

1967

A Study of the Solo Piano Works of Paul Creston

Carol L. Nelson Walgren

Eastern Illinois University

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A STUDY OF THE SOLO PIANO WORKS

OF PAUL CRESTON

(TITLE)

BY

CAROL L. NELSON WALGREN

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1967

YEAR

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	11
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	iv
 Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of Problem	
Scope of Study	
Methodology	
Definition of Terms	
II. BACKGROUND	7
III. ANALYSES	10
<u>Five Dances</u>	10
<u>Seven Theses</u>	22
<u>Sonata</u>	34
<u>Five Two-Part Inventions</u>	43
<u>Five Little Dances</u>	49
<u>Prelude and Dance I</u>	52
<u>Prelude and Dance II</u>	57
<u>Six Preludes</u>	61
<u>Three Narratives</u>	69
<u>Metamorphoses</u>	82
IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	91
APPENDIX	95
Honors, Awards, and Commissions	96
BIBLIOGRAPHY	97

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Example	Page
1. <u>Five Dances</u> , "Daemonic," meas. 3	11
2. <u>Five Dances</u> , "Daemonic," meas. 5, 7, 11, 12, 26-27, 38-39	11
3. <u>Five Dances</u> , "Primitive Idyl," meas. 11, 17-18	12
4. <u>Five Dances</u> , "Tarantella," meas. 1-3, 5-6	13
5. <u>Five Dances</u> , "Daemonic," meas. 6-7	14
6. <u>Five Dances</u> , "Primitive Idyl," meas. 29- 30	15
7. <u>Five Dances</u> , "Villanella," meas. 50-52	15
8. <u>Five Dances</u> , "Tarantella," meas. 8-9, 176-177	16
9. <u>Five Dances</u> , "Daemonic," meas. 33-34	17
10. <u>Five Dances</u> , "Daemonic," meas. 44-45	18
11. <u>Five Dances</u> , "Tarantella," meas. 1, 31- 32, 62-63, 121, 122	21
12. <u>Seven Theses</u> , "Thesis II," meas. 1, 9-10	24
13. <u>Seven Theses</u> , "Thesis VI," meas. 6-8	25
14. <u>Seven Theses</u> , "Thesis I," meas. 1	27
15. <u>Seven Theses</u> , "Thesis III," meas. 3	27
16. <u>Seven Theses</u> , "Thesis VI," meas. 21-22	28
17. <u>Seven Theses</u> , "Thesis VII," meas. 7-8	28
18. <u>Seven Theses</u> , "Thesis I," meas. 3	29

19.	<u>Seven Theses</u> , "Thesis II," meas. 7-8	29
20.	<u>Sonata</u> , first movement, meas. 1-2, 6-7, 11-12	35
21.	<u>Sonata</u> , second movement, meas. 1-4	36
22.	<u>Sonata</u> , fourth movement, meas. 10-11, 17-18, 62-63	37
23.	<u>Sonata</u> , first movement, meas. 83-84	38
24.	<u>Sonata</u> , second movement, meas. 115-117	38
25.	<u>Five Two-Part Inventions</u> , No. 1, meas. 1-2	44
26.	<u>Five Two-Part Inventions</u> , No. 5, meas. 1-3, 6, 11-12	45
27.	<u>Five Two-Part Inventions</u> , No. 1, meas. 11-12	46
28.	<u>Five Two-Part Inventions</u> , No. 3, meas. 1-2	46
29.	<u>Five Two-Part Inventions</u> , No. 3, meas. 1-2, 9-10	48
30.	<u>Five Little Dances</u> , "Rustic Dance," meas. 9-11	50
31.	<u>Five Little Dances</u> , "Toy Dance," meas. 1-3	51
32.	<u>Prelude and Dance I</u> , meas. 1-3, 19-21, 24-25	53
33.	<u>Prelude and Dance I</u> , meas. 48-50, 62-63	54
34.	<u>Prelude and Dance I</u> , meas. 50-51	55
35.	<u>Prelude and Dance II</u> , meas. 1-2, 14-15, 27-28, 55-56	58
36.	<u>Six Preludes</u> , No. 1, meas. 8-9, 13-14	62
37.	<u>Six Preludes</u> , No. 3, meas. 1-3	63
38.	<u>Six Preludes</u> , No. 5, meas. 1-2	64

39.	<u>Six Preludes</u> , No. 6, meas. 1-2	64
40.	<u>Six Preludes</u> , No. 1, meas. 1	65
41.	<u>Six Preludes</u> , No. 2, meas. 1	65
42.	<u>Six Preludes</u> , No. 6, meas. 9-10	68
43.	<u>Three Narratives</u> , "Narrative I," meas. 13-17, 24-25	70
44.	<u>Three Narratives</u> , "Narrative I," meas. 53-54, 66-67	71
45.	<u>Three Narratives</u> , "Narrative I," meas. 155-158	71
46.	<u>Three Narratives</u> , "Narrative II," meas. 1, 3-5, 31	72
47.	<u>Three Narratives</u> , "Narrative III," meas. 20-21, 81-83, 155-156	73
48.	<u>Three Narratives</u> , "Narrative I," meas. 8-9, 119	74
49.	<u>Three Narratives</u> , "Narrative III," meas. 62	75
50.	<u>Three Narratives</u> , "Narrative III," meas. 57	75
51.	<u>Three Narratives</u> , "Narrative I," meas. 57-58	76
52.	<u>Three Narratives</u> , "Narrative III," meas. 123	77
53.	<u>Metamorphoses</u> , "Theme," meas. 1	84
54.	<u>Metamorphoses</u> , "Variation IX," meas. 137-138	84
55.	<u>Metamorphoses</u> , "Variation XVI," meas. 289-290	85
56.	<u>Metamorphoses</u> , "Variation X," meas. 149-150	85

57.	<u>Metamorphoses, "Variation VI,"</u>	
	meas. 75-76	86
58.	<u>Metamorphoses, "Variation XX,"</u>	
	meas. 400-401	88

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The piano music of the twentieth century is a diverse, growing body of literature. If students are to be able to make knowledgeable selections for study, the need for its thorough, definitive analysis is apparent. Paul Creston's piano music is a part of this increasing collection. The piano is particularly emphasized in the total output of Creston's works. For example, the piano is specified in thirty out of fifty-two orchestral and chamber works. There are three piano concertos and ten works for piano solo.

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this paper is to examine the solo piano works and to discover basic characteristics in their structure and style.

Scope of the study. This paper will consider the ten mature piano works only. The pieces to be analyzed are listed with their dates of composition:¹

<u>Five Dances</u> , opus 1	1932
<u>Seven Theses</u> , opus 3	1933

¹The complete listing of the solo piano works and their publishers is included in the bibliography.

<u>Sonata</u> , opus 9	1936
<u>Five Two-Part Inventions</u> , opus 14	1937
<u>Five Little Dances</u> , opus 24	1940
<u>Prelude and Dance</u> , opus 29, no. 1	1942
<u>Prelude and Dance</u> , opus 29, no. 2	1942
<u>Six Preludes</u> , opus 38	1945
<u>Three Narratives</u> , opus 79	1962
<u>Metamorphoses</u> , opus 84	1964

The compositional dates of these works span the creative period of the composer to the present. All of the solo piano works have been published, including the first four books of Rhythmicon, a projected series of ten books of rhythmic studies, and Virtuoso Techniques for piano. The children's pieces include Rumba and Pony Rondo. The above mentioned pieces will not be a part of the major analytical study because they are pedagogical or are for children, rather than a part of the performance literature for the pianist. The Six Preludes, opus 38, which were written as examples of the methods of rhythmic structure are included in this group for their aesthetic as well as pedagogic qualities. The rhythmic principles are described at the end of this chapter. Five Little Dances are discussed so that the reader can become acquainted with a piece of Creston's which is for the intermediate pianist.

