is subordinate to the subject
15. Development: the manipulation or variation of one or more of the musical elements
16. Developmental form: a structure permeated by continuous development
17. Literal repetition: the exact restatement of a preceding musical event
18. Varied repetition: a recognizable variation of a preceding musical event
19. Transformation: a returning musical event that has been subjected to elemental variation but remains recognizable as a derivative of the original
20. Tonality: a system of pitch organization in which at least one tonal center can be perceived
21. Atonality: a system of pitch organization that avoids reference to any tonal center
22. Bitonality: a system of pitch organization employing two specific tonalities simultaneously
23. Polytonality: a system of pitch organization in which more than two specific tonalities can be perceived simultaneously
24. Tonal center: a predominant, focal pitch in a musical composition

Pitch and Tonality

In a 1977 interview, Kerr revealed his thoughts on how tonality evolved from a single pitch into a twentieth century idiom:

A musical tone arises from a source that vibrates at a certain speed as long as the tone lasts. These regular vibrations as interpreted by a listener produce a musical sound of definite pitch. A vibrating string divides itself into segments giving rise to a series of so-called overtones, or upper partials. These overtones are not in most cases distinctly audible to the listener but they are, nevertheless, an important part of the tone we consciously hear.

A string producing the tone C, two octaves below middle-C, when set in motion forms nodes or segments, each of which produces an overtone, also known as a harmonic. Thus, along with our fundamental C, we unconsciously hear a sequence of overtones or upper partials. The fundamental tone is designated number one by the acousticians. The first overtone, number two, is one octave higher. Then as we follow them upward, we have number three--G, number four--C, then E, G, B-flat, C, D, E, F, G, A, B-flat, B-natural, and number 16, C once more. Numbers 7, 11, 13, 14, are not on pitch in our system of tuning.

Thus we go from an octave skip through diminishing intervals until numbers 13, 14, 15, and 16 give us a chromatic scale. Note that the smallest intervals are half tones. This led certain experimenters to seek microtones, that, pitches less than a half tone apart. Quarter tones and other microtones produced unusual effects but also nearly insoluble difficulties.

The reason for this elementary explanation comes from a striking historical fact. Intervals acceptable to musicians and listeners during various periods follow with exactitude the sequence of overtones. We can assume that octaves were the first intervals between voices. When only one melodic line was used, the octave resulted from the natural differences in range between masculine and feminine voices. The acceptance of the interval of a fifth automatically brought the fourth into use. Both the fifths and fourths were present in what we call organum, which dates back in all probability to the ninth century A.D. Then came the

acceptance of the major third and the minor third in the fifteenth century style known as fauxbourdon. The major second and later the half tone as found in the chromatic scale finally came into use.

Until the present century, composers were content to build their harmonies and their contrapuntal relationships on the safe and respectable third, although fourths and fifths were also involved in the formation of chords. All the way from the major or minor triads through seventh chords, ninth chords, and eleventh chords, composers worked their way toward the time for new musical styles.

Of course, Richard Wagner had broken the barrier especially in Tristan. Then, after Wagner had threatened the reign of tonalities, they were gradually dethroned by Debussy and the Impressionists who utilized the whole tone scale with its limited possibilities. Schoenberg and his twelve-tone technique, which we called quite incorrectly and to Schoenberg's distaste, "atonality," was next to establish its place.

This led to a wide acceptance and various uses of the chromatic intervals that we find at the very top of the usable overtone series. This progression upward made the twentieth-century compositions possible. We are not yet wholly acclimated to this change and all of the possibilities and usages are still difficult to assimilate.¹

In this study, the term tonality is used broadly to include any system of pitch organization in which at least one tonal center can be perceived. For centuries tones in a musical composition have been related to a focal point called the tonal center or the tonic of a key. In the twentieth century, the tonal system that served composers for over four hundred years began to break down. Although much of the music written in this century continues to be organized around a tonal center, one major departure from

¹Kerr, personal interview, April 26, 1977.

the concept of tonality can be noted in atonality--music that avoids reference to any tonal center. Other techniques of tonal manipulation include bitonality--the simultaneous use of two tonalities--and polytonality--the use of more than two tonalities simultaneously. Kerr has discussed the choice of pitches that ultimately determine tonality in his music:

Notes are not a random decision but rather are the result of an obligation to a pre-conceived musical idea. This accounts for the use of extreme registers in some of my works. Only a certain pitch will fit into the passage. If I try another pitch to avoid an extreme register, it loses its character.¹

Gary Wittlich explains that twentieth-century composers have actively sought a new tonal vocabulary:

During the early twentieth century it became clear to many composers that the triadic tonal system was no longer a viable one for the creation of new musical art works. Merely to decorate the traditional tonal schema with elaborate chromaticism was not in the final analysis a satisfactory solution to the question of how to create something new and aesthetically satisfying in music. What was necessary was a radical revision of musical thought which could result in the establishment of a new musical dialectic²

One of the breaks with tradition was the specific ordering of pitches known as the twelve-tone or dodecaphonic technique invented by Arnold Schoenberg. His system of composing with a row of twelve tones underwent

¹Kerr, personal interview, December 15, 1977.

²Gary E. Wittlich, "Sets and Ordering Procedures in Twentieth Century Music," Aspects of Twentieth Century Music, edited by Gary E. Wittlich (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975), p. 388.

experimentation and revision even by Schoenberg himself and later by his student Alban Berg. The result was a polytonal system of freely chromatic pitch organization--a system characterized by rapidly shifting tonal centers, freely utilizing all of the twelve pitches of the chromatic scale. Gilbert Chase has stated that Kerr's

evolution has been from a rather conventional idiom (in his student days) to a prevailingly untonal (rather than atonal) texture utilizing twelve-tone elements, though not according to the Schoenbergian canon. His use of twelve-tone techniques has been nearer to the practice of Alban Berg than of Schoenberg Much of his music is characterized by chromaticism, frequent use of chords or sonorities based on superimposed fourths and dissonant counterpoint In his later works the harmony is not readily identifiable with any key . . . because without being a strict twelve-tone writer, his compositions since 1935 have all been more or less influenced by the twelve-tone technique

It is slightly amusing, as well as somewhat disconcerting, to learn that in some circles Kerr is regarded as a rather strict twelve-tone composer, while others have denied he is a twelve-tone composer at all. It all depends on whether or not one judges by the canon of the strictest orthodoxy. The fact is that most twelve-tone practitioners are going in the direction of revising and liberalizing our conception of twelve-tone writing. In the light of present practice it is difficult to tell, as Kerr confesses, "where ultra-chromaticism leaves off and twelve-tone technique begins." As a first step toward clarification, one should perhaps seek a new terminology.¹

Regarding pitch systematization, Kerr explains his avoidance of a given system:

I never consciously allow myself to be restricted by a preconceived rule. The test is in what gets down on paper and not what I might think of as a system. Each piece is a separate entity. Although many of them

¹Gilbert Chase, America's Music (New York: McGraw Hill, 1955), pp. 525, 541.

are similar, especially in the years when I wrote much in a short time, the "family resemblance" is not caused by the adoption of a given formula.¹

Kerr has used the term "overtonal" to categorize the harmonic aspect of his music. Harmony in Kerr's music, whether intentionally homophonic or polyphonic, will freely utilize the twelve chromatic pitches of the acoustical overtone series in a polytonal conception. Kerr more radically departs from the traditional in his expanded use of tonality than in his use of any of the other elements of music.

Because of the scope of this discussion, tonal aspects of the three representative works are mentioned in terms of stability or instability. Tonal instability can result from a concentration of vertical pitch dissonances, in which no specific pitch assumes predominance; tonal stability will reflect the absence of highly concentrated sustained dissonance in favor of a triadic or quartal construction centered around a specific pitch. A basic assumption is that the perception of tonal instability and stability is relative to what has preceded and what is to follow. This perception is influenced significantly by melodic direction, texture, and rhythmic propulsion. An example of a tonally stable section preceded by an unstable section is found in the Sonata. In Example 1, the contrast between the two sections is illustrated by measures 68-74,

¹Kerr, personal interview, July 2, 1976.

the end of Section 7, a development, followed by Section 8, measures 75-81, a return of material presented earlier.

9

violin

piano

70

75 Tempo (♩ = 50)

80

Example 1. Sonata for Violin and Piano,
measures 68-81.

Rapidly shifting tonal centers utilizing all pitches of the chromatic scale are characteristic in Section 7. Section 8 has fewer changes of tonal center and moves toward a

consonant A-major chord without added pitches in measure 80. Although Kerr admits that his compositions are difficult to analyze tonally, he believes that his music is primarily polyphonic with an underlying harmonic basis.¹

Rhythm

Kerr has emphasized the elemental importance of rhythm:

Rhythm is the most pervasive, the most encompassing of the elements of music. Since it is also the most direct and stimulating, it is for most listeners the most easily grasped in an instinctive sense. A closer examination soon discloses that this element is far more complex and subtle than is usually realized.²

In the twentieth century, many composers have used innovative systems to specify the order of sound and silence. Various systems used by composers include conventional notation, verbal notation, frame notation, proportional or space notation, and alterations of traditional notation including simplification, expansion, or addition.³

Although notated conventionally, rhythm is particularly significant to Kerr's musical style. Regular and constant pulse is a characteristic of Kerr's music. Although metrical groupings may change frequently, the unit

¹Kerr, personal interview, August 30, 1976.

²Kerr, "The Musical Experience," p. 89.

³Allen Winold, "Rhythm in Twentieth Century Music," Aspects of Twentieth Century Music, edited by Gary Wittlich. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975), pp. 263-267.

of beat is persistent throughout a movement or section. Only rarely will there occur a mixture of meters. An example is found in the Trio, Movement IV, measures 69-70, where the violoncello and clarinet move in a $\frac{3}{4}$ meter while the piano moves in $\frac{4}{4}$.

The image displays a musical score for three instruments: Bb clarinet, cello, and piano. The score is divided into two systems, labeled 69 and 70. In the first system (measures 69-70), the Bb clarinet and cello parts are written in a $\frac{3}{4}$ meter, while the piano part is in a $\frac{4}{4}$ meter. The piano part features a triplet figure superimposed over a two-beat pattern. The second system (measures 71-72) shows the continuation of these parts, with the piano part maintaining its $\frac{4}{4}$ meter and the other two instruments in $\frac{3}{4}$ meter.

Example 2. Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano, Movement IV, measures 68-72.

Although meters may change frequently, the unit beat is almost always synchronized between the parts. An exception, although quite conventional, is found in the second movement of the Trio where a non-synchronous relationship occurs. A triplet figure is superimposed over a two-beat pattern in $\frac{4}{4}$ meter as illustrated in Example 3.

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Bb clarinet, cello, and piano. The score is written on three staves. The Bb clarinet staff is on top, the cello staff is in the middle, and the piano staff is at the bottom. The piano staff is a grand staff with two lines. The music is in 3/4 time and features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. A dynamic marking of *p* (piano) is visible in the cello staff. A measure number of 10 is indicated above the first staff.

Example 3. Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano, Movement II, measures 7-12.

Kerr pays careful attention to details of rhythm. In all of Kerr's music, the tempo indications are followed by metronome markings. Tempo changes, which occur frequently and often contrast radically, are used to delineate the sectionalization of movements. In most cases, instructions for tempo and style are written in conventional Italian terminology.

Also conventional to early twentieth-century music is Kerr's prolific use of motoric devices. Faster sections or movements almost always utilize some repetitive rhythmic pattern that achieves a distinctive rhythmic propulsion. The motoric effect is achieved by a number of rhythmic devices. Various combinations of eighth-note, sixteenth-note, or triplet patterns are often found. Several of the motoric devices are illustrated in Examples 4-10.

9

Tetono I 105

B^b clar. *f*

cello *f* *cresc.*

piano *Tempo I* *marc.* *marc. Sve.* *cresc.*

Example 4. Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano, Movement I, measures 105-107.

B^b clar. 50

cello *arco* *pizz.*

piano *marc.*

55 *pp*

arco

cresc. *cresc.*

Trio 21

Example 5. Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano, Movement IV, measures 50-58.

violin 31

piano

35

Example 6. Sonata for Violin and Piano,
measures 31-35.

violin

piano

sempre accel.

124 = 132

mf poco a poco cresc.

mf poco a poco cresc.

Example 7. Sonata for Violin and Piano,
measures 124-129.

18

violin

piano

The image displays a musical score for violin and piano, covering measures 177 to 186. The score is arranged in five systems. Each system consists of a violin staff (top) and a piano staff (bottom). The piano staff is further divided into two staves (treble and bass clefs). The music is written in a complex, rhythmic style with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. Dynamics such as *f* (forte), *p* (piano), and *ff* (fortissimo) are indicated throughout. Performance markings include *cresc.* (crescendo) and *rit.* (ritardando). Measure numbers 180 and 185 are circled in the score. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 2/4.

Z. 1843 B.

Example 8. Sonata for Violin and Piano,
measures 177-186.

8 •III•

Allegretto $\text{♩} = \text{M}$

Flute in C *ff*

Flute in C *ff* *decresc.*

3 *f cresc.*

5 *ff* *f* *cresc.* *ff - f*

7 *mf cresc.* *ff* *mf cresc.*

Example 9. Three Duos for Two Flutes, Movement III, measures 1-8.

piu mosso (quasi presto)

20 *sempre pp* *sempre stacc.*

22

Example 10. Three Duos for Two Flutes, Movement III, measures 20-25.

Several movements are so dominated by motoric devices that they generate an effect of perpetual motion. In the Trio, for example, the perpetual motion of Movement IV is interrupted only by rests; in the Sonata all of the faster sections have a tendency to push forward to the following tempo change; and in the Duos the perpetual motion of the third movement is interrupted only by the presentation of a slower moving theme.

Kerr's music possesses an innate energetic propulsion from beginning to end. This effect often is generated by the regular recurrence of the beat even through meter changes. Frequently, a slow yet forcefully energetic section is alternated with a faster section that is driven motorically. In Kerr's music, the rhythmic energy of the motoric devices is intensified by pitch direction. A characteristic of Kerr's compositional style is his use of the rest or pause to punctuate the ending of a section. The stark silence at the end of such a section causes the rhythmic vitality to be even more pronounced.

Timbre and Texture

Composers of the twentieth century have viewed the treatment of timbre in three different ways. The first approach has been to compose for the traditional sound sources: instruments, human voice, or any combination of conventional performing forces. A second approach has been

to treat the traditional sound sources in an innovative manner requiring unconventional techniques of performance. A third approach has been to develop new sources of sound such as non-musical or environmental sounds, electronic sounds, and conventionally produced sounds manipulated by electronics.

In his music, Kerr has favored the more conventional instrumental combinations. The larger works have been composed for orchestra or mixed chorus and the chamber works have employed conventional combinations of the trio, string quartet, instrumental or vocal solos with piano accompaniment, and voice with small chamber ensemble. Only during his period of retirement, 1971-1978, has Kerr composed for less conventional instrumental combinations. Examples of this tendency are found in the concert duets, Three Duos for Two Flutes (1976), Quasi Quodlibet for eight trombones (1974), Variations on a Theme from the Tower of Kel for solo guitar (1974), and Carillon for bells, celesta, bassoon, sackbut, and piano (1977). Kerr also prefers to use traditional techniques of sound production. Although he has not used the electronic medium or environmental sound sources, Kerr does not object to these techniques and is very enthusiastic about electronic sound production as used by Varèse and others. In addition, Kerr has not used in his vocal compositions such techniques as speech-singing, shouting, screaming, groaning, clapping, stamping, humming,

whistling or blowing.

In his use of extreme registers, Kerr is creative although he does not depart radically from the traditional. An illustration of the clarinet pitched in its upper extreme is found in Example 11.

41 8^{va} lower (ad libitum)

B^b clar.

cello

piano

Example 11. Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano, Movement I, measures 41-43.

The violin in its upper extreme register is found in the Sonata, Example 12.

140

violin

piano

Example 12. Sonata for Violin and Piano, measures 140-144.

Kerr uses the extremely low register of the flute frequently in the Duos; in the opening measures of Movement I, the alto flute plays at its lowest extreme as illustrated in Example 13.



Example 13. Three Duos for Two Flutes, Movement I, measures 1-5.

Often the use of extremes is even more pronounced because a passage cascades upward or downward from register to register. Although such passages are not unique to Kerr's music, they are particularly characteristic. Several examples of these cascades are shown in Examples 14-16.

C flute

G flute

Three Duos For Two Flutes

Norman, May 18, 1976

Example 14. Three Duos for Two Flutes, Movement III, measures 93-104.

Bb clar.

cello

piano

Example 15. Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano, Movement I, measures 114-116.

violin

piano

E. 1848 B.

Example 16. Sonata for Violin and Piano, measures 207-301.

Also characteristic of Kerr's style is the rapid

alternation of registers illustrated in Examples 17-19.

B \flat clar. .
cello
piano

Example 17. Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano, Movement III, measures 21-22.

violin
piano

Example 18. Sonata for Violin and Piano, measures 136-141.