Methodology. The pieces will be examined in chronological order of composition. The date of composition for

each is the same as the year of publication. Each piece will be discussed individually in regard to:

1. Background, including date of composition and first performance; dominant expressive character; difficulty; and other distinguishing features.
2. Melody, including its vertical and horizontal dimensions; general qualities such as intervallic relationships, contour, scale basis, figuration; function and influence; and its exploitation, development and structural derivation.
3. Harmony and tonality, including chord vocabulary and function; tonal centers and relationships; treatment of consonance, dissonance, tension, and chromaticism; and harmonic or tonal rhythm and emphasis.
4. Texture, including a description of its homophonic, polyphonic, or hybrid nature; its relative density and distribution in the keyboard range; and special effects or processes of accompaniment or figuration.
5. Meter, tempo, and rhythm, including patterning of rhythmic divisions using the terminology which is found in Creston's book;² special accentuation; dimensions of rhythmic activity; and patterns and usage of meter and tempo.
6. Form, including the basic type or main formal devices; relative length and balance; contrast, unity, and phraseology; and processes of musical composition which are pertinent to the form.
7. Summary, including a brief digest of the main characteristics of the immediate piece examined.

Definition of terms. The present writer has adopted some of the composer's rhythmic terminology for use in describing the music because Creston has written a book about meter, tempo, and rhythm. In addition, knowledge of these

²Paul Creston, Principles of Rhythm (New York: Franco Colombo, Inc., 1964). See definitions, pp. 4-5.

terms is valuable to the analysis of at least one set of the piano pieces, Six Preludes, which were written as examples of his rhythmic terminology.³ The definitions which follow are based on concepts and examples presented in his book, Principles of Rhythm.⁴ They are meant to simplify and clarify the discussion of meter, tempo, and accent by describing an additional factor--rhythmic pattern, that is, subdivisions⁵ of the rhythmic pulse.

The rhythmic patterns may coincide with the basic metric pulse, or, by means of dots, ties, or numerals, they can alter meters and change accent. The type of rhythmic structure can determine alterations such as hemiola, multi-meter, polymeter, mixed rhythms, and syncopation. The definitions and examples which follow are quoted from Creston's book.

1. Regular subdivision--the organization of a measure into equal beats,⁶ i.e., beats of equal duration. [When the subdivision of the beats is extrametrical, the result is hemiola.]

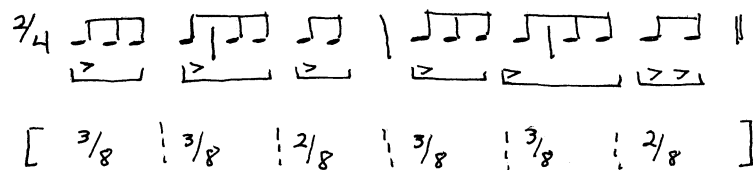
³See the rhythmic analysis of Six Preludes in Chapter III, p. 66.

⁴Creston, op.cit.

⁵The word "subdivision" is used by Creston to designate divisions of the measure as well as of the pulse unit.

⁶The term "beat" is used to indicate the actual sounded rhythmic beat which may or may not coincide with the pulses of the measure which are stated in the numerator of the meter signature.

5. Irregular subdivision overlapping--the organization of a group of measures into unequal beats overlapping the bar line. This structure often results in a repeated pattern of implied metric change.



CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND

Paul Creston was born in New York City in 1906. He has attained a respected position among musicians of the United States and Europe. His first published composition is Five Dances, opus 1, for piano, published in 1932 when the composer was twenty-six years old. Since that time he has produced over 100 compositions, 80 of them major works. Piano compositions, songs, choral works, cantatas, an oratorio, symphonic band pieces, chamber music for various instrumental combinations, over thirty orchestral works (including five symphonies and thirteen concertos), and works for solo wind and percussion instruments have won him a prominent place among American composers.

The composer is self-taught in harmony, counterpoint, orchestration, and composition. He studied piano with G. Aldo Randegger and Gaston Dethier and organ with Pietro Yon. Although he began to write music at the age of eight, he wavered between a career in literature and music until his first composition was published. Since that time he has remained in the field of music as a composer and teacher.

Creston, in addition to composing and teaching,

has been active as a lecturer, pianist, organist, and conductor. Since 1934 he has been the organist of St. Malachy's church in New York City. He has held positions at the University of Southern California, Swarthmore College, universities in Turkey and Israel, and is the author of two books: Principles of Rhythm, published in 1961, and Creative Harmony, which has not yet been published.

He has written concertos for the marimba, saxophone, trombone, harp, and accordion, in addition to the major body of works previously mentioned. Numerous scores for radio, television, and films add to the composer's repertoire.

Many of his works have been recorded, and many have been commissioned by individuals and organizations. The list of awards and honors he has earned includes the Guggenheim Fellowship for 1938 and 1939, the Citation of Merit from the National Association for American Composers and Conductors as "outstanding composer of the year" in 1941, the Music Critic's Circle Award, the Alice M. Ditson award in 1945, and First Prize in the Paris International Referendum of 1952 for his First Symphony.

Reviews of his works have appeared often in major periodicals. These include American Allegro, Music and Letters, Musical Times, Musical Courier, Hi-Fidelity,

Music Journal, Juilliard Review, Pan Pipes of Sigma Alpha Iota, The Musical Quarterly, and various newspapers. Most of the standard musical reference sources and current biographical publications have articles about him.

Edourd von Remoortel has the following to say about Creston's music:

Creston's melodies are rich, his rhythmic structures vividly graded, and his harmony, whether tonal or not, is the servant of his inspiration and not its master.⁷

⁷Edourd von Remoortel, "Reviews," Musical Times, (April, 1957), p. 213.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSES

Five Dances

Five Dances, opus 1, were composed in 1932. The descriptive titles of the five pieces indicate the character of each. The first, "Daemonic," is a lively, dramatic piece to be played feroce. The second dance, "Primitive Idyl," is contrasting in mood to the first. Languid expression is indicated, and a rustic quality is manifested. The central dance of the group, "Villanella," maintains a folk-like character, but the dynamics, tempo and attack contrast to the preceding piece. The fourth dance, "Sarabande Lugubre," is highly ornamented. As its title indicates, the expressive character is an exaggerated mournfulness. It is followed by a lively "Tarantella" which concludes the set. Fourteen minutes of playing time are required. The pieces are not easy and require agility in performing rhythmic patterns.

Melody. The melodies of all of the pieces have a characteristically narrow range. The range of each melodic phrase rarely exceeds an octave in any piece. That of "Primitive Idyl" is only a sixth.

The contours of the melodies vary in each dance. The first, "Daemonic," has melodies which are nearly always ascending, although counter melodies and counterpoint often descend. The rising motives of this piece are usually short phrases of only one or two measures and are characterized by much chromatic linear motion. The following example will illustrate.

Example 1. Five Dances, "Daemonic," m. 3.

The introductory melody is followed by thematic development in which a chromatic motive based on three notes is gradually expanded into a melody based upon a twelve-tone row. The example which follows illustrates this motivic development.

Example 2. Five Dances, "Daemonic."

(a) m. 5

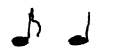
(b) m. 7

(b) mm. 17-18



The third dance, "Villanella," is in natural minor mode. The theme has a phrase length of eight measures. Whole and half-step motion is predominant. The melody is exploited through repetition with slight intervallic changes.

The following piece, "Sarabande Lugubre," has a short melodic motive which contrasts to the longer melody of the preceding dance. A descending leap of a perfect fifth dominates the melody of the first section. All else in this section can be analyzed as embellishment or alteration of the motive.

The melodic design of "Tarantella" is characterized by whole and half-step movement with contrasting sections which move by larger intervals but which stay within an octave range. Melodic skips are often done in  figures, and scale motion in the melody is usually placed in steady eighth-notes.

Example 4. Five Dances, "Tarantella."

(a) mm. 1-3



(b) mm. 5-6



Frequent repetition of melodic material is evident in all of the pieces. For example, short phrases, often of two measures, are repeated and extended throughout "Daemonic." Long phrases of "Villanella" are repeated and sometimes varied. Sequences occur occasionally. An example can be found in measures 7 and 8 of "Sarabande Lugubre." Imitation is used in measures 30 through 42 of "Daemonic."

Harmony and tonality. Traditional harmony is not typical of any of the pieces. Each has individual chord structures, progressions and treatment of dissonance. Unconventional harmonic changes and highly dissonant chords are employed.

The chord structures of "Daemonic" are often built of intervals of fourths and sevenths. The progressions are frequently chromatic, and tonal centers occur, rather than keys being established. "Daemonic" has half-note octave pedal points which give a tonal reference in measures 6 through 9 for the parallel harmonies.

Example 5. Five Dances, "Daemonic," mm. 6-7.

Other typical examples of similar harmonic structures which

can be observed are parallel diminished fifths which occur in measures 10 through 13, and a series of parallel major sevenths which occur in measure 14.

The second dance, "Primitive Idyl," has harmony which is characterized by vertical intervals of fourths, fifths, and sevenths. It appears that the pentatonicism, which is used melodically in the opening, is the basis for harmonic structures in the left hand from measures 17 through 42. Only the notes D, E, F-sharp, A, and B are employed in the left hand in these measures.

Example 6. Five Dances, "Primitive Idyl," mm. 29-30.



The harmonies of "Villanella" include a variety of tertian structures. Chords with added sixths occur in the right hand in parallel motion at measures 54 through 57. Polychordal treatment is also characteristic of the piece.

Example 7. Five Dances, "Villanella," mm. 50-52.



"Sarabande Lugubre" has tertian chord structures in the opening section. Later in the piece there is a preponderance of chromaticism and much use of streams of chords built of seconds and sevenths.

The last dance, "Tarantella," consists of chromatic harmony similar to the other pieces. The harmonies are often heterogeneous--tertian chord structures, polyharmony, and parallelism are evident. Dissonance is used almost continually and usually is not prepared or resolved traditionally. There is harmonic progression, but dissonance resolves to dissonance.

Example 8. Five Dances, "Tarantella."

(a) mm. 8-9

(b) mm. 176-177

Texture. Both homophonic and polyphonic textures are utilized in the Five Dances. Repetition of accompaniment patterns in the bass occurs in all five of the works, as

does parallel motion of chords in one or both clefs. The range and distribution of parts on the keyboard are varied, but are not extreme in any of the dances.

The texture of "Daemonic" is homophonic at the beginning. It is basically contrapuntal in measures 39 through 43 when a twelve-tone subject is stated and then imitated with accompanying counterpoint. The homophonic portion of the dance has some polyphonic aspects in that the parts are often of pronounced melodic or rhythmic individuality. Examples can be found in which the bass has a distinctive character, although it is a repeated accompaniment figure.


Example 9. Five Dances, "Daemonic," mm. 33-34.

"Primitive Idyl" is written in homophonic texture which is characterized by a repeated chord pattern in the bass. Relatively even vertical spacing is maintained throughout the dance. Fourth and fifth intervals are typical.

"Villanella" is also homophonic. The preponderance of thirds in the vertical spacing contrasts to the texture of the preceding piece. In addition, the number of parts is sometimes increased to eight. The texture is particularly influenced by two repeated figures in the opening part. The

first is a drone or pedal above the melody; the second is an accompaniment pattern consisting of chords on every eighth-note.

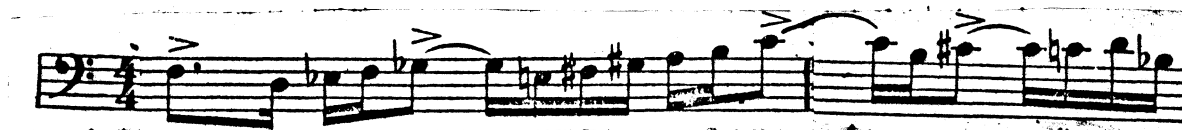
The following dance, "Sarabande Lugubre," occasionally has chord clusters in its homophonic texture. Examples of the close spacing of vertical intervals can be found in measures 24 through 29.

The last dance, "Tarantella," is usually homophonic and has many repeated accompaniment figures which have a simple rhythmic design. The texture of some passages is contrapuntal, owing to the pronounced independence of parts, for example, at measures 9 and 10. A thin, dissonant, two-voiced texture is heard in the central section from measures 54 through 71. The accompaniment pattern in the bass is a repeated rhythmic figure:  .

Meter, tempo, and rhythm. There is a variety of tempo and meter in the five pieces. The overall rhythmic character therefore offers contrast and variety. The meter for each piece remains constant throughout, except in "Daemonic," which is basically in 4/4 meter, but has some 2/4 meter and one measure of 3/4 at the end.



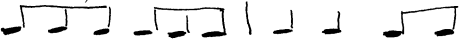

Irregular accent or stress often obscures the metric scheme and is found in all of the pieces. "Daemonic" has the most frequent use of this device. The irregular pattern sometimes overlaps the bar line.

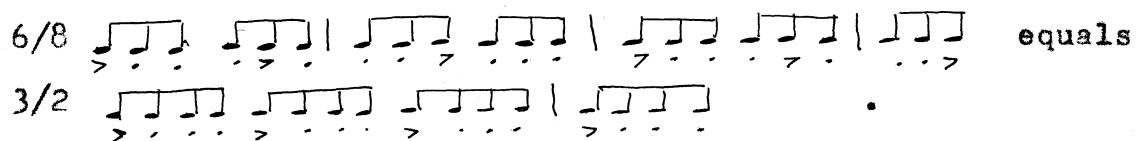
Example 10. Five Dances, "Daemonic," mm. 44-45.



The rhythmic element is prominent in all of the dances. Recurrent accompaniment patterns are characteristic of the set, although there is flexibility and variety in their use. The rhythm of "Villanella" is characterized by steady eighth-note motion in the bass accompaniment pattern. The rhythm is almost plodding because of the consistent eighth-note motion of the accompaniment. Changes in stress which do occur in the melody are relatively simple.