10

C flute

G flute

Example 19. Three Duos for Two Flutes, Movement III, measures 29-35.

As mentioned earlier, when Kerr conceives a musical thought, the placement of the pitch assumes a higher priority than does the consideration of technical difficulty.

Kerr achieves another timbral effect by combining glissando, change in register, and flutter tonguing. This is found in the Duos as illustrated in Example 20.

C flute

G flute

Example 20. Three Duos for Two Flutes, Movement III, measures 68-71.

A similar occurrence is found in the Sinfonietta for small orchestra (1968). A "glissando lento e tremolo solo" begins in the violins and descends slowly through the violas, violoncellos, and double basses. This effect is illustrated in Example 21.

From Sinfonietta by Harrison Kerr
Measures 209 - 213 Pages 37 and 38

Handwritten musical score for measures 209-213 of Sinfonietta by Harrison Kerr. The score includes staves for Violin I (VI. I), Violin II (VI. II), Viola (Va.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (C.B.).

Violin I (VI. I): Solo, Gliss. e trem., sulla corda mi, Solo, sulla corda sol.

Violin II (VI. II): Solo, Gliss. e trem., sulla corda la., Solo, Gliss. e trem., sulla corda re.

Viola (Va.): (pizz.) Solo, Gliss. e trem., sulla corda do.

Violoncello (Vc.): (pizz.) Solo, Gliss. e trem., sulla corda sol.

Double Bass (C.B.): (arco) Solo, Gliss. e trem., sulla corda mi.

Tempo: ♩ in tempo

Dynamic markings: ff, Solo, Tutti.

Example 21. Sinfonietta for small orchestra, measures 209-213.

The use of glissando, although rare in Kerr's music, is also found in his opera, The Tower of Kel, assigned to the trombones and the tympani.

In regard to texture, Kerr believes that he conceives most of his music as primarily "polyphonic with an underlying harmonic basis."¹ In an examination of the three representative works, the Trio is heard as a more homophonic conception than either the Sonata or Duos. Especially in the second movement of the Trio, this homophonic conception is evident. However, a notable exception is found in the third movement of the Trio, a fugue. The Sonata alternates fast passages that are essentially polyphonic with the slower sections that are homophonic. The Duos are conceived polyphonically although harmonic implications are present. Certain sections, because of the similar timbres of the G and C flutes, give the illusion of being monophonic in that a continuous melody is perceived even though the two instruments share in the presentation. Examples 22-23 illustrate this occurrence.

piu mosso (quasi presto)

C flute

G flute

20

sempre pp 3

sempre stacc.

23

Example 22. Three Duos for Two Flutes, Movement III, measures 20-25.

C flute

G flute

42

48

53

piu mosso ♩ = 84

decrsc.

f

mf

p

mp

pp

f

ff

f

decrsc.

Example 23. Three Duos for Two Flutes, Movement I, measures 42-55.

In his use of timbre, Kerr is conventional yet progressive. He prefers to use the traditional sources of sound, both instrumental and vocal. His most innovative device is the use of extreme registers for effects of timbre. Polyphony, homophony, and monophony are present in Kerr's works with a growing preference in the later works for a more polyphonic style.

Intensity

Intensity is an element often omitted in a discussion of musical style.

This element of music has long been exploited as both a distinguishing and a modifying factor. In the eighteenth century the Mannheim symphonists made an important contribution to the expressiveness of music

with their use of dynamic extremities and their sudden contrasts of forte and piano.¹

Intensity has assumed a renewed importance to twentieth-century composers. Several composers have pursued intensity to the point that other elements serve in a secondary role. In Elliot Carter's Etude No. 7 for woodwind quartet (1955), pitch content is static. Dynamic changes dominate the entire movement.


Although the element of intensity does not lend itself to the variety of design as do the other elements, many composers of the twentieth century have utilized the element innovatively. Generally, twentieth-century composers tend to specify very carefully dynamic changes that occur frequently. In the works of Carter, Pierre Boulez, Luciano Berio, Gunther Schuller, and others, dynamic markings abound. Aurally the dynamic context not only modifies the other elemental events but also becomes a factor in delineating a logic. Frequently, extreme contrasts or the simultaneous use of several dynamic levels are found. The role of intensity is also emphasized in chamber works, especially in ensembles of similar instruments. In larger works, volume can be increased to high levels by the simple addition of instruments. However, in chamber music, the composer has certain limitation in dynamic manipulation and must carefully specify each

¹Gail de Stwolinski, Form and Content in Instrumental Music (Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown, 1977), p. 53.

level of intensity.

In Kerr's chamber music, intensity serves in a conventional sense to modify musical events and distinguish between sections as well as to build and decrease tension. Extreme dynamic markings occur frequently, but simultaneous use of varying intensity levels does not occur. A predominant melodic line often is marked with a crescendo or diminuendo, but such markings serve only to indicate the importance of the line and the secondary role of the accompaniment. Changes of levels of intensity also punctuate many of the sections. Levels of intensity serve secondarily to the other elements and are intended to modify thematic events.

The contrast in instrumental timbre of the Trio and the Sonata helps to distinguish various melodic and thematic occurrences. However, in the Duos the similar timbre of the G and C flutes does not allow this distinction. Here, Kerr uses the nuance of dynamic levels to indicate the predominance of one line over another. Although traditional dynamic markings indicate the general level of intensity, Kerr has inserted brackets around certain melodic lines. The following statement was inserted at the beginning of the score:

To facilitate interpretation, the voice which should be dominant at any given time is bracketed . Occasionally the bracketed passages will overlap, implying that both voices are equal. Where the relationship is obvious, the brackets are omitted.

Kerr has solved this problem of voicing and timbre by subtly using the element of intensity.

Structure

Structure or form in music is a system of organization that provides logic to the interaction of the other four elements: pitch, rhythm, timbre, intensity. "Form implies the organization of materials into a meaningful whole--a whole that can be apprehended aurally as an aesthetic complex."¹ Form or structure helps to make the relationship and manipulation of the musical elements more comprehensible to the listener. One of the most frequently discussed elements, structure plays a vital role in the aural comprehension of Harrison Kerr's music. Kerr has presented his own thoughts about formal organization in his music:

I like the word "structure" better than the word "form" because "form" indicates a set pattern. Structure is movement from a beginning to an end--a musical thought carried to its logical conclusion. How a movement may progress determines the success of the composer's musical intention. Form is not perceived during the progress of a composition even by the technically informed listener. It is thought of afterwards in trying to find out how a work is put together.²

Mary Wennerstrom presented a specific system of formal delineation of twentieth-century music that includes the

¹Mary Wennerstrom, "Form in Twentieth Century Music," Aspects of Twentieth Century Music, edited by Gary Wittlich. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975), p. 1.

²Kerr, personal interview, December 15, 1977.

following categories: traditional forms, forms with blocks and layers, time proportion forms, free forms, and no forms. The category of traditional forms includes those with statement-departure-return and those that employ serial techniques.¹ All of the music of Harrison Kerr, including the three representative works, falls into the traditional forms category. Kerr has explained his own approach to structure in his music:

As a matter of fact, I have never allowed myself to become addicted to a form although for a long time I wrote strictly in the sonata form. Actually I got away from the strict interpretation of the sonata form and leaned more toward the compression of the form. I wrote a number of one-movement works which had in them the elements of a sonata. However, I didn't allow sections to develop as independent movements. Each section became a part of the whole and would recur in the course of the piece even though the work might divide into three or four parts. For example, the "allegro movement," the "slow movement," the "scherzo," and the "finale" would be in more or less a sonata form but the "movements" were compressed. They were not expanded into independent movements. I never gave up independent movements in larger works but often I didn't actually write or follow any conventional form that I knew.

There is another thing that I have never done. Many composers devise a theme and think, "Well, what can I do with this theme? What might be suitable for such and such kind of movement?" I always write from the beginning to the end without any of the material occurring until it is ready to occur. I don't take a fragment and develop it and then move on to the next one. The development comes out as a part of the whole conception of the composition.

Development is strongly represented in my music but not in a conventional sense. A development may take many different forms: rhythmic changes, changes

¹Mary Wennerstrom, lecture at the University of Oklahoma, "Women in Music Conference," Norman, Oklahoma, November 18, 1976.

in tempo, retrogression, and other things of that sort. I hear the entire work before I begin to write and then I let it take its own course. I let it rest and usually rewrite it. Sometimes I have rewritten a piece two or three different times until I felt that I had gotten the elements organized the way I wanted them. I throw away a lot of music. I have more music in the garage than I have in the house. The garage holds not so much "tries" but "rejections." I usually complete what I start although I don't necessarily stay with it from the time I hear it until the time it is finished.¹

Each of the three representative works adheres to the format of statement-departure-return. By examining these works, the gradual departure from conventional formal models can be traced through the three later mature periods of Kerr's compositional career. The Trio more closely adheres to conventional formal ideas than does the Sonata or the Duos. The Trio employs a sonata-allegro idea in the first movement, a type of statement-departure-return (ABA) in the second movement, a rather strict fugal model in the third movement, and a freely conceived sonata-rondo in the final movement. Whereas the Sonata compresses the conventional three-movement sonata idea into one movement, the Three Duos use developmental forms based on the conventional ideas of statement, departure, and return.

Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano

The Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano was completed in April 1936 while Kerr was living in Manhattan. The first performance of the work was given on June 24, 1936

¹Kerr, personal interview, July 2, 1976.

in New York with William Bortman, clarinet, Abe Veder, violoncello, and Harry Rubinstein, piano, performing on a program devoted entirely to Kerr's compositions. The first commercial recording of the work was made in 1938 by a New York ensemble consisting of William Bortman, clarinet, Margaret Aue, violoncello, and Gregory Tucker, piano. The Trio was first published in 1940 by New Music Edition in the New Music Quarterly and a study score was issued in 1977 by Conatus Music Press.

The Trio in four concise movements is unified through a cyclic structure. Material found in the second, third, and fourth movements is based upon themes or rhythmic ideas, especially the motoric motives, presented in the first movement.

The Trio utilizes classical formal inventions in each of the four movements. The first movement utilizes a sonata-allegro idea in the presentation, development, and restatement of thematic material. Tonally, the movement does not adhere to a classical model but rather is conceived in a freely chromatic idiom characteristic of the twentieth century. The second movement is a three-part song form--statement-departure-return--with a closing section. Tonally, the movement does not adhere to any traditional model but moves freely through tonal centers. The third movement follows rather strictly the ordering of events in a classical fugue. In this movement the tonal plan resembles

the classical model; the fugue centers melodically around A-flat but moves freely through other centers adhering only to the intervallic transpositions of the counterpoint. The fourth movement also utilizes classical structure but in such a way that no specific categorization is possible. The presentation, restatement, and development of themes is characteristic of both the sonata-allegro and rondo forms. However, to categorize this movement as a sonata-rondo would imply a rigid structure that cannot be justified without distorting excessively the intention of the material within the sections. Tonally, the movement avoids any classical model by moving through rapidly shifting tonal centers.

Although each movement of the Trio may begin and end with a tonal focus on the same pitch, the generation of tonality within each movement is not dependent upon that central pitch. The Trio adheres to a chromatic polytonal pitch organization as do all of Kerr's works after 1935. The first, third, and fourth movements are essentially polyphonic with underlying harmonic implications; the second movement has a more homophonic texture.

Movement I, Allegro

The opening Allegro movement is closely allied to a conventional sonata-allegro structure as illustrated in the diagram shown in Figure 2 on page 128. The movement is based upon three main melodic themes. The exposition, measures 1-49, is introduced by Theme I, (1), played by the

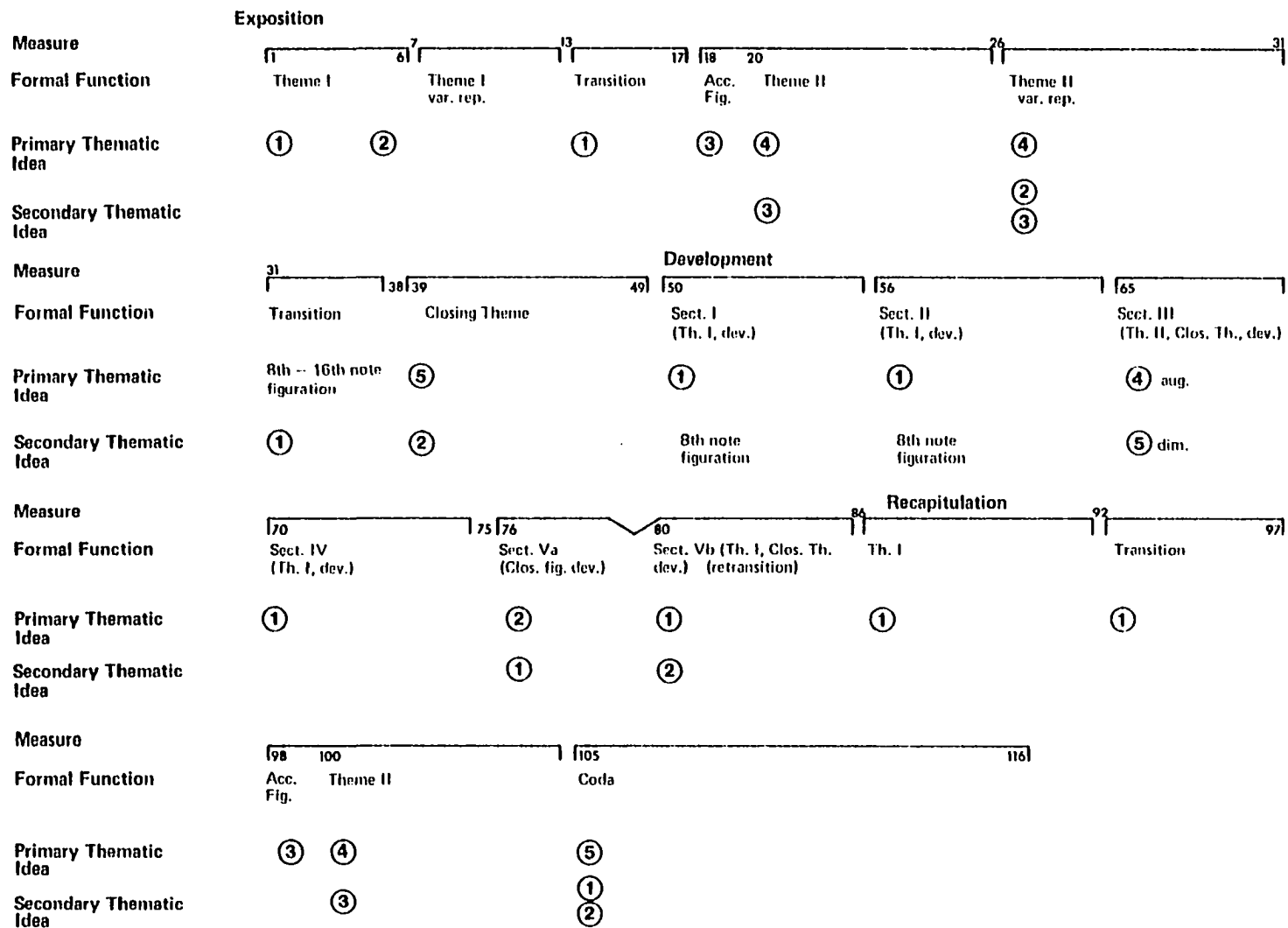


Figure 2. Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano, Formal Diagram, Movement I.

clarinet as shown in Example 24.

Example 24. Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano, Movement I, Theme I, measures 1-10.

Tonally the theme begins with a D center, stabilized by the repetition of pitch combinations, although the tonality soon shifts toward other centers. The theme is composed of a number of figures and motives that reappear in the development, recapitulation, and coda, as well as in other movements. A notable recurring figure (2), which later becomes a closing figure, is heard in measure 6, Example 24. In measure 7, a variation of Theme I is presented in the same general tonal center. Utilizing material from Theme I, a

transitional passage, measures 13-17, blurs the stability of the preceding statement to prepare for the second thematic group presented in measure 18. Theme II, shown in Example 25, is characterized by an accompanimental figure (3) in the violoncello that precedes the actual appearance of the melodic portion of Theme II (4), played by the piano in measure 20.

2

B^b clar. 251 rit. meno mosso 3

cello rit. 18

piano pesante *mf* *mp* 4 20 25 26 poco a poco cresc. marcato

Example 25. Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano, Movement I, Theme II, measures 15-26.

The second theme suggests a B-flat tonal center but moves

freely through other centers. In measures 23-25, a quasi-stretto entrance of the clarinet interrupts momentarily the second thematic area before a varied repetition of the second theme appears in measure 26. Here the accompanimental figure played by the piano in a strict eighth-note pattern, is a transformation of the earlier presentation in measure 18. The prominent second theme played by the violoncello is heard below clarinet interjections of figure ② from Theme I. A transitional passage, measures 31-38, consisting of ascending and descending eighth-note patterns completes the second thematic area and prepares for the following closing area.