"Sarabande Lugubre" is rhythmically constructed of regular subdivisions of the $3/4$ meter, and the pulse and beat usually coincide. An exception occurs in a short portion from measures 13 through 16 in which the triple subdivision changes to duple subdivision. This is effected by an accent at the mid-point of the measure.

Two basic rhythmic patterns are exploited in "Taran-tella." The first is $6/8$  ; the second is $6/8$  . More complex figures occur occasionally. For example, there is a change from duple to triple subdivision which occurs in measures 2 and 3 of the melody of this piece: $6/8$  . Extra-metrical rhythm occurs in measure 15 in the form of a duplet group:  . Regular subdivision overlapping which results in the enlargement of the meter, is evident in the treble clef of measures 54 through 58:



Form. Five dances of relatively similar length comprise the set. Contrast is achieved through dissimilar expressive character and individuality in melodic contours, harmonies, textures, and rhythmic patterns. Emphasis on the rustic rhythmic aspect provides unity to the group.

Form in "Daemonic" results from the exploitation of motivic ideas which does not divide into well-marked sections. The melodic motives are gradually expanded and developed into a twelve-tone row which is first stated in measures 39 and 40. (The melodic expansion is discussed under "melody.") Contrapuntal treatment of the melody is followed by repetitions of the theme and thematic motives.

"Primitive Idyl" divides into three well-marked sections of A B A structure. The first sixteen bars have a right-hand melody which is made of the notes B, C-sharp, D-sharp, F-sharp, and G-sharp; the second part is thematic repetition with harmony in added fourths. The final section of this piece is a six-measure statement of the original pentatonic melody with tertian harmonic structures.

"Villanella" is based upon an eight-measure phrase which is stated at the beginning of the piece and is repeated near the end at measure 48. The same basic harmonic structure is used for both statements, although the textures differ. Figures and motives of the melody, which is used

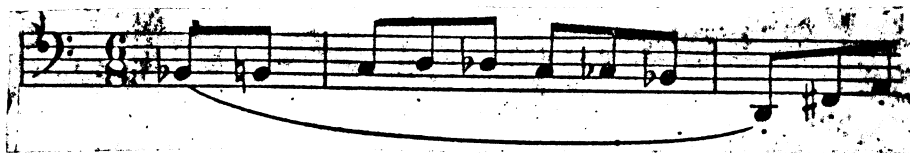
in free repetition, are found in the middle section.

Three slightly varied statements of a four-measure theme are found in "Sarabande Lugubre." Between the thematic statements is connective material. The resulting formal arrangement is a combination of variation and rondo forms and can be represented as follows: $A_1 B A_2 C A_3$. The last four measures are closing material derived from the theme.

The last dance, "Tarantella," is generally a repetition form in which the basic melodic and rhythmic material is presented in the first fifteen measures. The structure is characterized by a perpetual rhythmic drive which leads from one rhythmic and melodic statement to another. Sections are not clearly defined, but there is extensive variety of textures, phrasing, and harmonic contexts. All of the musical ideas are related, in either rhythmic or melodic contour, to the first part of the piece. Related melodic ideas are illustrated in Example 11.

Example 11. Five Dances, "Tarantella."

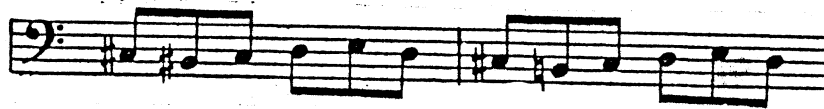
(a) m. 1



(b) mm. 31-32



(c) mm. 62-63



(d) mm. 121-122



Summary. The construction of the melodies is based on a variety of techniques. Chromaticism, pentatonicism, and a twelve-tone row are used in the melodic designs. Extension and repetition of musical phrases are characteristic. Harmonies are often unconventional, and vertical intervals are consistently dissonant. Texture is varied in density and character. Usually both registers have independently strong contours. Both sectional and continuous forms are used. All of the pieces have a large amount of motivic development and repetition.

Seven Theses

Seven Theses, opus 3, is the second piano solo composed by Creston. It was published in 1933, one year after the Five Dances. The work is divided into seven relatively short pieces, each of which has its individual character. The expressive markings of the pieces are respectively: maestoso, scorrevole (freely flowing), espressivo, giocosso, grazioso, tranquillo, and feroce.

The performer is informed that accidentals affect only the notes to which they are prefixed in all except

the fourth and seventh pieces. (This exceptional rule will also apply to the examples from the "Theses.") The pieces are difficult. Friskin and Freundlich describe them as "complicated studies in counterpoint and various metric and harmonic problems. Sophisticated, abstruse, difficult."⁸ Irregular phrasing and complex rhythmic structure make this work difficult to play without a studied and "academic" effect.

Melody. The melodies of Seven Theses are through-composed in the sense that there are no literal repetitions of phrases or sections, although there are strong relationships in melodic intervals and rhythmic patterns.

Melodic intervals of the first piece are seldom wider than a fifth. The chromatic scale is the basis for linear progression. Each melodic strand undergoes continuous development. The opening top ten notes of each clef have a notable feature: each clef uses a different arrangement of ten different tones. These "rows" are not repeated. Because of the highly flexible character of all the melodies in this set, phrases in which no note is repeated are not unlikely; however, melodic statements are usually sequences of fewer than twelve different tones. Dodecaphonic technique is not the basis for the group.

The second "Thesis" is characterized by melodic

⁸James Friskin and Irwin Freundlich, Music for the Piano edited by Ernest Hutcheson (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1960), p. 259.

continuous development similar to that of the other pieces.

The fourth piece is characterized by alternation of quick conjunct melodic figures followed by wider leaps. The melodic structure of the accompaniment has steady rhythm and makes use of repeated notes.

The thematic material of the fifth "Thesis" consists of short phrases. Two melodic strands are evident: the dominant melody is in the right hand; a subordinate idea is in the left hand. Melodic intervals of seconds, thirds, and fourths are characteristic of both. The scale basis is chromatic.

The left hand introduces a melodic figure in "Thesis VI" which moves mostly by major and minor seconds. The principal melody, which is presented in the right hand beginning at measure 5, often has movement by major and minor seconds followed by a larger intervallic leap in the opposite direction.

Example 13. Seven Theses, "Thesis VI," mm. 6-8.



Like the other pieces which make up this set, the melodic structure is governed by the recurrence of intervals and rhythmic motives rather than by a particular key. For instance, the melody opens on the note of B and ends on B-flat.

The melody of the last piece gradually expands in

breadth: the melodic intervals of the first five measures do not exceed a diminished fifth; however, intervals of major and minor sevenths and sixths are introduced later.

Phrasing is sometimes indicated by commas placed directly above the staff, for example, in the fifth and sixth pieces. Phrases usually are of uneven lengths and often do not coincide for both left and right hands. This is especially noticeable in "Thesis VI" because the composer indicates the phrasing in each staff by commas.

Harmony and tonality. The pieces often have an element of pandiatonicism in their harmonic structures. Unconventional progressions and chord combinations are employed. The compositional basis for harmony sometimes seems to be the equality of the tones in the chromatic scale.

The first "Thesis" has full, triadic, consonant chords in the right hand. The accompanying harmonies in the left hand are often dissonant, and the vertical sonorities resulting from the two hands playing simultaneously are highly dissonant throughout. The first measure has vertical minor and major seconds or sevenths on every beat. The harmonic progressions are not traditional and do not seem to follow a particular pattern.

Example 14. Seven Theses, "Thesis I," m. 1.



The two-voiced texture of the second "Thesis" has many major and minor third harmonic intervals. Intervals of fifths, fourths, sevenths, and seconds are interspersed in this context. The dissonance level remains relatively constant.

Harmonic intervals of major and minor seconds and sevenths are characteristic of all the pieces of this group. Polyharmonic structures are used extensively. For example, major third intervals indicating chords of different roots are used harmonically in the third piece.

Example 15. Seven Theses, "Thesis III," m. 3.



"Thesis IV" has the highest degree of dissonance. Major sevenths appear in the right hand throughout the piece. The left hand provides additional harmonic tension by its dissonant counterpoint.

The harmony of the fifth piece is characterized

by the use of fifths and fourths which combine in the two clefs to form intervals of seconds and sevenths. Parallel movement is used frequently and polyharmonic structures are typical. Pandiatonicism is present in measure 16.

Parallel first inversion triads dominate the left hand harmony of the sixth "Thesis." The right hand melody is dissonant with the accompanying triads, although some enharmonic seventh chords and triads can be found.

Example 16. Seven Theses, "Thesis VI," mm. 21-22.

The last "Thesis" has an ostinato bass figure which is made of major seconds in a sixteenth-note pattern. The harmonies which are found in the right hand appear to use some tertian and some non-tertian structures. The chords in the treble clef of measure 7 are built in fifths.

Example 17. Seven Theses, "Thesis VII," mm. 7-8.

Texture. Texture is a major unifying device in each of the pieces, in that each maintains a relatively consistent texture.

Chordal four-part writing prevails in the right hand in "Thesis I." Two countermelodies are evident in the left hand; thus, there are often three individual melodic lines, the upper one of which is homophonic texture.

Example 18. Seven Theses, "Thesis I," m. 3.

The second "Thesis" is two-part counterpoint. It is the only predominantly two-voiced piece in the set. The legato treble line contrasts to the consistently staccato and accented bass line. The lower melody often repeats the contours of arpeggiated accompaniment, although not literally.

Example 19. Seven Theses, "Thesis II," mm. 7-8.

The example is also illustrative of the special quality of rucksichtsloser Kontrapunkt, in that the

harmonic combinations between the two hands give little regard to euphony. This characteristic is found frequently in the set of pieces.

A fuller texture dominates the third piece, although the dynamic level is piano. The widest spacing is found in this piece. As is true of the other "Theses," polyphonic and homophonic factors are both present: each hand plays a part which is of distinctive melodic and rhythmic significance; and chord structures of two to three voices are often sounded in each hand in conjunction with the basic contrapuntal melodies.

The texture of "Thesis IV" consists of a single melodic strand which is heard in the left hand and is dissonant with the major seventh chords in the right hand accompaniment.

"Thesis V" has four-voiced texture. The vertical spacing is consistent and is characterized by contrary motion of the two upper parts against the two lower parts. Open fourths and fifths occur in the left-hand accompaniment, and thirds and sixths are used extensively in the right-hand texture.

The two hands are closely spaced in the sixth piece. They eventually cross each other in measures 8, 21, and 23. Repetition of rhythmic and melodic motives similar to that in the other pieces of the set is employed in this "Thesis." Strict imitative devices are not evident in this or in any of the pieces of the group.

Reiterated bass accompaniment figures are characteristic of much of the last piece. Vertical spacing in the accompaniment is usually major seconds or major ninths. Widely spaced chords, often encompassing a tenth, are found in the texture of the upper parts.

Meter, tempo, and rhythm. The most characteristic aspect of the rhythm of Seven Theses is that every piece has a pattern of metric changes which is repeated unvaryingly throughout it.

In the first piece, the meter changes in successive measures from 4/4 to 5/4 to 6/4 to 5/4. The pattern of the next piece is that every two measures equal ten beats, and the numerators increase and/or decrease by one. The construction of lines is:

8/4	+	2/4	=	10/4
7/4	+	3/4	=	10/4
6/4	+	4/4	=	10/4
5/4	+	5/4	=	10/4
4/4	+	6/4	=	10/4
3/4	+	7/4	=	10/4
2/4	+	8/4	=	10/4
1/4	+	9/4	=	10/4
10/4			=	10/4
8/4	+	2/4	=	10/4
7/4	+	3/4	=	10/4
1/4				

The pattern of meter change of the third "Thesis" is 2/4, 3/4, 5/4. It is repeated three times with a final 2/4 measure at the end. The metric design of the fourth piece is 4/4, 3/4, 2/4, 3/8. In "Thesis V" the meter pattern alternates 4/8 and 2/8 with 3/8 meter, that is, a pattern of 4/8, 3/8, 2/8, 3/8 is repeated. The sixth piece has a


repeated metric pattern of 2/8, 5/8, 3/8, 4/8. The scheme in the last piece is 5/8, 11/16, 6/8, 13/16, 7/8, 15/16.

The listener hears generally uneven and varying rhythms rather than separate and distinct groupings. The meter changes actually serve to eliminate a repetitious rhythmic effect. Some of the formal unity is a result of these metric patterns.

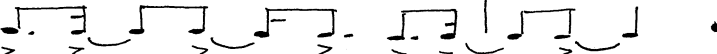
Highly varied rhythmic groupings are characteristic. The multimetric schemes are bases for generally flexible patterns of rhythm and accentuation.

The first piece sometimes uses recurrent rhythmic patterns for the duration of one measure, although the general character of rhythmic flow is uneven and angular.

Patterns of different rhythmic structures often occur simultaneously. The rhythm of "Thesis II," for example, is characterized by regular subdivision in the upper staff and regular subdivision overlapping in the lower staff.

The rhythm of the third "Thesis" is uneven in comparison to the preceding piece. The pattern in the left hand at measure 5 is 3/4  .

Sixteenth-note repetition of chords is sounded almost throughout "Thesis IV." Changes in stress are evident, and the rhythmic patterns of the left hand are varied. The use of accent to create overlapping rhythm in measure 17 is

4/4  .

The rhythm of the piece which follows is generally

in regular subdivision, but the use of multimeter results in irregular stress and general flexibility, as is true of the other pieces in the set.

"Thesis VI" and "Thesis VII" have examples of duple and triple subdivision. The latter piece has ostinato bass patterns throughout.

Formal aspects. The formal arrangement of the individual pieces of Seven Theses is based partly upon the patterns of metric change described above. A second unifying factor in each piece is the repetition of characteristic harmonic intervals. The following examples will illustrate: major triads appear consistently through the first and sixth pieces; two voices are heard throughout the second piece; major and minor thirds occur consistently in "Thesis III"; a single melodic line is contrasted to three voice chords in the fourth and sixth pieces; open fourths are typical of "Thesis V"; and harmonic intervals of major and minor seconds are used throughout the last piece.

The melodic phrases and harmonic progressions are generally not repeated; thus, the design of the pieces is a type of continuation form.

Summary. The melodies of Seven Theses undergo continuous development. Melodies are not restated; instead, melodic intervals and motives recur and are exploited. The phrasing is generally uneven and varied. Each piece has a characteristic spacing of vertical intervals. Heterogeneous

harmonic structures are typical of the seven pieces. Rhythms are generally uneven and changing. Patterns of changing meter are the most obvious formal aspect. Texture serves as a unifying device in individual pieces and is a factor of variety in the set.