A Closing Theme (III) ⑤ enters in measure 39 as shown in Example 26.

B \flat clar. *riten.* *Tempo I* ② 30

cello *pp* *riten.* *Tempo I* 39 *sf*

piano *riten.* ⑤ *Tempo I* *sf*

8^{va} lower (ad libitum)

Trio 21

Example 26. Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano, Movement I, Closing Theme (III), measures 37-43.

The theme, essentially a repetitive accented quarter-note pattern, has superimposed on beat four a closing figure ② taken from the first theme. The closing section is punctuated by a complete pause at the end of measure 49.

Development Section I, measures 50-55, begins with fragmentation and rearrangement of the motives found in the first theme. Expository in nature, the section begins in a B-flat tonal center but freely shifts through other centers until a D center is heard shortly before the second section begins. Section II of the development, measures 56-64, is a manipulation of motives from Theme I in an unstable tonal context. This unstable tonality is achieved through the use of frequent dissonance and disjunct tonal relationships. An appearance of the falling figure of the Closing Theme (III), also the same closing figure ② from Theme I, signals the conclusion of the section. Section III, measures 65-69, is a combination and variation of the broad Theme II ④ and the Closing Theme ⑤. The material in this section moves rapidly through tonal centers unlike earlier presentation of the themes. The fourth section, measures 70-74, employs eighth-notes in continuous motion to develop the melodic direction of figures found in Theme I. Section IV ends with complete silence in measure 75. Section V, which serves as a retransition to the recapitulation, is subdivided into two parts. The first, Section V-a, measures 76-79, is a variation in triple meter of the closing figure ② found in

both Theme I and the Closing Theme. The second subsection, V-b, measures 80-86, a version of the Theme I, is added by the clarinet to the existing texture dominated by the closing figure. However, the first thematic idea is removed and the section returns to the domination of the closing figure in an unstable tonal setting. After a rest held for one beat in all voices, the recapitulation begins.

The Recapitulation, measures 87-116, is a compression of the Exposition. The ascending upbeat figure of Theme I is presented here by all of the instruments in measure 86. Then the piano continues the principal theme in measure 87 against the closing figure added by the other two instruments. A brief transitional section, measures 92-97, begins in the same manner as Theme I. The melodic idea ② is passed from one voice to another unlike the first presentation by the piano. The clarinet initiates the second theme in measure 98 with the accompanying figure. The actual theme is presented by the piano in measure 100 and the second thematic area continues through measure 104. The tonality shifts freely through centers from F-sharp to B. Measures 103-104, a descending chordal passage in the piano followed by three beats of rest, serve to close the brief Recapitulation.

The Coda, measures 105-116, is a briskly moving variation of material taken from the Closing Theme (III) and Theme I with the ever present interjections of the closing

figure ②. The sixteenth-note figuration, appearing first in the opening measures 105-108, and the rapidly ascending and descending sixteenth-note patterns, as in measures 113-115, propel the energy of the movement to an unstable conclusion in a D tonal center.

Movement II, Largo

The second movement, Largo, is structured in a conventional three-part song form, ABA, as illustrated in Figure 3 on page 135. Although two themes are presented, the second theme is actually a combination and variation of motives taken from the first section. After a two-measure introduction of pulsating open fifths ① in the piano, a broad melodic Theme I-a ② is presented by the violoncello, measures 3-7, as shown in Example 27.

Example 27. Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano, Movement II, Theme I, measures 1-17 (continued on page 138).

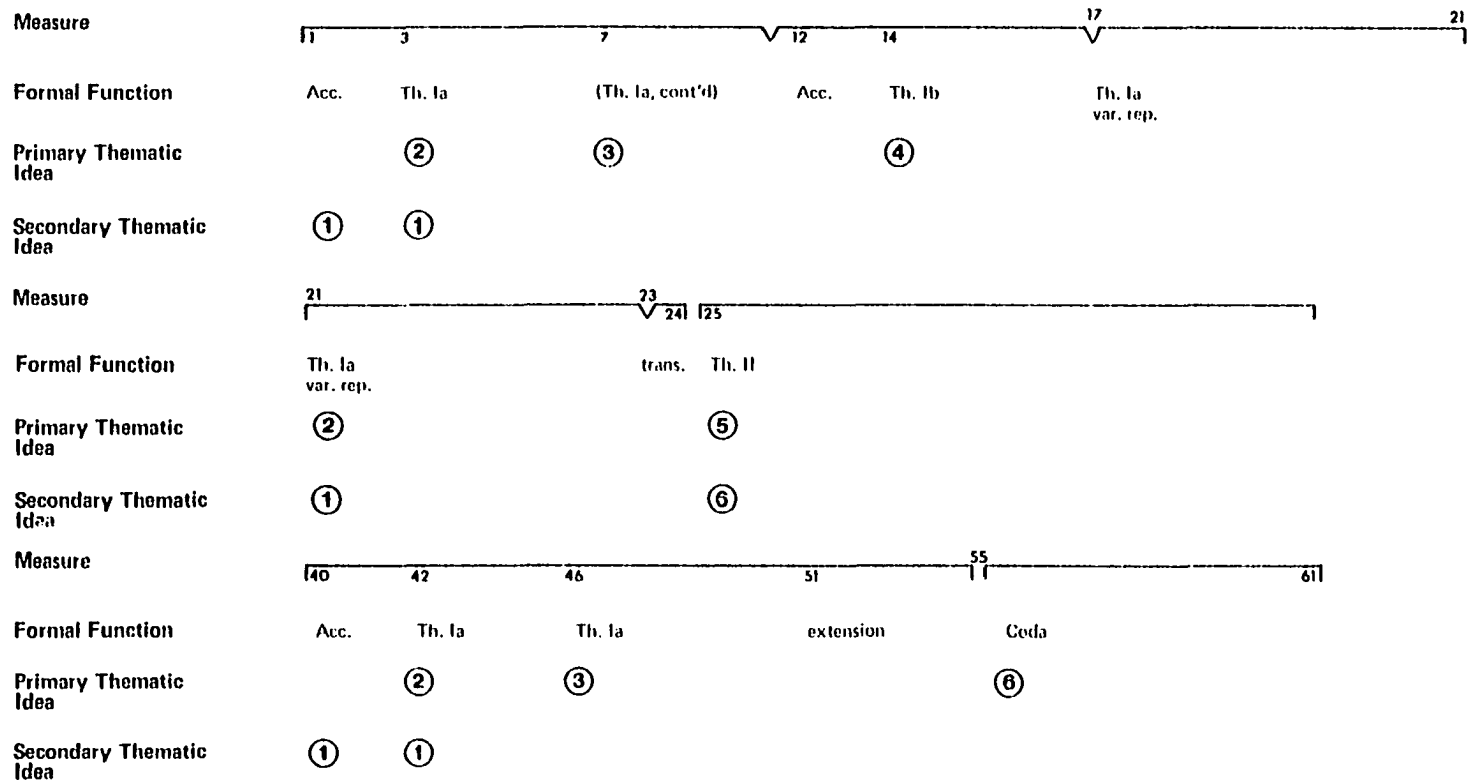


Figure 3. Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano, Formal Design, Movement II.

Example 27. Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano, Movement II, Theme I, measures 1-17 (continued from page 136).

In measure 7, Theme I-a continues with a two-beat triplet ③ and concludes in measure 11. Following a brief interlude in the piano, the second part of the theme, I-b ④, is continued by the clarinet in measure 14. A non-literal restatement of Theme I-a is found in measures 17-23. In measures 23-24, a series of chords serves as a transition to the second thematic area, measures 25-40.

Theme II or the B Section is a duet between the clarinet and violoncello accompanied by chords in the piano. The clarinet theme ⑤ beginning in measure 25 is derived from the broad first theme and is illustrated in Example 28.

Example 28. Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano, Movement II, Theme II, measures 22-30 (continued on page 139).

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Bb clarinet, cello, and piano. The score is written on three staves. The top staff is for the Bb clarinet, the middle for the cello, and the bottom for the piano. The music is in a key with one flat (Bb) and a common time signature. There are several measures of music, with a circled number '6' above the clarinet staff in the middle. The word 'cresc.' is written below the cello and piano staves, indicating a crescendo. The score ends with a double bar line.

Example 28. Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano, Movement II, Theme II, measures 22-30 (continued from page 138).

The violoncello theme ⑥, is taken also from the first thematic area, a contrapuntal accompaniment, measures 15-17. A quasi-cadenza passage in the clarinet beginning in measure 34 concludes the second section and leads to a return of the introduction in measure 40. The return of the first melodic theme occurs in measure 43, played by the clarinet, and although not a literal repetition, follows the first presentation. The movement concludes with a brief Coda, measures 55-61, based on material presented in the second section.

Movement III, Vivace-Scherzando

The third movement is a brief three-voice fugue, as diagrammed in Figure 4 on page 138. Virtually all of the thematic material in this movement is derived from Movement I. Stated in the first two measures, the principal subject beginning in an A-flat center takes its pitch direction from Theme II, Movement I, and is shown in Example 29.

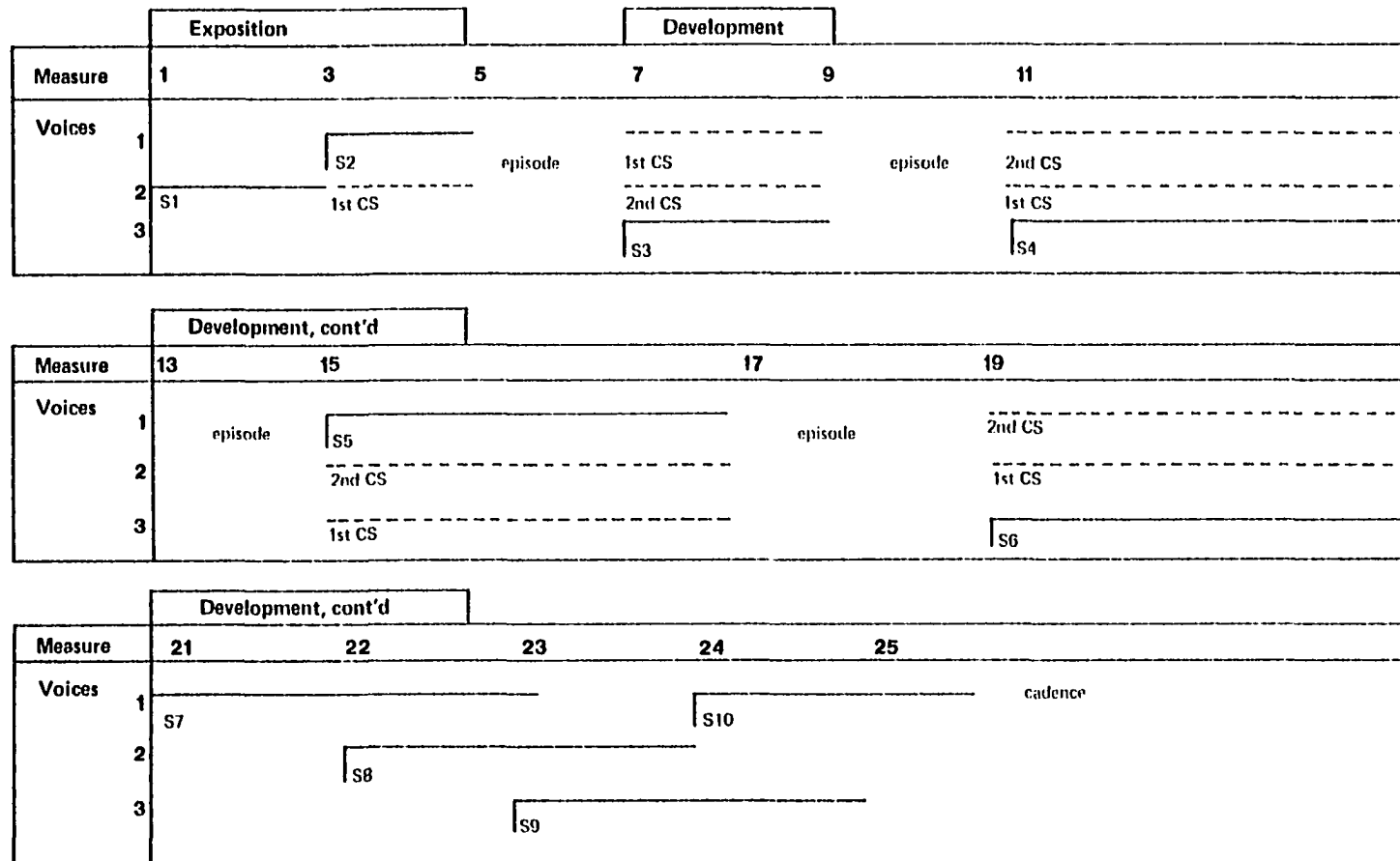


Figure 4. Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano, Formal Diagram, Movement III.

Example 29. Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano, Movement III, measures 1-7.

An exact transposition of the subject a perfect fifth higher is presented by the clarinet in a real answer that begins in measure 3. In the same measure the first countersubject appears in the violoncello, also derived from Theme I of the first movement. An episode, measures 5-6, leads to a return of the subject, presented at the original pitch level in octaves by the piano in measure 7. This second countersubject, derived from the Closing Theme of Movement I, is presented by the violoncello. A brief episodic stretto follows in measures 9-10 built upon a fragment of the subject. In measure 11, the subject, transposed to an F center, appears in the piano. Simultaneously, the first countersubject is assigned to the violoncello and the second countersubject to the clarinet. In measure 15, the subject, transposed to an E center, appears in the clarinet with the

first countersubject in the piano in octaves and the second countersubject in the violoncello. A two-measure episode of staccato eighth-notes leads to another presentation of the subject at the original pitch level of A-flat by the piano with the first countersubject in the violoncello and the second countersubject in the clarinet. A Coda begins in measure 21 with the subject presented in stretto by the clarinet, violoncello, and piano respectively. This section concludes the fugue over a double pedal point of A-flat and E-flat.

Movement IV, Allegro vivace, quasi presto

Structurally, none of the first three movements departs significantly from traditional forms. The fourth movement displays elements of both the rondo and sonata-allegro forms. A structural diagram of the movement is found in Figure 5 on page 141.

The movement opens with a two-measure introduction of triplet figures in the right hand of the piano. The triplet figure ① consists of a pair of descending perfect fifths followed by an ascending group as shown in Example 30. The second triplet figure is an inversion of the first figure pitched a whole tone higher. The two triplets are repeated literally on the third and fourth beats of measure 1. The triplets are heard over three descending seconds ② on the first three beats and on the fourth beat over an open fifth. The violoncello doubles the lower tones pizzicato.

Example 30. Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano, Movement IV, Introduction and Theme I, measures 1-6.

Measure 2 is a literal repetition of the first measure. Although not thematic in nature, the first two measures state the motives that will dominate the movement. The actual presentation of the first theme (3) begins in measure 3 although the melodic idea is a continuation of the preceding two measures. The theme is passed from the triplet in the piano on beat 1 to the violoncello on beat 2. The thematic line returns to the piano on the third beat, a diminished octave lower than the descending figure on beat 1. On beat 4, the clarinet assumes the ascending triplet figure from the second beat, pitched an octave and a fifth higher. The first section, ending in measure 12, is a constant variation of the triplet sequence. In a quasi-cadenza (4), the clarinet leads to the end of the section which is closed

by two beats of complete silence illustrated in Example 31.

Example 31. Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano, Movement IV, measures 13-15.

The second section, a development of the first section, figures ① and ②, begins in measure 17. Another abrupt silence of one beat is heard at the end of measure 23 signaling the close of this section. Section III, beginning in measure 24, is a development of the cadenza passage in measures 13-15 with intrusions of figures found in the earlier measures. In measure 37, a broad Theme II ⑤ is presented by the violoncello against a constant triplet movement in the other instruments, as shown in Example 32.

Example 32. Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano, Movement IV, Theme II, measures 35-40.

The broad theme is transferred to the clarinet on the last beat of measure 42. Section IV, measures 48-63, presents a return of measures 1-2, a minor third lower, signaling the return of Theme I in measure 50. The theme is passed from voice to voice in the same order as the original presentation. In measures 64-68, Section V presents a brief variation of the beginning of Section II. Section VI, measures 69-72, returns to the broad Theme II that was heard earlier in measure 37. The theme is played by both the clarinet and violoncello an octave and a fourth apart over a variation of the triplet figure presented in measure 24. In Section VI, measures 69-71, the clarinet and violoncello move in a triple meter against the piano moving in $\frac{4}{4}$. In measure 72, the instruments resolve to common time in rhythmic agreement. A Coda, measures 73-77, is based on material ④, presented first in measure 13. The concluding movement of the Trio ends in measure 77 with an open fifth on D.

Sonata for Violin and Piano

The Sonata for Violin and Piano composed in 1956 was performed in November of that year during a broadcast over station WNYC in New York City. The Sonata was recorded in Hamburg, Germany in 1961 by Charles Joseph, violin, and Christoph Eschenbach, piano, and it was published by Berben at Ancona, Italy in 1973. A study score of the Sonata was

issued in 1977 by Conatus Music Press.

The Sonata illustrates Kerr's use of a traditional structural idea freely in a twentieth-century style. The work in one movement offers a suggestion of a three-movement form. This is achieved through obvious breaks between the three large sections and by the presentation and development of the thematic ideas. A decrease in energy, a sustained chord, and a pause at the end of the first large section gives the impression of a first movement ending; in the next measure, the second large section begins an energetic propulsion. At the end of the second large section a pair of final cadences punctuated by a rest gives the implication that the next sudden entrance is a third movement. Although this principle of composing a sonata in one movement was common in the seventeenth century, eighteenth-century composers preferred a three-movement pattern. The compression of a sonata into a single movement was prevalent again in the nineteenth century, although varying degrees of departure from the earlier three-movement structure are found. This Sonata illustrates a very free application of the compressed one-movement form.

The term "sonata" carries with it conventional implications that may cause the term to be a misnomer.

It is a temptation to refer to the generic term "suonare," which, in its early application meant only something to be sounded; that is, something to be played. However, the title, "sonata," has come to have such a significant meaning, that few composers can resist its prestigious implications. Thus the term has frequently

been applied to compositions that are only distantly related to the classical sonata.¹

Because this Sonata is structured in three sections, reference to a "large section" will indicate one of the quasi-movemental sections while mention of a "small section" will delineate a portion of one of the large section. Since the Sonata is in one movement, the small sections will be numbered consecutively from the beginning to the end of the entire work. In addition, each small section will carry a term that approximates or suggests its primary function within the large section. Because central themes of the first large section are used throughout the Sonata, thematic or melodic ideas will be numbered consecutively and will be utilized in all of the three large sections. Figure 6 on page 147 illustrates the overall design of the Sonata.

Tonality in the Sonata does not focus upon single pitches but rather is characterized by series of rapidly shifting tonal centers. The categorization of each quasi-movement in a tonal area as accomplished in the Trio proves to be misleading. Stability and instability of the pitch organization within sections proves to be the logical vocabulary for discussion of Kerr's chromatic polytonal conception of this work.

The first large section contains the essential ideas of a sonata-allegro form. However, in relation to the

¹Kerr, personal interview, October 15, 1977.

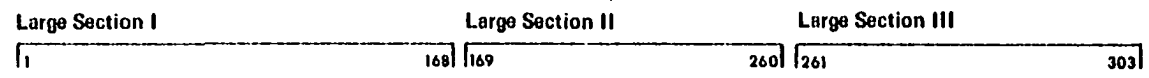


Figure 6. Sonata for Violin and Piano, Overall Design.

total work, the first large section functions as a modified exposition of ideas with continual development. The second large section is a bipartite form, but in relationship to the first movement, functions as further development of ideas found in the first large section. The third large section, which is through composed and based upon figuration from the first large section, actually functions in the capacity of a coda to the preceding sections. The following paragraphs discuss the details within each large section.

Large Section I

The first large section of the Sonata, measures 1-168, is illustrated in Figure 7 on page 149. The section begins with Theme I-a in the solo violin and piano (1) as shown in Example 33.

Tempo liberamente ♩ - ca.50

Violin

Piano

7 8 10 11

Example 33. Sonata for Violin and Piano, Large Section I, measures 1-11.

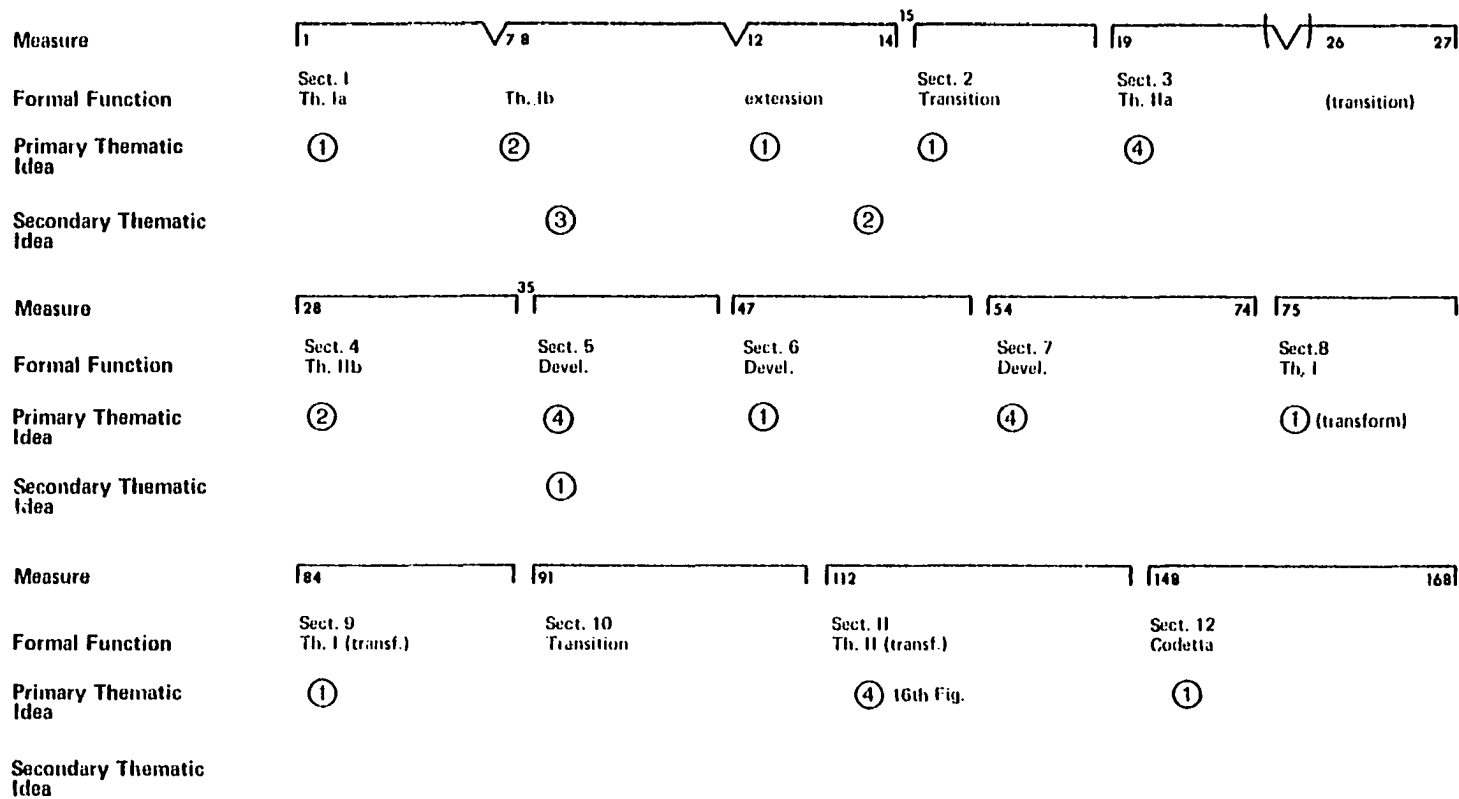


Figure 7. Sonata for Violin and Piano, Formal Diagram, Large Section I.

The first phrase of the chromatic melody and harmonic accompaniment moves slowly through the first six measures. The consequent phrase of the theme, I-b, continues in measures 7-12 and introduces motives (2) and (3). Measures 12-14 are a compression of the first eleven measures and serve to close the first thematic section. Section 2, a transition, begins in measure 15 with a single descending line reminiscent of the first theme. In measure 19, Section 3 begins by stating Theme II-a (4), sixteenth-note figuration with a distinctive pitch contour rather than a memorable melodic line as illustrated in Example 34.

The image shows a musical score for violin and piano, measures 18-24. The score is in 3/2 time, marked Allegretto (100-104). The violin part starts at measure 18 with a circled '20' above it. The piano part starts at measure 18 with a circled '44' above it. The piano part includes markings such as 'p', 'p leggero secco', 'stacc.', and 'sempre stacc.'.

Example 34. Sonata for Violin and Piano, Large Section II, measures 18-24.

This section continues through measures 26-27, where an accelerando prepares for Section 4, the second part of the theme, II-b (5), which begins in measure 28 and is shown in Example 35.

5

violin

piano

Allegro $\text{♩} = 120-126$

5

30

35

35

E. 1848 B

Example 35. Sonata for Violin and Piano, Large Section II, measures 27-35.

This theme also is primarily a rhythmic motive consisting of a distinctive sixteenth-eighth-note pattern heard earlier on the first beat of melodic idea (2). In measure 35, a fifth section begins with a brief recollection of motive (1) from Theme I and then, in measure 36, begins to develop the sixteenth-note figuration from Theme II-a. Another development of Theme I, motive (1), begins in Section 6, measures 47-54. Section 7, also a development, is a sudden Allegro of cascading sixteenth-note patterns based upon motive (4) from Theme II-a. This development section is quite extensive and achieves length in the sequential patterning of motives derived from Theme II-a. This development section concludes in measure 74. Section 8 is a return of Theme I-a. The theme here is a transformation of the original; but because of the consonant tonal setting, the unhurried presentation, and the pauses, the section emerges as the most stable and familiar sounding portion of the movement. This stability is even more pronounced because of the preceding dissonant presentation and variation of the theme. A solo violin passage, measures 81-83, leads to a complete transformation of Theme I in Section 9, beginning in measure 84. The theme is heard in the solo violin over a rapid tremolo in the piano. Section 10, measures 91-111, continues to utilize material from Theme I but serves a dual function. The first half of the section, measures 91-98, builds to a climax and then decreases in energy. The

second half, measures 99-111, begins quietly and gradually builds in energy both rhythmically, through an *accelerando*, and tonally, through greater concentration of dissonance. The first portion serves to close the preceding section while the second part serves as a transition to Section 11. Section 11, measures 112-147, is an extensive development of the sixteenth-note figuration from the second theme employing the same developmental techniques as found in Section 7. A series of trills in the solo violin over sixteenth-note figuration signals the close of the section. Section 12, measures 148-168, is a codetta within the first large section and is a slowly moving version of material derived from Theme I. The codetta section closes on a sustained D-minor chord.

Large Section II

The second large section, an extended development of thematic ideas heard in the first large section, is illustrated in Figure 8 on page 154. The section begins abruptly in measure 169 with the sixteenth-note motive ④ characteristic of Theme II. This Section 13 is a development section employing sequential figuration that moves motorically to the next section. Section 14, measures 200-209, is based on material from Theme I-b ②. Measures 200-206 closely replicate measures 11-14 from the first large section. The section concludes in measure 209 with a sustained chord containing the pitches of an F-major triad with a major

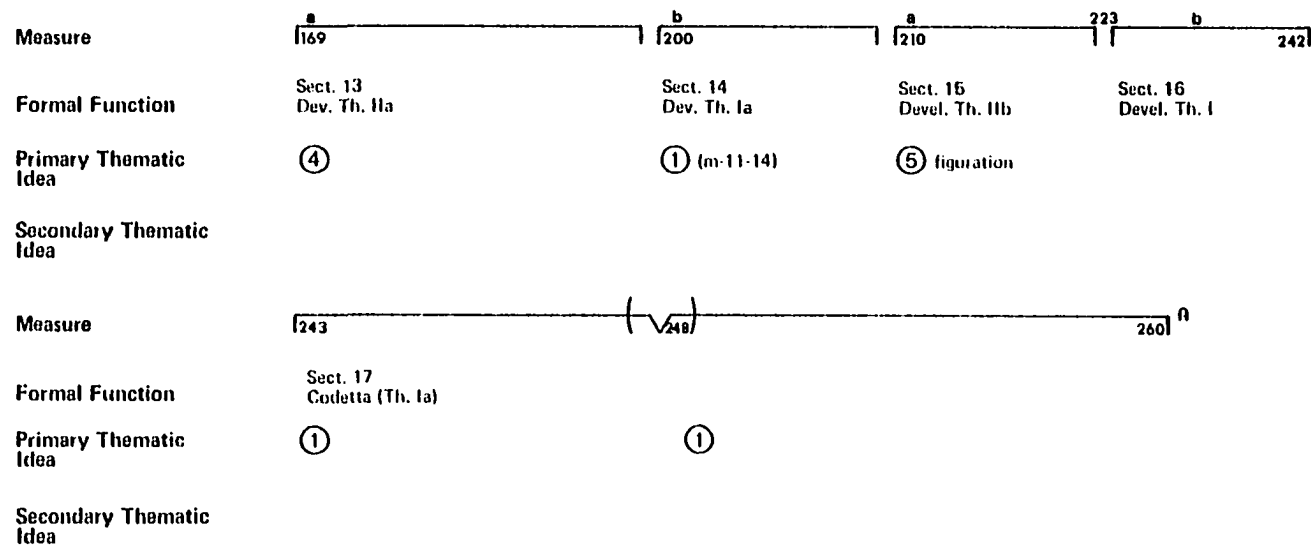


Figure 8. Sonata for Violin and Piano, Formal Diagram, Large Section II.

seventh and an added F-sharp. Section 15, measures 210-223, utilizes material found in the second part of Theme II (5). The following Section 16 presents another transformation of Theme I, measures 223-244. Section 17, measures 243-261, is a closing section that, although based on the same Theme I material, employs another thematic transformation that makes it strikingly different from the preceding section. The effect is a soft, rocking motion of eighth notes. In measure 247, a more recognizable theme undergoes several tempo changes that generate energy until measures 255-260, when a descending melodic line and chordal piano accompaniment close the second large section.

Large Section III

The third large section, a coda to the entire work illustrated in Figure 9 on page 156, begins abruptly in measure 261 with sixteenth-note figuration in the piano. This figuration, which permeates the coda, is derived from Theme II. Section 17 is an introduction that reiterates in figuration the falling pattern of the preceding cadence and is illustrated in Example 36.

violin

Allegro \downarrow = 126

piano

Example 36. Sonata for Violin and Piano, Large Section III, measures 1-3.

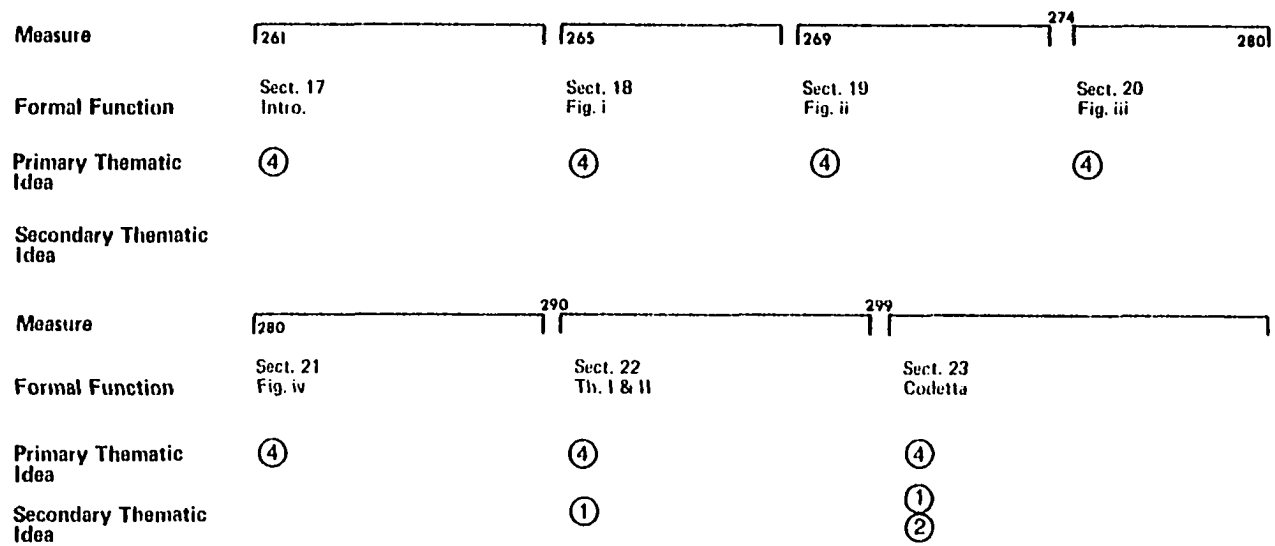


Figure 9. Sonata for Violin and Piano, Formal Diagram, Large Section III.

In measure 265, Section 18 begins with further development of earlier figuration with its own distinctive pattern as shown in Example 37.

violin

piano

sempre *ff*

sempre *ff*

Example 37. Sonata for Violin and Piano, Large Section III, measures 264-267.

The descending sixteenth-eighth-note figure becomes a running descending pattern of sixteenth notes. Section 19, beginning in measure 269, utilizes a generally descending sixteenth-note figuration that is immediately developed as illustrated in Example 38.

violin

piano

268

sempre *ff*

Example 38. Sonata for Violin and Piano, Large Section III, measures 268-273
(continued on page 160).

violin

piano

Example 38. Sonata for Violin and Piano, Large Section III, measures 268-272 (continued from page 159).