Sonata

The Sonata, opus 9, was composed in 1936. The four movements are marked allegro appassionato, allegro grazioso, andante, and presto scorrevole. The Sonata was first performed November 22, 1939, at Town Hall in New York City. It is a full-scale work which requires mature technical control and interpretive ability. The duration of the piece is approximately fifteen minutes.

Melody. The melodies of the Sonata are characterized by diatonic progression. The melodic contours are often similar and contrasts result from varying rhythmic and dynamic settings.

The range of the themes of the first movement is slightly more than an octave. The major part of the melodic activity of the themes takes place within the range of an octave; however, melodic motives are used almost throughout the entire keyboard.

The melodies are constructed so that expansion of them is easily accomplished. The first theme, which is presented at measures 1 through 5, is characterized by a climactic contour. The second melodic idea, beginning at measure 6,

is in F-sharp major. Its rhythm is smooth and flowing compared to the first theme. A third melody, which begins similarly to the first theme is found at measure 11. A three-note motive which ascends or descends by step is characteristic of all of the themes.

Example 20. Sonata, first movement.

(a) mm. 1-2

(b) mm. 6-7

(c) mm. 11-12

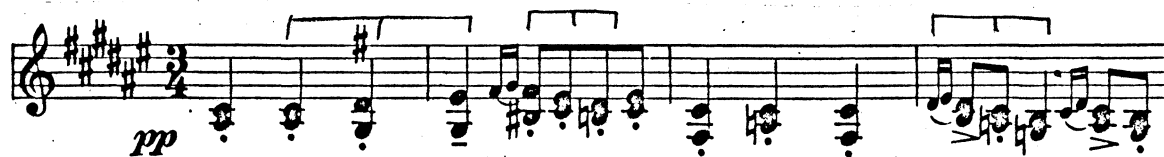
Melodies in the first movement lead smoothly, without sectional breaks, from one to another. Distinct separation of phrases does not occur.

Melodies tend to progress diatonically, but scales often change; for example, the melody in measure 18 is in F-sharp major; measure 19 is in F major; and measure 20

moves to B-flat major. There is much repetition of melodic figures, but little repetition of complete melodic phrases.

The second movement has two principal themes. The melodic progression of each is diatonic, and a progression by major and minor seconds is characteristic. Ornamental grace notes occur in the first melody. The use of a three-note scalar motive relates this theme to the first movement.

Example 21. Sonata, second movement, mm. 1-4.



The third movement has a strongly diatonic theme which is used in seven variations. The range is two octaves. The melodic intervals are mostly seconds, thirds, fourths, and fifths; however, the three-note motive which moves by whole and half steps also occurs in the melodic structure of this movement. A countermelody in the bass clef is frequently placed in contrary motion to the upper melody. The melodic variations include altering interval relationships, adding non-harmonic tones, and doubling the melody in a second voice.

The last movement has a subject, in the left hand, which has intervals of fifths and major and minor seconds and thirds. A second melody, stated in measures 17 through 25, consists of fourths and major and minor seconds. Two other melodies, which each have individual character, are

found in the central section of this movement. One is a subject used in imitation. Its first statement begins at measure 62, and a second statement is heard beginning at measure 69. The three-note motive, which was evident in the melodies of the other movements, is also found in the fourth movement.

Example 22. Sonata, fourth movement.

(a) mm. 10-11



(b) mm. 17-18



(c) mm. 62-63



Melodic ideas derived from the themes are used throughout the movement; for example, portions of the first idea can be found at measures 82, 86, and 103.

Harmony and tonality. The dissonance level of the first movement is varied. The opening measures are relatively dissonant because of the vertical intervals of major and minor seconds and sevenths. Less harmonically tense portions are evident, however. The section from measures 18

through 24, although modulatory, is relatively consonant. The harmonic structure is characterized by consonances and dissonances which suggest keys but do not establish them conventionally. A key sometimes is suggested by the melodic line, but is not supported by the accompanying figures. Example 23 illustrates this procedure.

Example 23. Sonata, first movement, mm. 83-84.



The harmonies of the second movement are similar to those of the first, however, definite chords of F-sharp major are heard at the beginning and end of the piece. Harmonies often change without traditional preparation.

Example 24. Sonata, second movement, mm. 115-117.

Major and minor sevenths are also characteristic vertical intervals of this portion of the piece.

The third movement has an E-major chord at the opening and in the final measure. The harmonic structure is notable for added sixths, sevenths, and ninths. An example of seventh intervals can be found in measure 37. The harmonic structure is less dissonant than that of the other movements.

The key of A major is stated at the beginning and end of the last movement. Some chromatic figures are found in transitional sections. Harmonies are basically tertian with non-harmonic tones and added notes providing dissonance.

Texture. The first movement is usually homophonic. The density of parts varies, for example, from only one voice at measure 200, to six parts at measure 183. Wide spacing is also evident at times. Reiterated accompaniments and arpeggios are used, and melodic lines appear in either clef.

The second movement is predominantly homophonic in three voices. Spacing is relatively close and is consistent throughout the piece. Textural variety similar to that of the first movement is found, but it is on a smaller scale. Motives are usually heard in the top voice.

The texture of the third movement is increased in density. Steady eighth-note figures dominate the texture. Contrapuntal individuality of parts occurs occasionally, but the general texture is homophonic. Spacing is important in preparing the climax which comes at measures 44


and 45. Here, the texture is increased to five or six voices and the spacing is extended to four octaves.

The last movement is the most contrapuntal. Two-voiced texture predominates. Sixteenth-note figures and reiterated accompaniments are often found. The subject in the central section, at measure 62, however, is treated imitatively.

Meter, tempo, and rhythm. The first movement is to be played allegro at $\downarrow = 144$. Unlike earlier pieces, this movement utilizes the original 4/4 meter throughout. Some overlapping rhythms are found in the middle section in measures 81 through 89. Duple subdivision is predominant, although triplet groups are occasionally used.

The second movement has a dance-like character in 3/4 meter. Overlapping rhythm is apparent beginning at measure 82. The rhythm is usually straight-forward and is relatively simple.

The third movement is in 9/8 meter. Triple divisions of the meter give a lilting quality to the rhythm. The rhythmic figures which accompany the theme in a set of variations are different in each of the last four variations.

The last movement is to be played presto. Sixteenth-note accompanying figures are used almost continuously. The 4/4 meter supports a theme which is notable for having accents on weak beats. An example of this can be seen in measure 10: 4/4  .

Form. The first movement resembles sonata-form, although the tonal centers are not traditionally defined. Two themes are presented and developed. The second theme, beginning at measure 6, contrasts with the initial theme in measure 1. Development of the subjects begins in measure 10, at which point the first theme is varied and expanded. A modulatory section immediately follows in which the themes and thematic motives are heard in new and changing keys. The first theme returns in the tonic key of A-major/F-sharp minor at measure 174. The second theme is returned at measure 187. This recapitulation is not a complete repeat of the themes, but it is a return to the opening tonal center with a partial restatement of the melodic material.