Section 20, measures 275-280, is a gradually ascending pattern that soon reverts to the descending pattern, as illustrated in Example 39.

violin

piano

Example 39. Sonata for Violin and Piano, Large Section III, measures 274-277.

In measures 279-280, the addition of the pitch direction and rhythmic interruption of the opening motive from Theme I signals an expectation that the section is about to close, as illustrated in Example 40.

The image shows a musical score for violin and piano. The violin part is on a single staff, and the piano part is on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). Measure 280 in the violin part is circled. The score is in a key with one flat (B-flat) and a 2/4 time signature. The violin part features a melodic line with some grace notes and a circled measure 280. The piano part features a complex rhythmic and melodic accompaniment with many sixteenth notes.

Example 40. Sonata for Violin and Piano, Large Section III, measures 278-280.

Section 21, measures 281-289, is another development of the sixteenth-note figuration that combines all of the motives previously heard. Section 22, measures 290-298, gives the effect of previously unheard material. However, the pitch direction of the first theme assigned to the violin is combined with the rhythmic energy of the second theme in the piano. A brief codetta, measures 299-303, closes the work in Section 23. This brief section combines rhythmic and melodic ideas found in both thematic areas. An almost literal restatement of the melodic motive ② from measure 7 is heard in the penultimate measure. The work concludes on an open fifth, G-sharp and D-sharp.

Three Duos for Two Flutes

The Three Duos for Two Flutes represent Harrison Kerr's most recent creative period. The work was composed

in the spring of 1976 for Christine Smith and Sandra Steinberg, both of the University of Oklahoma, after Kerr heard the flutists play in a recital. In June 1976, Smith and Steinberg recorded the Duos for Conatus Educational Recordings, and, at the same time, the published version was released by Conatus Music Press. In 1977, a study score of the Duos was issued by Conatus. The first public performance of the work was on the composer's eightieth birthday, October 13, 1977, at the University of Oklahoma. Smith and Steinberg premiered the works on the program.

The Duos were composed for flute in C and flute in G or alto flute. Although the two instruments are sometimes difficult to distinguish in timbre, the G flute allows the composer to use pitches of the lower range down to an F below middle-C, unobtainable on the C flute. The opening measure immediately uses this lower range; none of the pitches in the measure is playable by the C flute. Although flute parts are included in his opera, symphonies, and other orchestral works, the only other chamber work by Kerr for flute is the Sonata for Flute, composed between 1940 and 1941 and published by Boosey and Hawkes in 1943. In addition to a work for eight trombones, a work for solo guitar, a work for celesta, bells, bassoon, sackbut, and piano, the Duos represent Kerr's recent willingness to compose for less common instrumental combinations. Despite the tradition that most duets are intentionally instructive, the

Duos were composed as concert pieces intended to add to the twentieth-century chamber music repertoire. The two flutes interlock in timbre, and because the melodic and rhythmic lines pass from flute to flute, the work sounds at times as though it were composed for a single instrument. However, the two instruments are necessary to achieve the desired contrapuntal effects as well as the extended range.

Structurally, the Duos employ forms that may be termed developmental. Based on the traditional ideas of statement-departure-return, each movement is permeated with immediate transformations of themes and constant development of thematic ideas. Similarly, elements of imitation, diminution, augmentation, retrogression, and stretto are employed so extensively that all three movements sound fugal. Although contrapuntal techniques are used, traditional fugal designs have been avoided by the composer in favor of other methods of organization. Much of the thematic material is used in all three movements resulting in a highly unified work.

Tonally, the Duos are not organized around distinctive pitch centers. Although a specific pitch may occur at the beginning and ending of a movement and frequently in other sections, the generation of tonality is not dependent upon that pitch. Rather tonal stability and instability are generated by the concentration of dissonance, a technique typical of Kerr and found in most of his works.

Another characteristic of Kerr is his avoidance of thematic repetition at the same pitch level. However, in the second movement, measures 61-65 repeat measures 1-5 exactly. The more common occurrence is rhythmic and intervallic transformation of thematic ideas.

Movement I, Allegro

The first movement of the Duos, shown in Figure 10 on page 163, is a modified sonata-allegro design with development permeating each section. As soon as a thematic idea is stated, an immediate development or transformation of the idea begins. As a result of this continuous development, a formal development section does not occur and the return of material in recapitulation appears in a transformed version.

The first section of the first movement begins with a statement of Theme I (1) in the G flute as shown in Example 41.

The image shows a musical score for three staves. The top staff is for Flute in C, the middle for Flute in G, and the bottom for a second Flute in G. The music is in 3/4 time and includes various dynamics and tempo markings. Circled numbers 1 through 6 are placed above specific notes in the score to indicate thematic elements.

Example 41. Three Duos for Two Flutes, Movement I, Theme I, measures 1-11.

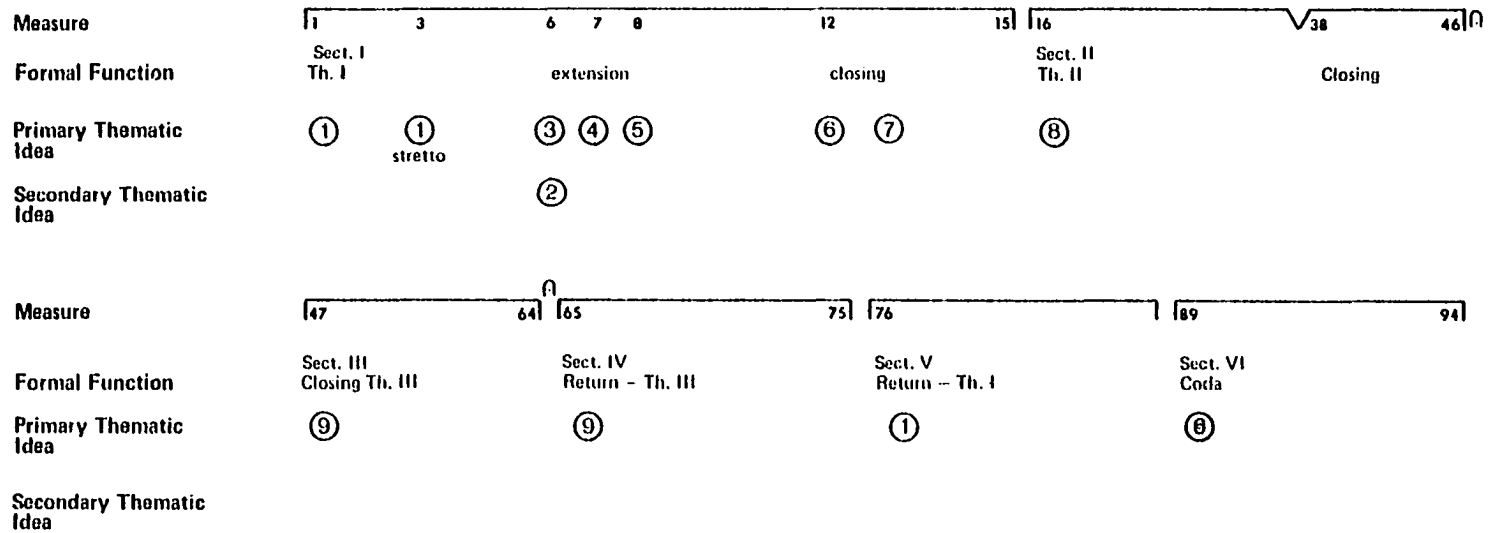


Figure 10. Three Duos for Two Flutes, Formal Diagram, Movement I.

The theme is presented immediately in stretto-fashion by the C flute in measure 3, giving at first an illusion of a strictly contrapuntal form. However, as the first theme continues, a new motive ② is introduced in measure 6 by the C flute along with additional thematic material ③ in the G flute as illustrated in Example 41. The melodic line continues in measure 7 with still another motive ④. Measure 8 presents a triplet passage ⑤ that will return in other sections along with all motives heard previously. A brief closing section beginning with descending sixteenth-notes ⑥ appears in measure 12, as shown in Example 42.

C flute

G flute

Example 42. Three Duos for Two Flutes, Movement I, measures 12-15.

The closing area continues with increasingly less rhythmic and pitch direction ⑦ through the end of the section, measure 15.

The second theme ⑧ is introduced by the flute at the beginning of Section II in measure 16 as shown in Example 43.

C flute

G flute

Example 43. Three Duos for Two Flutes, Movement I, Theme II, measures 16-24 (continued on page 167).

Example 43. Three Duos for Two Flutes, Movement I, Theme II, measures 16-24 (continued from page 166).

The "tranquillo" Theme II moves distinctively in its pitch direction but in measure 20 immediately evolves into a development employing ideas from both Themes I and II throughout the section. A closing area, measures 38-46, ends Section II and is separated from Section III by a rest. The G flute begins a Closing Theme (III) ⑨ in measure 47 as illustrated in Example 44.

Example 44. Three Duos for Two Flutes, Movement I, Closing Theme (III), measures 42-52.

The disjunct nature of this third theme finally gives way to further development employing sixteenth-note figuration in measure 53. Section III ends in measure 64 with a sustained G-sharp. Section IV is a varied return of the closing section that continues through measure 71 where a closing

area leads to a sustained A preceding the next section. A varied return of the first thematic area is heard in measure 76, Section V. The section begins distinctively in octaves making the return even more pronounced. This brief return transforms into rhythmic figuration as further development until the Coda begins in measure 89. The final Section VI employs motives from Theme I and concludes with an open fifth, B-flat and F.

Movement II, Larghetto

The second movement is in the traditional form of statement-departure-return with coda as shown in Figure 11 on page 167. Theme I is introduced by the G flute in measures 1-5 (1) followed by a consequent phrase in the C flute, measure 5, (2) and (3), illustrated in Example 45.

The image shows a musical score for two flutes in C. The top staff is labeled 'Flute in C' and 'Larghetto' with a tempo marking of a quarter note equal to 66 beats per minute. It contains measures 1 through 5. Measure 1 is marked with a circled '1' and 'espressivo'. Measure 5 is marked with a circled '2'. Measure 8 is marked with a circled '3'. The bottom staff is labeled 'Flute in C' and contains measures 8 and 12. Dynamics include 'p', 'pp', and 'mp'.

Example 45. Three Duos for Two Flutes, Movement II, Theme I, measures 1-12.

The thematic material immediately becomes involved in development until the theme reappears in a transformed version, measures 17-20. In measure 20, a brief closing area prepares for Section II. The second section, measures 25-37,

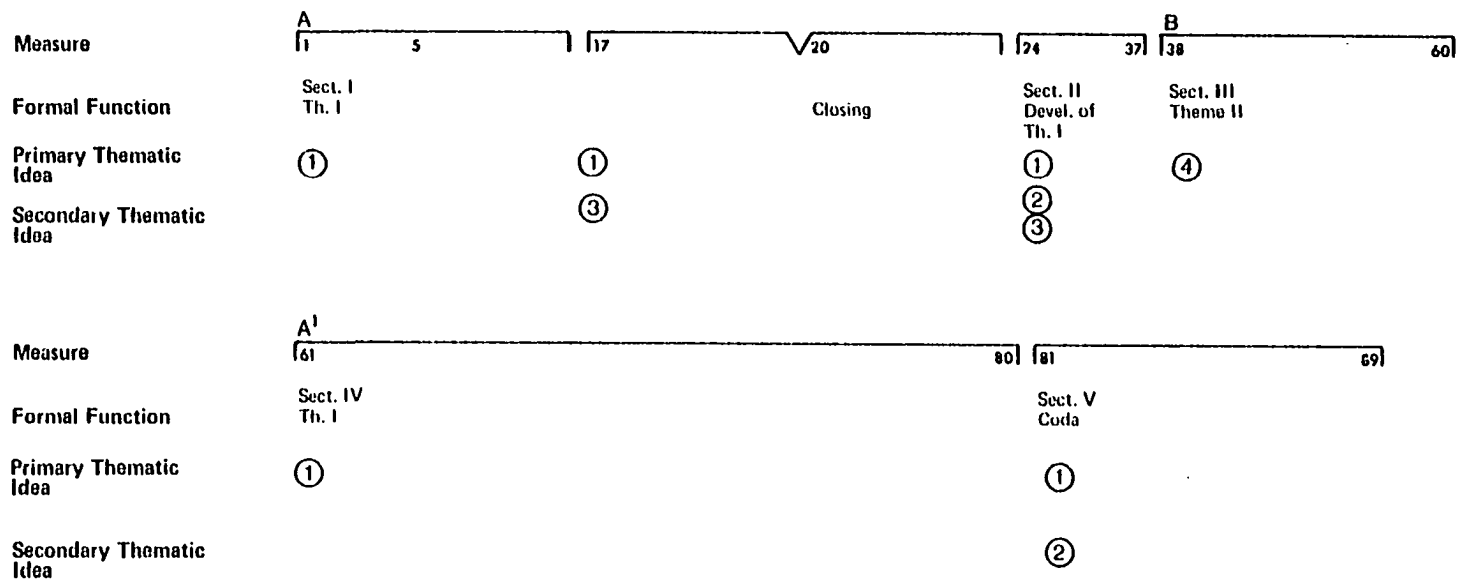


Figure 11. Three Duos for Two Flutes, Formal Diagram, Movement II.

is a free development of material presented in the first section. A sustained A-sharp concludes the section. Theme II (4) is introduced immediately by the G flute in measure 38 and appears to be derived from motive (2) of the first theme as shown in Example 46.

The image shows a musical score for two flutes. The top staff is labeled 'C flute' and the bottom staff is labeled 'G flute'. The score covers measures 37 through 48. Measure 38 in the G flute part is marked with a circled '4', indicating the start of Theme II. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings (mf, f, mp, f). The instruction 'poco a poco cresc.' is written below the G flute staff between measures 38 and 40.

Example 46. Three Duos for Two Flutes, Movement II, Theme II, measures 37-48.

As soon as the theme is stated, a development occurs in which material from Section I and Section II is present in a transformed version. The fourth section, beginning with a literal repetition of Theme I, occurs in measure 61. The measures 61-65 match exactly measures 1-5 of the first theme. In measure 66, the repetition ends as further development of Theme I material continues. A fifth section resumes, measures 81-89, and concludes the movement as a Coda. The Coda is a quiet statement derived from the opening phrase of the movement and ends with a single A in the G flute.

Movement III, Allegretto

The third movement incorporates a perpetual motion idea into a modified sonata-allegro format as illustrated in Figure 12 on page 170. First and second themes, development, recapitulation, and coda are presented in a straightforward manner. Theme Ia begins the first section of the movement with a motoric sixteenth-note figuration (1) as shown in Example 47.

8 -III-

Allegretto $\text{♩} = M$

The image shows three systems of musical notation for two flutes. The first system is for Flute in C and Flute in C, with a circled '1' marking the start of the sixteenth-note figuration. The second system is for Flute in C and Flute in C, with a circled '2' marking the start of the triplet figuration. The third system is for Flute in B-flat and Flute in C, with a circled '3' marking the start of the triplet figuration. Dynamics include *f*, *cresc.*, and *decresc.*

Example 47. Three Duos for Two Flutes, Movement III, Theme I-a, measures 1-6.

Sixteenth notes appear consistently on each portion of the beat until measure 16, where an interruption prepares for the rhythmic change that will occur in the second section. Theme I-b (2), Section II, beginning in measure 20, is a continuation of the perpetual motion idea except that the sixteenth-note figuration has been transformed into triplets as shown in Example 48.

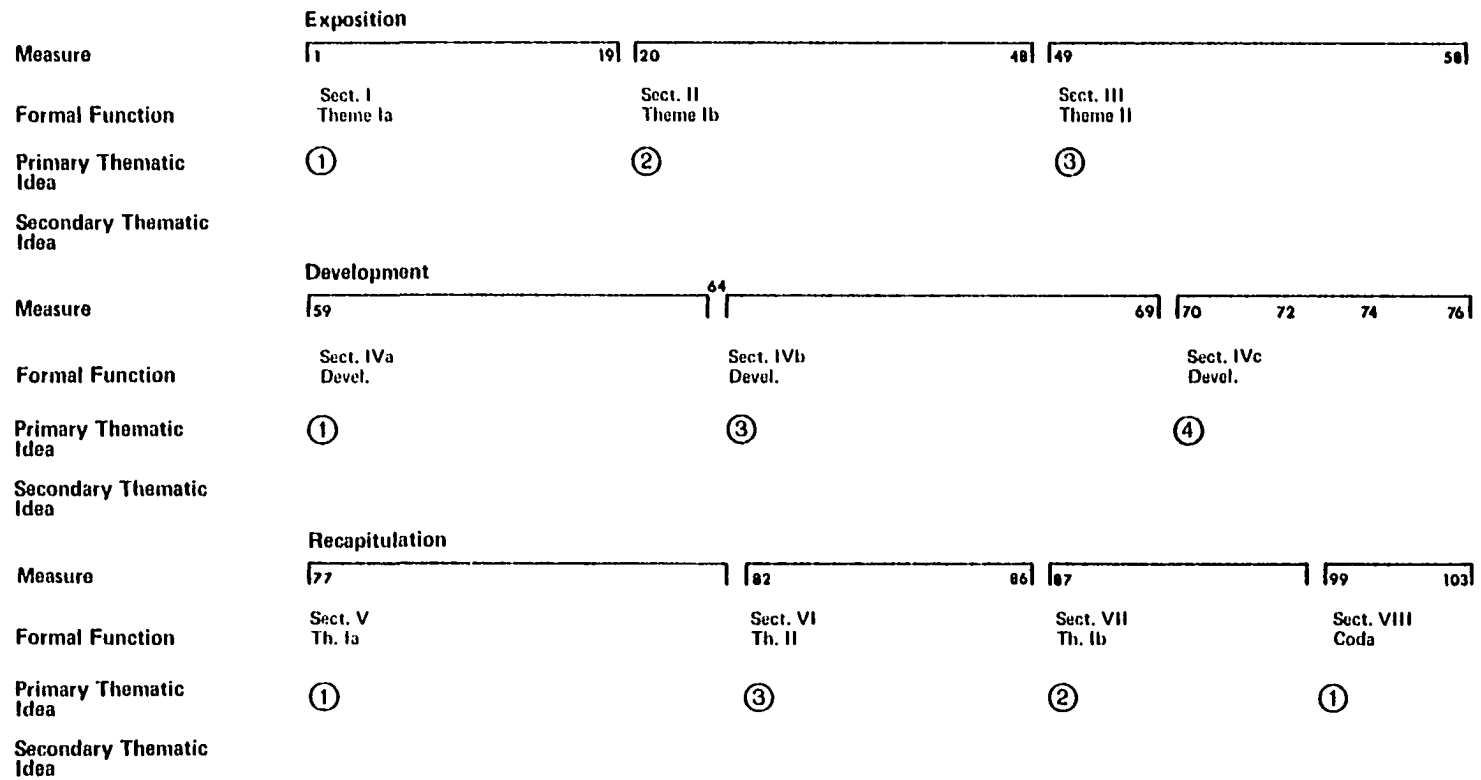


Figure 12. Three Duos for Two Flutes, Formal Diagram, Movement III.

C flute ② *piu mosso (quasi presto)*
 G flute

Three Duos For Two Flutes

Example 48. Three Duos for Two Flutes, Movement III, Theme I-b, measures 20-28.

This figuration continues in a freely contrapuntal development until the motion is interrupted by Theme II ③ in measure 49, illustrated in Example 49.

C flute
 G flute

Three Duos For Two Flutes

Example 49. Three Duos for Two Flutes, Movement III, Theme II, measures 47-56.

This larghetto second theme of Section III is clearly derived from Theme I of the first movement. This theme concludes with a held open fifth, D and G, in measure 58. Section IV, illustrated in Example 50, is a three-part development.

C flute
G flute

Tempo I (♩ = 88)

57 58 *f*

62 64 *ff*

68 *decrsc.* *ff* Fluttertongue 70

72 *Flatt.* 74 *Flatt.*

75 77

78

Example 50. Three Duos for Two Flutes, Movement IV, Section IV, measures 57-79.

The first section IV-a, measures 59-63, freely utilized the figuration from Theme I. The second section, IV-b, measures 64-69, uses material reminiscent of Theme II, employing ideas from the first movement upon which Theme II was based. The third section, IV-c, measures 70-76, transforms the sixteenth-note figuration into a new theme, achieved by flutter tonguing. The flutes begin to ascend in measure 70 in parallel fifths, in measure 72 in parallel fourths, and

in measure 74 in parallel thirds. Following a brief transitional passage, a varied return of Theme I-a begins Section V, measures 77-81. Section VI, measures 82-86, is a varied return of Theme II followed by Section VII, measures 87-98, a varied return of the triplet figuration from Theme I-b. A brief five-bar Coda, measures 99-103, incorporating material heard previously, concludes the movement on an octave G.

Performance and Public Acceptance of Kerr's Music

The bulk of Kerr's music has been presented publicly and only three late works remain unperformed: the Third String Quartet (1973), We Are the Makers of Music (1976), and Carillon (1977). His opera, The Tower of Kel, has had excerpts performed, although the work never has been staged or produced in its entirety. In addition several commercial recordings of Kerr's works have been released including Sinfonietta Da Camera (1968), Concerto for Violin and Orchestra (1950-1951, revised 1956), Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano (1936), Trio for Violin, Violoncello, and Piano (1938), Overture, Arioso, and Finale (1944-1951), Sonata for Violin and Piano (1956), and Study for Violoncello unaccompanied (1937). The Three Duos for Two Flutes (1976) were recorded privately for the Conatus Educational Recording Project and is available on a limited basis.

Early in his career, Kerr's music was received by

critics with varying degrees of enthusiasm. The following reviews present a cross section of typical attitudes toward twentieth-century music. One very early critique by Alexander Williams criticized Kerr's innovative use of the violoncello in an early recording of the unaccompanied Study for Violoncello (1937):

Mr. Kerr's Etude for unaccompanied 'cello is a horrid work. Most composers incline to make the 'cello sob; Mr. Kerr prefers it to cough and sputter. At that there are some hints in Mr. Kerr's use of the instrument which would not come amiss for Mr. Varèse's experiments.¹

Another review of the same recording stated:

Harrison Kerr's similar essay, an Etude for unaccompanied 'cello, which takes up half the second record, I found definitely unpleasant, not to say sterile.²

A review of a performance by the Rhode Island Concert Orchestra of the Federal Music Project reflected the critic's frustration not only with Kerr's expanded tonality and innovative rhythms but also with the changing society:

The "Movement for String Orchestra," by Mr. Kerr is one of those compositions that abounds in five footed rhythms and seems to be played by men trying to destroy a large iron pipe with dull hacksaws. Possibly that is a trifle unfair; it is quite democratic music, in which every tone in the scale tries to live together in the same chord, and so may be said to represent our country and our time, and it is also trying on our nerves, which is also like our country and our time.

¹Alexander Williams, "New Phonographic Ventures," a photostatic reproduction of an articles that appeared in the New York Herald Tribune, n.d.

²Moses Smith, "Recent Phonographic Records," Boston Globe, March 15, 1938.

In a word, it is bewildering, and that may quite as well be the fault of the listener as of the composer.¹

A more positive criticism was offered by George Beiswanger who comprehended structure as playing a central role in Kerr's music:

Harrison Kerr's Dance Sonata is a neat solution of a problem not often put to the contemporary composer for the dance, although it belongs to the solid tradition of the Diaghileff school. What he was given to start with was the idea of a sonata in four movements, the mood which each movement was to articulate, and certain suggestions as to the larger blocks of form in which each movement was to be composed. With these general directions, the composition was completed before any of the choreography was done. The result is a work liberally informed with the qualities of dance, and yet quite interesting in itself and, as might be expected, unusually well-knit in form. Given such collaboration between dancer and composer as to idea and basic rhythms, it is easy to see that the nice result is not a matter of happy accident; one may even guess that the choreography has gained something from having its form predetermined, although the danger that the dance will not come up to the music has not been altogether escaped in this case. At any rate, Kerr's sonata is solid and does not seem to be a measure which violates the essential spirit of the dance.²

In recent years audiences have assumed a more liberal attitude toward the twentieth-century musical style. In 1956, a review in the Houston Post of the String Quartet (1937) expressed this growing tolerance of a more mature audience:

Of the strictly instrumental works, the one that stood out for sheer brilliance of method and communicative effect was a string quartette by Harrison Kerr.

¹"American Music and Stravinsky Symphony at Faunce House," The Providence Journal, May 30, 1938.

²George Beiswanger, "Music at the Bennington Festival," Dance Observer, August-September, 1938.

It was probably also the most "advanced" in its language, the use of a modified 12-tone technique, a system not otherwise strongly apparent in these offerings.

However, his quartette is anything but an exhibit of musical engineering, the impression one usually acquires when this method of composition is called into play. It is, instead, a work of direct appeal, of easily grasped melodic ideas, of tremendous vitality, thematic fecundity and rhythmic inventiveness. It communicates with the greatest of ease and persuasion, and has so much of real interest to say that nobody could hear it without feelings of excitement and satisfaction.

Its slow movement, the one where the serial "row" technique is apparent, is a model of how to make the Schoenbergian method expressive, and its succinct, bustling scherzando is a witty and irresistible episode.

Thanks to a performance of complete conviction and relish by the Lyric Art ensemble, everybody was delighted with Mr. Kerr's piece--and delighted to have him present to hear about it.¹

In 1968, a reviewer of the Sinfonietta da Camera no longer found Kerr's musical style incomprehensible:

The work is full of fascinating writing, but some highpoints were the way flutes and woodwinds were used in fluid foil to tearing, staccato strings; the way expressive cello passages were accented with piano, and an exceptional duet of cello and double bass. Strings were used very effectively in tremolo, pizzicato, detached stroke and in building structural dynamics. But everyone in the audience came away with something especially echoing in the memory. It is a work to be heard many times before hearing in full.²

As Kerr and many other twentieth-century composers agree, any music in a relatively unfamiliar idiom will be neglected by the general public until ample time has passed and a sufficient number of performances have occurred.

¹Hubert Roussel, "From the New World: A Concert of Fresh Music at University," Houston Post, April 25, 1956.

²W.U. McCoy, "Kerr Work Hailed," The Daily Oklahoman, April 26, 1968.

Through repetition of performances and recordings of new works, a wider public acceptance of twentieth-century music is likely to occur. Unfortunately as Kerr has observed, many conductors and concert artists are unwilling to perform music that may alienate them from their audiences or that cannot offer the distinction of a premier performance.¹

This discussion of Kerr's musical style has illustrated that Kerr's music presents a number of unfamiliar elements to a traditionally educated listener. Although less radical than that of many composers, Kerr's tonal vocabulary may account in part for a lack of musical comprehension by many listeners. However, Kerr's use and modification of the traditional elements in his compositions is part of a logical succession in the evolution of twentieth-century music. In the 1970's, Kerr's work appears to be one of the links between the music of the nineteenth-century composer and the composer of today.

¹Kerr, unpublished lecture delivered at the University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, March 30, 1977.

CHAPTER III

HARRISON KERR IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Harrison Kerr: Arts Educator

Harrison Kerr has spent most of his life involved in education. Early in his career in Cleveland, Kerr taught piano privately in his home and, shortly afterwards, he taught at the Ashtabula Conservatory. Kerr also taught music at Greenbrier College and later at the Chase School. When Kerr moved to New York City, he was in close contact with many musicians and educators, so that at every opportunity, he readily discussed music and art, presented formal lectures, or conducted musical performances. An especially noteworthy activity in arts education was his role in the publication of Trend. This arts quarterly was one of the most popular and authoritative publications of the 1930's. Volumes of this periodical are found in prominent libraries around the world and are quoted frequently in articles written about architecture, dance, drama, literature, music, painting, and sculpture.

In his position with the Department of Army's Reorientation Branch, Music and Art Section, Kerr's educational activities in the arts became far reaching.

His duties in that position allowed him to develop extensive fine arts re-education programs in Germany, Austria, Japan, and Korea. He was also able to visit and observe educational institutions in these areas.

As a result of this extensive background in practical arts education and administration, Kerr assumed a prestigious position as Dean of the College of Fine Arts at the University of Oklahoma in 1949. In this position, he not only helped the departments to expand and develop their programs but also helped the Southwest to develop a national reputation in the arts. When he retired from the position as Dean, Kerr pioneered courses in comprehensive arts education that were intended to present relationships among as well as distinctions between the arts. This increasingly popular concept today is pursued at many institutions in the United States.

Kerr wrote a number of works intended for educational use including his extensive text, "The Musical Experience." Kerr also wrote a book on orchestration as well as extensive outlines both for the comprehensive arts program and for the survey of music history courses that he taught.

In retirement, Kerr sought further self education as he traveled throughout the world. During this time he revisited ancient ruins and observed architectural trends, frequented exhibitions of art and sculpture, attended

theatrical productions and musical performances, and met with prominent art personalities throughout the world.

At eighty, Kerr still is interested in education. He works extensively with students interested in music or the other arts. He frequently writes articles of an educational nature for publication and actively corresponds with professional musical organizations and students who exhibit interest in his work. Widely known as one who has pursued his own educational training, Kerr has built much of his reputation through his educational endeavors.

Harrison Kerr: Proponent of American Music

Throughout his career, Harrison Kerr has actively endorsed the dispersion and performance of American music. As early as the 1920's, Kerr began to discuss the problems encountered by an American-born and American-educated composer. His interest in American music became so intense that he actively engaged himself in a number of endeavors that were designed to aid the American composer. Kerr was the manager of Arrow Music Press, a leading publisher of American music, and supervised the production of the New Music Quarterly and New Music Quarterly Recordings. He also was active in the formation of American Composers Alliance and was the early administrator of both the ACA and the American Music Center. Interested in the performance of American music and the protection of the American composer, Kerr also became associated with Broadcast Music

Incorporated. Kerr represented ACA and the American Music Center on the National Music Council and later the International Music Council.

His activities with the American Government allowed him to cultivate interest in American music abroad by sending American musicians and music to the occupied areas after World War II. Kerr also brought noted musical figures to the United States to observe American cultural life. His series of lectures for the U.S. Information Agency during the late-1940's were intended to give Europeans insight into the musical and artistic life and heritage of America.

Even in retirement, Kerr is interested in making the music of American composers available to a larger audience through his work with the Composer in America. His lectures and discussions frequently concern problems facing an American composer and his correspondence adamantly defends American music. Harrison Kerr has had a decisive influence in bringing twentieth-century American music to the prominence it holds in the world today.

Harrison Kerr: American Composer

Born in Cleveland in 1897, Kerr received his musical training exclusively in the United States except for his study in 1921 at the Conservatoire Americain de Fontainebleau. Kerr also has lived his entire life in the United States with the exception of a year spent in Vienna while composing a portion of his opera. Kerr and his wife,

Jeanne McHugh, also Cleveland born, have traveled extensively throughout the world and, when Kerr retired, they made a two-and-a-half-year journey through the Orient, Middle East, and Europe. However, they chose to return to Norman, Oklahoma to live their retirement years.

Kerr emerges in a historical perspective as a composer who is a product of America--where he was born, where he developed his compositional style, and where he chose to live his entire life. Although many so-called "American composers" were born and trained abroad, Kerr is exclusively American. Certain indigenous elements such as folk or jazz styles which are often found in the music of Charles Ives, George Gershwin, or Aaron Copland are not present in Kerr's music. The American feature in Kerr's compositions is his personal style that has developed freely and without interference from musical factions or "isms." Although deeply rooted in the evolution of traditional elements, Kerr has sought a style that was the next logical progression from the preceding generation of composers. When Kerr began to find his own style of expression in the 1920's and 1930's, his music was considered incomprehensible by many listeners. Because listeners of the time were unaccustomed to hearing the elements of music in such a progressive guise, the level of musical comprehension was low as was the level of public acceptance. Kerr gradually developed and refined his style until in the late 1930's and

1940's, when audience reaction became more positive. In the 1970's, Kerr's music is still considered to be innovative. However, the listener who has been subjected to many diverse and radical styles comprehends Kerr's music as being traditional in the twentieth century. Now in his eighties, Kerr writes in a mature idiom that has gradually evolved through six decades; yet, some of the distinctive features of his earlier music are still present in his latest compositions. In his music, Harrison Kerr provides the link between romantic composers and the present generation.

Even though he is not a prolific composer, Kerr has lived to compose. Despite the fact that Kerr has not become a musical celebrity during his lifetime or heard frequent performances of his music, Kerr still possesses an innate compulsion to create music in his own expressive style. Kerr is not discouraged. As he has stated, "I have always composed just to compose." As musicians discover Kerr's works and as his music becomes more readily available through recordings and public performances, Kerr will likely be known as one of the significant composers whose creativity gives a logic to musical evolution in the twentieth century.