The second movement is a sectional form. The repetition of melodic ideas can be sketched as a variation of rondo form as follows: A¹ A² B A¹ A² B A¹ A² B A¹. The first part of the "A" melody is always begun on an F-sharp major chord. Idea "B" is introduced at measure 24. The sections contain variations of the thematic material rather than exact statements of it. The final "A" section is brief and repeats only the opening measures of the first theme.

The "Andante" is comprised of a theme and five variations. The first statement of the theme occurs in measures 1 through 10. Melodic intervals, rhythm, and harmony are factors used in the variations. The melody is inverted in the first variation, and the accompanying

rhythmic figures maintain the original eighth-note patterns, but change in melodic contour. The other four variations are each in a different key, and the accompanying rhythmic figures and harmonic structures are varied.

The fourth movement has formal balance like that of a sonata, but without traditional definition of keys. There is an introduction of approximately ten measures. The first theme is then presented, and the second theme is introduced at measure 17. The development of these themes is characterized by free repetitions of thematic motives with different harmonies and textures. An imitative section, beginning at measure 61, is heard in the middle section of the development. Free imitation of the subject begins at measure 69, followed by additional development of the two original themes. A final statement of the first and second themes is presented in measures 147 and 155, respectively. This time the second theme is in the key of B major instead of E major. The concluding section is based on fragments of the first theme.

Summary. The Sonata has several related melodic ideas which are expanded and developed. A three-note motive appears in the themes of each movement. Diatonic themes are characteristic of the work. Strong major chords are stated at the beginning and end of each movement. Harmonies are tertian, but harmonic progressions are not traditional. The texture is widely varied in density and spacing. Rhythmic

stress is changeable. The form is characterized by contrast between the movements in a manner similar to that of the traditional piano sonata; however, the use of traditional forms for each of the movements is freer in regard to key statements and melodic repetition. Versions of first movement form, rondo form, and theme and variation form are used.

Five Two-Part Inventions

Five Two-Part Inventions, opus 114, were composed in 1937. This work consists of five contrapuntal pieces of medium difficulty. The metric markings remain the same throughout each piece. The expressive character is affected partly by the varying use of staccato and legato attack. These pieces aptly illustrate Hugo Leichtentritt's definition of an invention:

The invention is a short two- or three-part piece in contrapuntal style and is not bound to any particular form, written sometimes in free polyphony, sometimes in strict canonic or fugal style.⁹

Melody. The inventions have clear subjects and counterpoints. There is generally flexible use of diatonic scales in which seemingly desultory changes occur from one scale basis to another. The subject of the first invention will illustrate this.

⁹Hugo Leichtentritt, Musical Form (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951), p. 68.

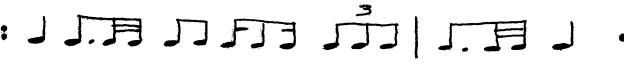
Example 25. Five Two-Part Inventions, No. 1, mm. 1-2.



The character of the melody is influenced by leaps of sixths and sevenths. Different counterpoints often accompany the subject when it appears in altered forms throughout the piece.

The theme of the second invention is made up of whole-step triplets which contrast to the more disjunct melodic intervals of the preceding piece. The absence of minor seconds is notable in the opening part of the theme, although they are found in the countersubject.

The third invention has a four-measure subject characterized by leaps of fourths and fifths. Fragments of this subject are repeated with intervallic changes at measures 12, 23, 33, 51, and 63. The counterpoints are ascending and descending conjunct passages of sixteenth notes.

The fourth invention has a subject which is marked by an interval of a major seventh at the opening and a jagged and complex rhythm: . The subject and countermelody establish the contours for the rest of the piece. Wide spacing of melodic and harmonic

intervals is characteristic.

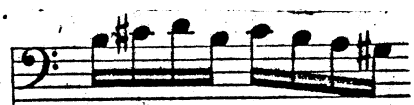
The subject of the last invention consists of three definite parts, portions of which are shown below.

Example 26. Five Two-Part Inventions, No. 5.

(a) mm. 1-3



(b) m. 6



(c) mm. 11-12



The subject is repeated fully in the bass clef from measures 15 through 26. Here, the rhythm and the overall contour remain the same, but the interval relationships are changed.

Harmony and tonality. The pieces have harmonic schemes which seem to be based on tonal centers rather than definite keys. For example, the harmonies of the first invention change often, seldom allowing a clear major or minor tonality to be established. The harmonies frequently are characterized by the use of dissonant intervals on strong beats. Chromatic progressions often obscure the key feeling.

Example 27. Five Two-Part Inventions, No. 1, mm. 11-12.


The harmonic structure of the second invention employs intervals of thirds on strong beats. Polytonal treatment is evident in the opening measures in which the keys of D-flat and G-flat are implied simultaneously. Other tonal centers are established throughout the piece. The invention ends with a C-sharp major chord which could indicate the original tonality of D-flat (enharmonically C-sharp).

The harmonic structures of the third, fourth, and fifth inventions are characterized by dissonance treatment similar to that of the preceding inventions. Dissonant and consonant intervals alternate in such a way that harmonies are constantly changing and patterns of change are not repeated. Progressions are unconventional and heterogeneous harmonic structures are employed.

Example 28. Five Two-Part Inventions, No. 3, mm. 1-2.

Texture. The texture of the inventions is two-part counterpoint. The set is written predominantly for the middle range of the keyboard; however, spacing of vertical intervals is varied. Texture is often characterized by quick changes in registration. For example, measure 46 of the third invention opens with the two hands playing a major third, and the following measure begins with vertical spacing of two octaves plus a minor sixth. Instances of the hands crossing occur in the third piece in measure 14.

Each voice in the contrapuntal weave maintains an independent rhythmic and melodic structure. The pieces are generally constructed of free imitation of melodic and rhythmic figures.

Meter, tempo, and rhythm. The rhythmic patterns of the subjects provide the primary motivic devices. The rhythmic character of each melody is very different from that of the other four pieces. Flexible use of rhythmic patterns occurs in each invention. Syncopation and change from triple to duple subdivision are evident in the first piece at measures 40 and 41: $3/4$  .

The second invention is in $12/8$ meter. The rhythmic motives of the subject appear in both clefs and dominate the piece as they do in the first invention.

The rhythmic motion of the third piece is more continuous than that of the previous inventions. The counterpoint moves steadily in sixteenth-note patterns. The motives

are used in varying relationship to the bar line.

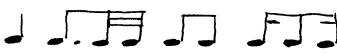
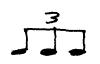

Example 29. Five Two-Part Inventions, No. 3.

(a) mm. 1-2



(b) mm. 9-10



The fourth invention has rhythmic patterns of irregular subdivision. The $5/4$ meter supports notes of a variety of durations as follows: $5/4$   |  . An angular rhythmic feeling results. The uneven meter and unequal note values provide contrast to the steady sixteenth-note movement of the preceding piece.

The rhythmic structure of the last invention contrasts uneven durations with steady sixteenth-note motion. These two rhythmic figures recur throughout the piece.

Form. Subjects are introduced in the first few measures of each piece. The form is governed by free imitation of the melodies and rhythmic and melodic motives derived from them.

The first invention has a subject which returns only in rhythmic organization and not with the same interval relationships. Episodes exploiting short motives of the

subject follow the first statement. A fragment of the subject returns, but, even at the end of the piece, it is not in the original key.

The other inventions follow a similar formal plan. The subjects are not returned in their original keys or with the original intervallic structure. The pieces are free imitative forms which use motives of the opening statements throughout.