APPENDIX A

PLATES

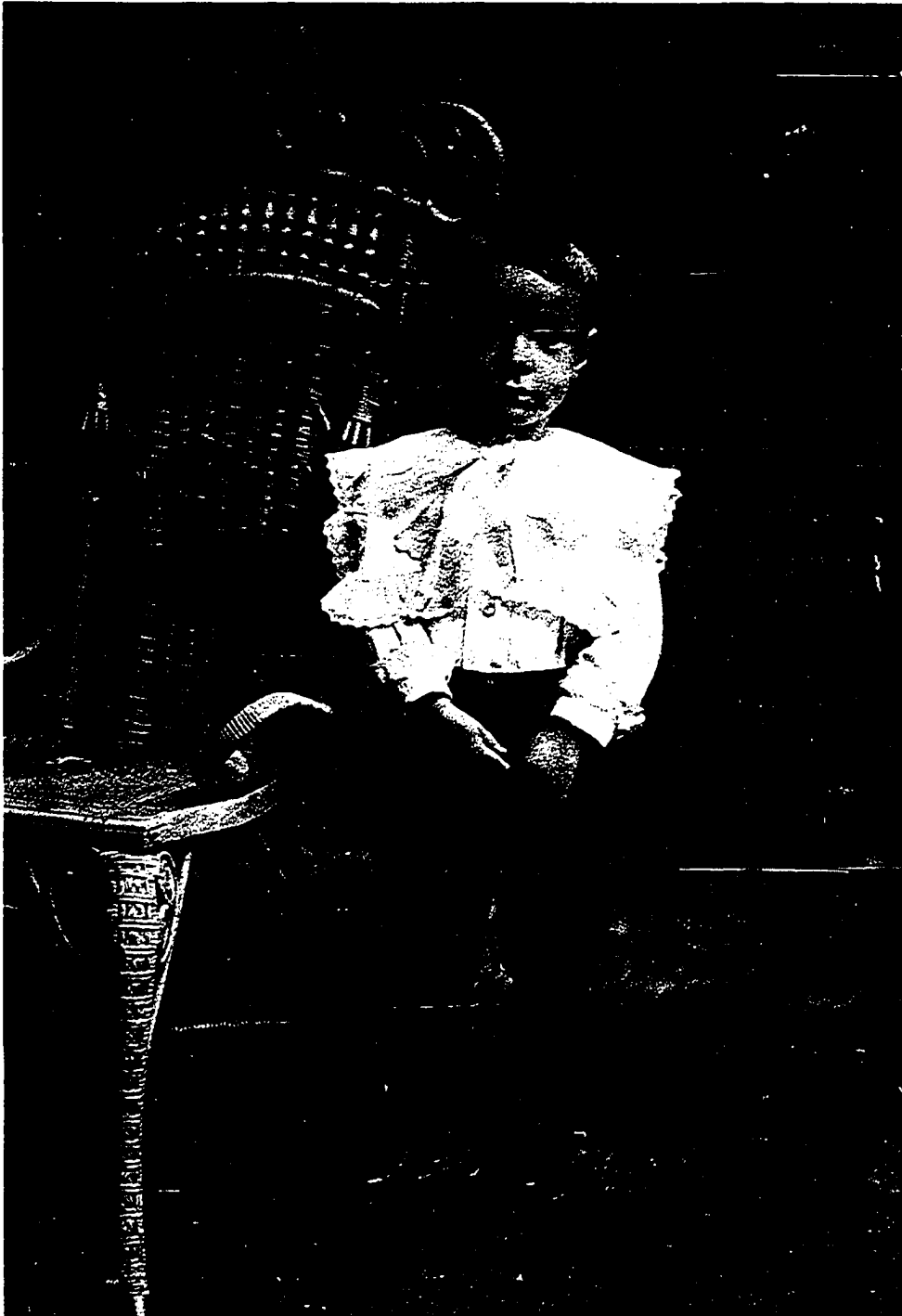


PLATE I. An early portrait of Kerr.



PLATE II. Harrison Kerr dressed for a Fourth of July parade.

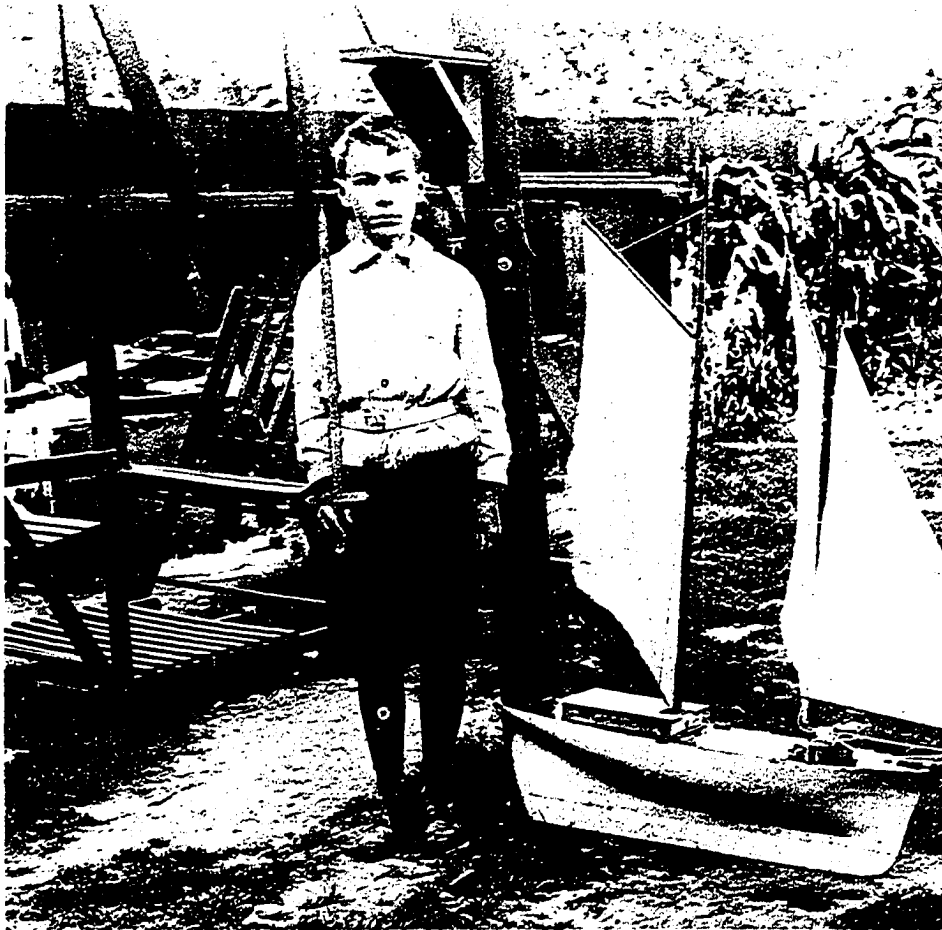


PLATE III. Kerr standing next to his model ship in back of the house on 92nd Street.



PLATE IV. A portrait of Kerr as a youth.

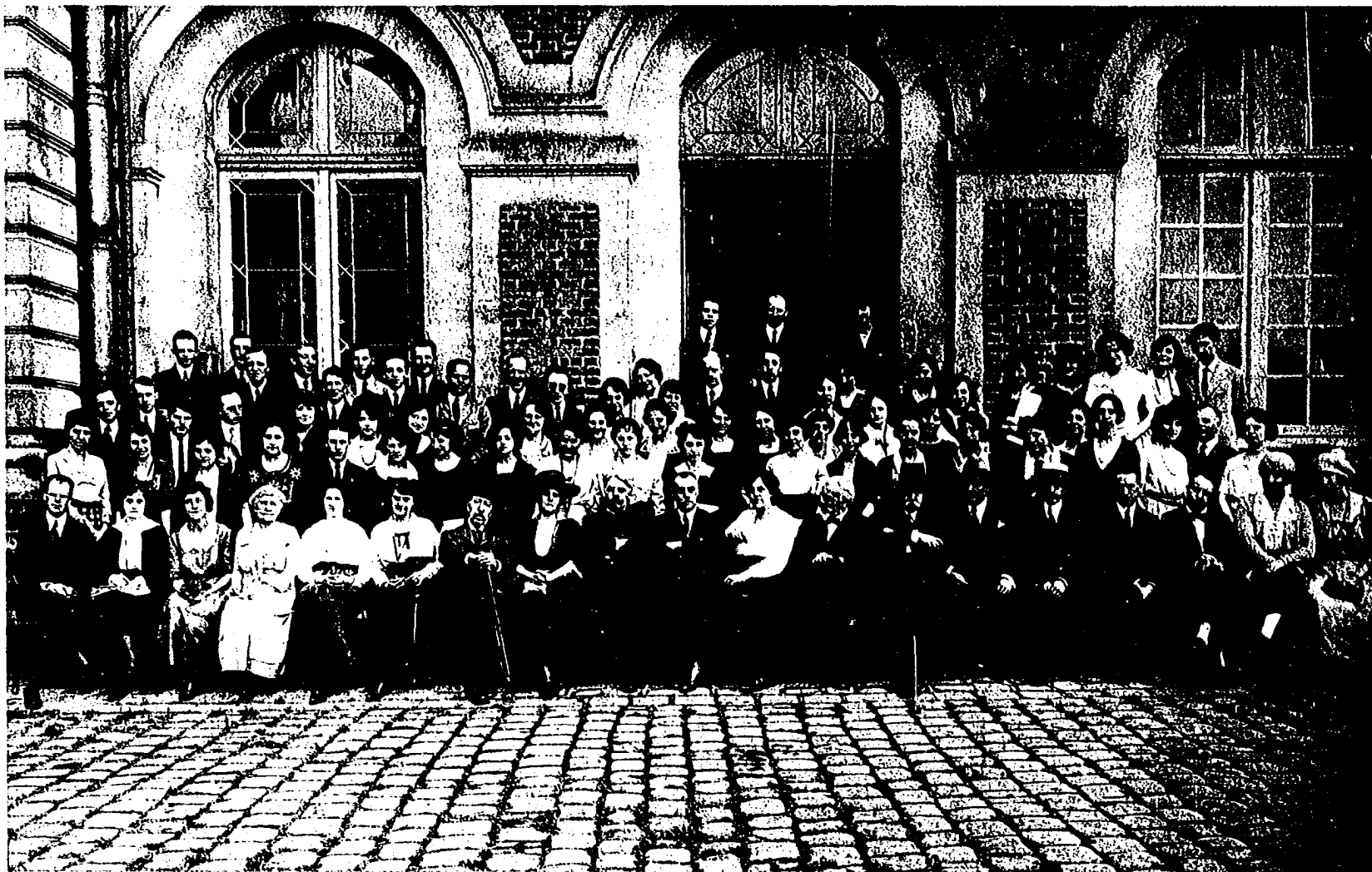


PLATE V. Class of 1921, Conservatoire Americain de Fontainebleau.



PLATE VI. A portrait of Jeanne McHugh taken in Cleveland, Ohio, 1928.

FOREWORD

MODERN educators have long recognized the educational value of the fine arts, even when the student expects to follow none of them as a career.

The need of developing manual dexterity led to the introduction of woodworking and kindred subjects into the high school boy's curriculum. The more serious study of the arts followed and led naturally to the introduction of music as a school subject. It has now come to be considered indispensable in most public and private schools. It is required of nearly all teachers, at least in public schools, that they be prepared to teach it in a simple manner. Recently the introduction of instrumental teaching and orchestras into the schools has demonstrated the value of this art to the student of high school age.

The reasons for the changed attitude toward a subject, formerly thought rather unimportant, are many. The study of music is, for instance, the best coördinator of mind and muscle yet devised by man. Any educational psychologist will agree that a person whose mechanical skill has not been developed is only half educated. The study of a musical instrument is the most practical way to develop this skill. Especially is this true for the girl student.

Music furnishes a means of self-expression to the student at a time when such expression is of greatest value in lessening emotional strain. As a cultural agent it is unsurpassed. It quickens the receptive faculties and develops the aesthetic sensibilities. At the present day no one can hold his place as a cultured individual who does not display the capacity to appreciate fine music as fully as he appreciates fine literature. A true understanding of an art is best acquired through the practice of it. It is a doubly difficult problem for the individual who must attain appreciation without proper technical training.

It is true that the general public, deluged with radio and theatre music, sees no special reason why the child should study to bring into the home an art so easily obtainable from mechanical instruments. Educators do not agree with this viewpoint and it is certain that a reaction away from the present tendency is to come shortly. In an art that requires several years of practice before adequate proficiency is attained, it is well to be forehanded and to anticipate the time when it will again be a social necessity for most people to be able to perform music with some skill.



HARRISON KERR

*Instructor in Pianoforte and Ensemble Playing
and Teacher of Music History and Appreciation and
of the Theoretical Branches of Music.*

MR. KERR'S first musical studies took place in Cleveland, his native city. Among his several teachers there, was James H. Rogers, the well-known organist and composer, with whom he studied for four years.

Going to France in 1921 he studied pianoforte under M. Isidor Phillip, Director of the Piano Department at the Paris Conservatory, and under M. Camille Decreus, Director of the Fountainebleau Conservatory, of which, Mr. Kerr is a graduate. While in France he also studied Harmony and Composition with M. Paul Vidal of the Paris Conservatoire and with Mlle. Nadia Boulanger of the Ecole Normale. He was also a student of Music History under Jacques Pillois.

Mr. Kerr has taught all the above-mentioned branches of music privately and in a number of schools and colleges; among them being Cleveland City College and Greenbrier College, in both of which schools he was Director of Music.

Mr. Kerr is the composer of many works for orchestra and chamber ensembles, as well as solo instruments and voice. He is one of the directors of the Society of Teachers and Composers, Inc.



PLATE VIII. A portrait of Harrison and Jeanne Kerr
in the 1940's.



PLATE IX. A portrait of Kerr in the 1940's.



PLATE X. A photograph of Kerr taken during the period of his work with the Reorientation Branch.

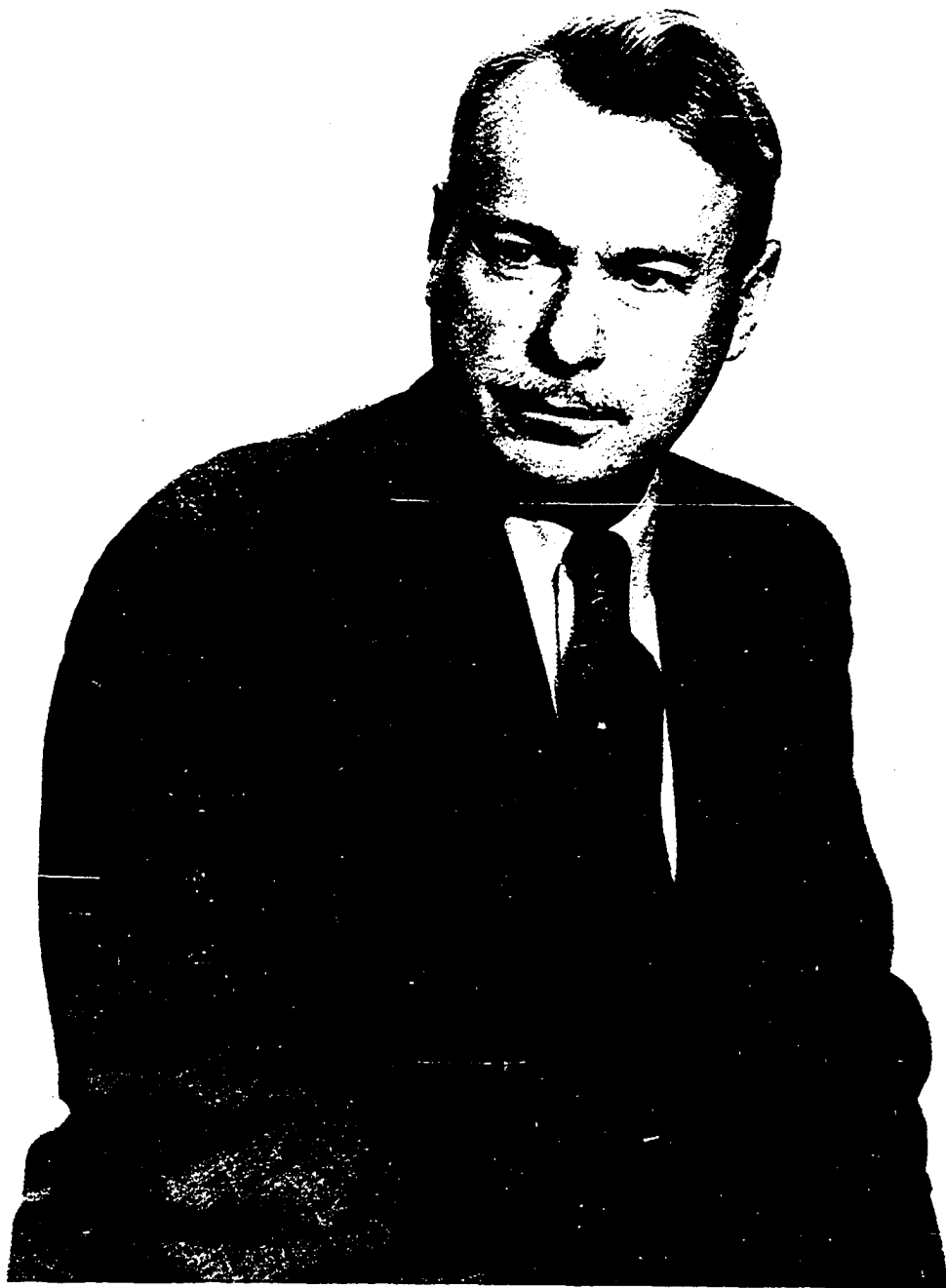


PLATE XI. A portrait of Kerr in the 1950's.

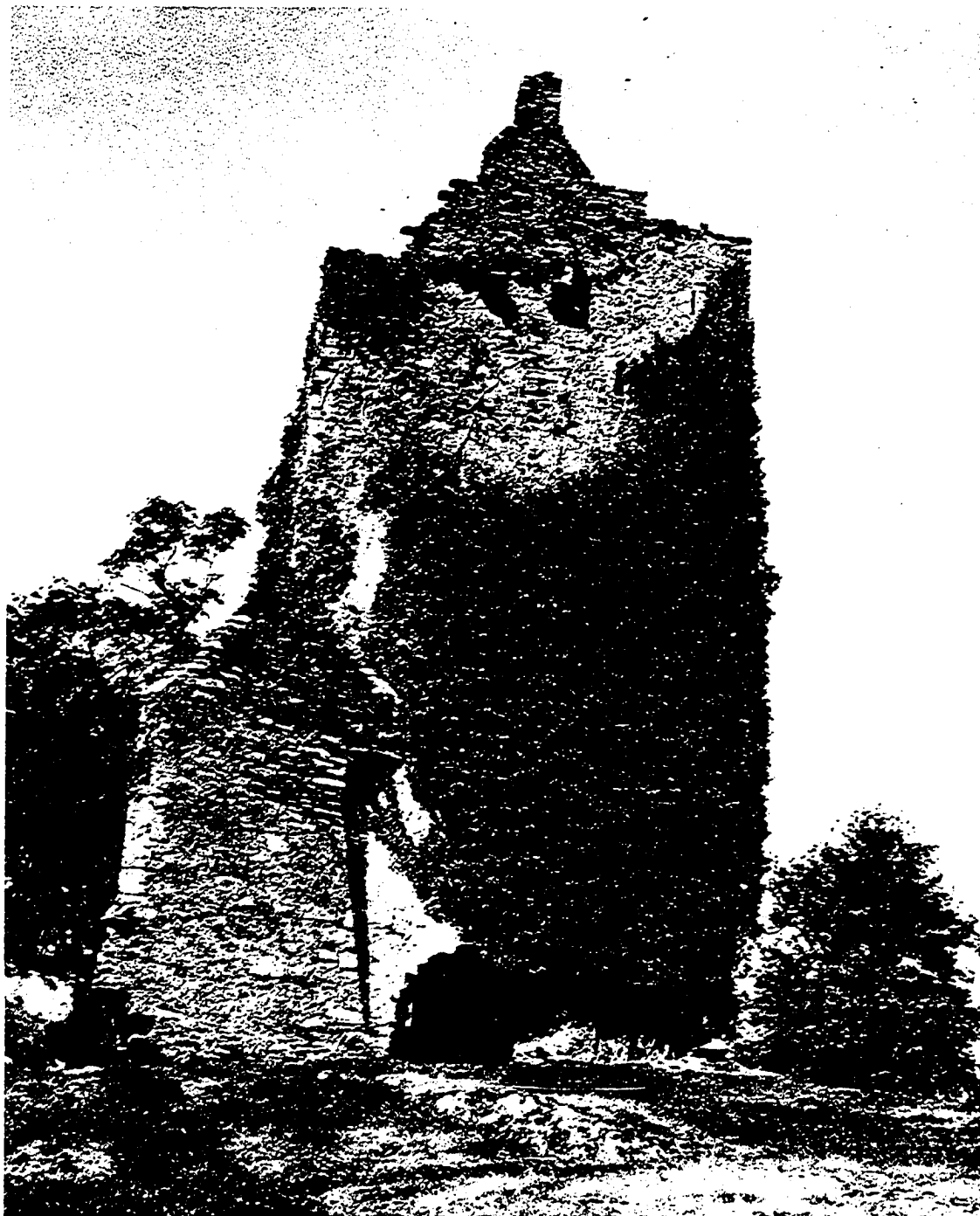


PLATE XII. The Tower of Longing in Ireland.



PLATE XIII. A photograph of Kerr taken in his home during the 1960's.

PLATE XIV. A portrait of Kerr taken for his
eightieth birthday celebration,
"Creativity at Eighty."



APPENDIX B

LIST OF COMPOSITIONS

Stage Works

Dance Suite for Two Pianos and Percussion (1938)

Commissioned: Bennington School of the Dance
First performance: August 5, 1938, Hanya Holm Dance
Group, programmed as "Dance Sonata"

Instrumentation: 2 pianos, 4 tympani, snare drum,
bass drum, cymbals, triangle, tambourine, xylo-
phone; if available: 2 wooden African drums,
2 Hindemith tympani, large gong

Duration: 15 minutes

The Tower of Kel, an opera in four acts (1958-1961)

Libretto: September 1952
Vocal score: January 1958-October 1959
Orchestral score: May 1958-September 1971
Stage settings and costume designs: John O'Neil
1954

First performance: Excerpts from Act I, November
23, 1958, Philip Tregor, baritone; Hartford,
Connecticut Symphony; Moshe Paranov, conductor

Principal roles: soprano, tenor, bass-baritone, bass
Secondary roles: mezzo-soprano, contralto, baritone,
bass-baritone

Chorus, 3 flutes (piccolo), 2 oboes, English horn,
2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contra-
bassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba,
tympani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, xylo-
phone, gong, piano, strings

Duration: 2 hours and 30 minutes

Orchestral WorksSymphony No. 1, in one movement (1927-1928, revised 1938)

First performance: October 24, 1945, Eastman-Rochester Symphony Orchestra, Howard Hanson, conductor, Rochester, New York

Instrumentation: flute, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, tympani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, piano, strings

Duration: 16 minutes

Published: 1946, Boosey and Hawkes (Arrow Music Press)

Dance Suite (1939-1940), orchestral version of Dance Suite for Two Pianos and Percussion (1938)

First performance: October 27, 1942, Eastman-Rochester Symphony orchestra, Howard Hanson, conductor

Instrumentation: 3 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 3 clarinets, 3 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, 4 tympani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, tambourine, xylophone, 2 wooden African drums, 2 Hindemith tympani, large gong, piano, strings

Duration: 15 minutes

Symphony No. 2 (1943-1945), four movements

First performance: February 23, 1951, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma Symphony, composer conducting

Instrumentation: 3 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, tympani, snare drum, bass drum, tambourine, triangle, cymbals, harp strings

Duration: 30 minutes

Symphony No. 3 (1953-1954), three movements

First performance: November 19, 1971, University of

Oklahoma Symphony, Donn Mills, conductor, Norman

Instrumentation: 3 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, tympani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, celesta, strings

Duration: 35 minutes

Variations on a Ground Bass for Orchestra (1966)

Instrumentation: 3 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, tympani, snare drum, cymbals, celesta, harp, piano, strings

Duration: 6 minutes

Sinfonietta (1968), one movement

First performance: November 3, 1977, The Oklahoma Symphony Orchestra, Ainslee Cox, conductor, Chickasha, Oklahoma

Instrumentation: piccolo, flute, oboe, English horn, clarinet, bass clarinet, bassoon, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, tympani, snare drum, cymbals, piano, strings

Duration: 18 minutes

Episodes from The Tower of Kel (1971-1972)

Instrumentation: 3 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, 4 tympani, cymbals, snare drum, bass drum, xylophone, bells, piano, harp, strings

Duration: 25 minutes

Solo Instrument with Orchestra

Overture, Arioso, and Finale for Violoncello and Orchestra (1944-1951), orchestral version 1966-1967)

Instrumentation: solo violoncello, 3 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, tympani, snare drum, cymbals, piano, strings

Duration: 14 minutes

Concerto for Violin and Orchestra (1950-1951, revised 1956)

First orchestral performance: December 12, 1954, Oscar Ravina, violin, Symphony of the Air, David Brockman, conductor, New York City

Instrumentation: solo violin, 2 flutes, piccolo, oboe, English horn, clarinet, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, bass trombone, tympani, snare drum, cymbals, strings

Duration: 20 minutes

Recorded: 1960, Composers Recording, Inc. (CRI-142), Wolfgang Stavonhagen, violin, The Imperial Philharmonic Symphony of Tokyo, William Strickland conductor

Solo Voice with Orchestra or Chamber Ensemble

Six Songs to Poems by Adelaide Crapsey (1924-1928) Triolet, Old Love, Dirge, Fate, The Old, Old Winds, A White Moth Flew

First Performance: January 1936, Louise Taylor, soprano, Modern Art Quartet, New York City

Soprano, string quartet

Duration: 9 minutes

Notations on a Sensitized Plate (1935), poem by Cary Ross

First performance: June 24, 1936, Louise Taylor, soprano, William Boatman, clarinet, Harry Rubinstein, piano, Modern Art Quartet, composer conducting, New York City

High or medium voice, clarinet, string quartet, piano

Duration: 6 minutes

Published: 1949, Merion Music, Inc. (New Music Edition)

Carol on a Sixteenth Century Text (1940)

First performance: February 22, 1950, Margaret Burtaine, soprano, Bela Urban and Frank Natale, violin, Wilfred Fidler, viola, Dorothy Fidler, violoncello

Soprano and string quartet

Duration: 3 minutes

Choral Works

Wink of Eternity (1937)

First performance: December 15, 1937, Negro Art Singers, William Bortman, clarinet, Federal String Quartet, Harry Rubinstein, piano, composer conducting

Mixed chorus, clarinet, string quartet, piano

Duration: 7 minutes

Carol on a Sixteenth Century Text (1940)

Mixed chorus, piano or organ

Duration: 3 minutes

Published: 1975, Conatus Music Press

In Cabin'd Ships at Sea (1971)

Poem by Walt Whitman

Commissioned: Damascus, Maryland High School Chorus

First performance: April 30, 1972, Damascus High School Chorus, Donald Murphy, conductor, Damascus, Maryland

Duration: 11 minutes

Sumer is Icumen In. (1973)

Variations based on chorus from Act IV, The Tower of Kel

Mixed chorus, 2 pianos or solo piano

Duration: 4 minutes

We Are the Makers of Music (1976)

Poem, "Words from Ode" (1874) by Arthur W.E. O'Shaughnessy

Chorus, piano or organ

Duration: 4 minutes

Published: 1976, Conatus Music Press

Chamber MusicString Quartet (1926, revised 1934)

First performance: March 5, 1936, Le Quatuor Crevoisier, Paris, France

Duration: 16 minutes

Trio for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano (1936)

First Performance: June 24, 1936, William Bortman, clarinet, Abe Veder, violoncello, Harry Rubinstein, piano, New York City

Duration: 11 minutes

Published: 1940, Merion Music, Inc. (New Music Edition)

Recorded: 1943, New Music Recordings, Aaron Gorodner, clarinet, Margaret Aue, violoncello, Josef Wagner, piano

String Quartet (1937)

First performance: December 13, 1937, Forum String Quartet in a broadcast at WNYC, Walter Eisenberg,

violin, Milton Lang, violin, Harry Hyams, viola,
Herman Krapkoff, violoncello, New York City

Duration: 21 minutes

Published: 1942, Boosey and Hawkes (Arrow Music
Press)

Dance Suite for Two Pianos and Percussion (1938)

First performance without dance group: December 21,
1938, Edward Sporer and Martha Thompson, piano,
Franziska Boas and Charlotte Sturgess, percussion,
New York City

Duration: 15 minutes

Trio for Violin, Violoncello, and Piano (1938)

First performance: December 21, 1938, Forum Trio,
Eva Stark, violin, Otello Mazzari, violoncello,
Musia Modelevska, piano, New York City

Duration: 14 minutes

Recorded: 1953, University of Oklahoma Recordings
Norman, Robert Gerle, violin, Gabriel Magyar,
violoncello, Keith Wallingford, piano

Suite for Flute and Piano (1940-1941)

First performance: November 22, 1942, Albert Tipton,
flute, Joseph Levine, piano, New York City

Duration: 9 minutes

Published: 1943, Boosey and Hawkes (Arrow Music
Press)

Overture, Arioso, and Finale for Violoncello and Piano
(1944-1951)

First Performance: April 22, 1952, Gabriel Magyar,
violoncello, Mildred Andrews, piano

Duration: 14 minutes

Recorded: 1953, Remington Records (R-199-211), Eber-
hard Finke, violoncello, Claus Billing, piano,
Germany

Sonata for Violin and Piano (1956)

First performance: November 1956, Oscar Ravina,
violin, Rebecca Sidorsky, piano, broadcast at
WNYC, New York City

Duration: 16 minutes

Published: 1973, Edizioni Berben, Ancona, Italy

Recorded: 1968, Century Records, Charles Joseph,
violin, Christoph Eschenbach, piano

String Quartet (1973)

Duration: 20 minutes

Quasi Quodlibet (1974)

Commissioned: The University of Oklahoma Trombone
Choir, Irvin L. Wagner, conductor
First performance: March 18, 1974, University of
Oklahoma Trombone Choir, Irvin L. Wagner,
conductor

Eight trombones

Duration: 15 minutes

Three Duos for Two Flutes (1976)

First performance: October 13, 1977, Christine Smith,
Sandra Steinberg, University of Oklahoma, Norman

Flutes in C and G

Duration: 13 minutes

Published: 1976, Conatus Music Press

Recorded: 1976, Conatus Educational Recordings,
Christine Smith and Sandra Steinberg, Norman

Carrillon (1977)

Bells, celesta, bassoon, sackbut, piano

Duration: 2 minutes

Published: 1977, Conatus Music Press

Compositions for Solo Instruments

Study for Violoncello (1937), unaccompanied

First performance: February 18, 1944, Margaret Aue,
violoncello in a broadcast at WNYC, New York City

Duration: 5 minutes

Published: 1941, Merion Music, Inc. (New Music
Edition)

Recorded: 1938, New Music Recordings

Sonata for Solo Violin (1954)

Commissioned: Gerald Tarrack
First performance: February 5, 1955, Gerald Tarrack,
violin, broadcast at WFUV, Fordham University,
New York City

Duration: 16 minutes

Variations on a Ground Bass for Organ (1966)

Commissioned: H.W. Gray Company
First performance: October 13, 1977, Charles Benbow,
organ, University of Oklahoma, Norman

Duration: 6 minutes

Variations on a Theme from The Tower of Kel (1971)

Commissioned: Edizioni Berben

Solo guitar

Duration: 8 minutes

Published: 1972, Edizioni Berben, Ancona, Italy

Voice with Piano

Three Songs to Poems by Omar Khayyam (1919) Ah Love,
When You and I, Yon Rising Moon

Duration: 5 minutes

Published: 1975, Conatus Music Press

Six Songs to Poems by Sara Teasdale (1919) Twilight, Tonight, The Wind, I Shall Not Care, Tides, Give Me Neither Love Nor Tears

Duration: 11 minutes

Three Songs to Poems by Edna St. Vincent Millay (1924-1928) The Death of Autumn, Ebb, Wild Swans

Duration: 12 minutes

Published: 1975, Conatus Music Press

Six Songs to Poems by Adelaide Crapsey (1923-1931) Triolet (1923), Dirge, Old Love (1926), Fate, The Old, Old Winds, A White Moth Flew (1931)

Duration: 9 minutes

Published: 1952, E.B. Marks; 1975, Conatus Music Press

I Am Your Song (1930), poem by Leonard Cline

First performance: June 24, 1936, broadcast WNYC, New York City

Duration: 4 minutes

Carol on a Sixteenth Century Text (1940)

Voice, piano or organ

Duration: 3 minutes

Published: 1975, Conatus Music Press

She Tells Her Love (1950), poem by Robert Graves

Duration: 3 minutes

A Terrible Night (1951), poem by Christopher Morley

Baritone and piano

Duration: 5 minutes

Darkness (1952), poem by Harry Roskolenko

Baritone and piano

Duration: 5 minutes

The Friar's Sermon from Act I, The Tower of Kel (1958)

Baritone and piano

Duration: 6 minutes

The Irish Dancer from Act II, The Tower of Kel

Mezzo-soprano and piano

Duration: 5 minutes

Piano Solo

Sonata No. 1

First performance: July 30, 1933, Harry Rubinstein,
broadcast at a WEVD, New York City

Duration: 15 minutes

Fugue on "Entre Le Boeuf et L'Anegris" (1933)

Duration: 3 minutes

Sonata No. 2 (1943)

First performance: January 28, 1947, Emile Baume,
piano, Carnegie Hall, New York City

Duration: 15 minutes

Published: 1947, Boosey and Hawkes (Arrow Music
Press)

Preludes, Book I (1943), Maestoso, Allegretto, Scherzando,
Lento, Allegretto Moderato

First performance: June 27, 1943, Erno Balogh,
piano, in a broadcast at WQXR, New York City

Duration: 9 minutes

Published: 1947, Broadcast Music Inc.; 1975, Conatus
Music Press

Preludes, Book II (1926-1973), poem (1926), Lento (1945),
Vivace (1973), Lento Molto (1973)

Duration: 15 minutes

Published: 1976, Conatus Music Press

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