Summary. The Five Two-Part Inventions have clearly stated subjects. The linear construction of each theme is individual and contrasting to the themes of the other inventions. The harmonic plans are based on tonal centers, rather than major or minor keys or modes. Dissonance levels vary, and patterns of harmonic change are avoided. The pieces have two-voiced contrapuntal texture. Rhythmic motives are a predominant part of each invention. The forms are based on free imitation of the melodic and rhythmic patterns.

Five Little Dances

The five pieces are in contrasting moods. Each dance has one basic expressive quality. The first buoyant, rhythmic, "Rustic Dance" is followed by a slow, drowsy "Languid Dance." A pert "Toy Dance" precedes the lyrical, flowing "Pastoral Dance." A strongly rhythmic "Festive Dance" concludes the set. A folk-like quality results from the use of modal scales as well as from the repetitive rhythmic figures in the bass. The naïveté of the melody, simple

rhythmic accent, and straightforward repetitions have a rustic, youthful appeal. The pieces are relatively short and are not technically demanding. Indeed, the technical and formal simplicity mark the set for the young or intermediate piano student.

Melody. Melodic statements vary in length from six to eight measures. Repetitions and partial repetitions usually follow the first statement. Short motives derived from the theme are sometimes used in contrasting rhythmic and textural settings. The melodies are occasionally based on modes. For example, "Rustic Dance" is in the Lydian mode.

Example 30. Five Little Dances, "Rustic Dance," mm. 9-11.



Evidence of the Lydian mode is also found in "Toy Dance."

Harmony and tonality. The harmonic structure is triadic, although unconventional use is made of harmonies. For instance, the key often changes without traditional preparation and chord progressions are frequently unusual. An example can be found in measures 11 through 13 of "Rustic Dance" in which the chord sequence is C major to D major.

to B minor to E major.

The harmonic structure is sometimes bitonal, for example in the first two measures of "Languid Dance." The keys of F major and D minor are defined by the left and right hands respectively. Occasionally, notes seem purposely mis-harmonized. Examples of this are found in "Toy Dance." This is in keeping with the simple, playful nature indicated by the title.

Example 31. Five Little Dances, "Toy Dance," mm. 1-3.

The musical notation shows three measures of music. The upper staff (treble clef) has a melodic line with a slur over the first two measures. The lower staff (bass clef) has a simple accompaniment pattern. The tempo marking "very crisp" and the dynamic marking "p" are placed above the first measure of the upper staff.

Texture. The texture of Five Little Dances is homophonic. Simple accompaniment figures are repeated throughout each dance. The accompaniment patterns are usually repeated several times without alteration. "Rustic Dance," for example, has a figure composed of two eighth-notes which is repeated without change for the first eleven measures of the piece. A design of one measure in length is repeated eight consecutive times in the opening measures of "Festive Dance." Similar repeats of rhythmic figures are characteristic of all of the dances.

Meter, tempo, and rhythm. The predominant character

of the pieces is rhythmic. Consistent placement of accent and stress is typical; however, slight changes in rhythmic patterns can be found in each.

Phrasing of rhythmic figures is varied and often uneven. For example, the phrase lengths in "Languid Dance" are sometimes three or five measures.

Form. Five Little Dances is a set of pieces in sectional forms. They are short--from twenty-four to forty-six measures long. Within these structures a theme or motive with a characteristic rhythm, melody, and harmony is stated, departed from, and then returned in the last measures. Each piece begins and ends in the same key or with the same predominating chord or tonal center. Accompaniment patterns are consistent throughout each dance.

Summary. The melodies of Five Little Dances are simple, concise, and light in character. They are sometimes modal. Triadic harmonies are connected unconventionally in a homophonic texture. Rhythmic patterns are repeated and are treated as ostinato patterns which change irregularly. Each form is a simple statement of an idea with a short departure and return to the original idea.

Prelude and Dance I

Prelude and Dance I, opus 29, was composed in 1942. The majestic expressive character and fortissimo dynamics of the prelude contrast to the softness and folk-like

character of the dance. Melodic and rhythmic ideas are often repeated with new harmonies. The work is not difficult to perform, but requires some maturity and technical skill.

Melody. The melodies generally have a narrow range and are based on diatonic scales. The melodic structure of the prelude and the dance is characterized by the use of a three-note figure which descends by step. It is used almost constantly in the prelude, although it is sometimes inverted to ascend, for example, in the first few measures. The motive appears in each voice of the piece and becomes a bass ostinato pattern in measure 24. There is consistent melodic activity.

Example 32. Prelude and Dance I.

(a) mm. 1-3



(b) mm. 19-21



(c) mm. 24-25



Many ascending and descending figures of three notes also occur in the dance, and the melodic progression is also by whole and half-steps.

Example 33. Prelude and Dance I.

(a) mm. 48-50



(b) mm. 62-63



The melodies are prominent in the texture, and phrases often end after the bar lines. They vary in length and rhythmic character and are frequently expanded from germinal motives of a few notes to phrases several measures long. The first six measures of the dance have this procedure of melodic development. The countermelodies of the bass part often utilize the melodic motion, especially to connect phrases of the upper parts. Repetition of motives occurs in different keys, but not in a strictly sequential manner.

Harmony and tonality. The prelude and the dance each have a B-flat tonal center. A B-flat minor chord with an added E-flat is stated at the opening. A B-flat minor

chord over an E-flat octave in the bass appears at the end. This does not alter the function of B-flat as a tonal center. There are many seventh and ninth chords, often chromatic chords with much whole and half step voice leading. Measures 3 through 5 have illustrations of this. Examples of other tertian harmonic structures are the diminished seventh chords in measures 16 through 19. The middle section, beginning at measure 19, has slower harmonic rhythm than the sections preceding and following.

The harmonies of the dance often are dissonant on strong beats. Major sevenths and open fourths and fifths are used frequently. Bitonal structures are evident, and progressions are not traditional.

Example 34. Prelude and Dance I, mm. 50-51.

Harmonic rhythm is usually in half and quarter-note changes. A highly modulatory section occurs from measures 65 through 80. Chords in the key of B-flat major and minor are often found, but added note dissonances and unconventional progressions keep the tonalities from being established traditionally. There are several points of tension that

Creston creates on the way to the principle climax near the end of the piece at measure 109.

Texture. The piece has two basic textures: the first is four-voiced texture (occasionally three or five), with voicing evenly and traditionally distributed; the other in reinforced melody (octaves) accompanied by chords in contrasting registers. Countermelodies in the dance are diverse in character and length. Some ostinato accompaniment figures are used; however, the figures are repeated at two to five measure intervals rather than successively.

Meter, tempo, and rhythm. The prelude is to be played "majestically" at $\downarrow = 108$ and the dance "liltingly" at $\downarrow = 92$. The dance has more eighth and sixteenth note movement than the prelude; thus, it sounds faster despite its slower pulse rate. Quarter and eight-note motion is often used alternately in each hand. Accents and phrasing vary. The $3/4$ meter is sometimes accented like a saraband:
 $3/4 \quad \downarrow \quad \downarrow \quad \downarrow$. An interesting characteristic of accent in the prelude is that a fortissimo chord is found on nearly every beat of the first few measures.

Form. The prelude and dance have an overall plan of two parts which have general rhythmic contrast similar to the slow-fast organization of the French overture or the two-part plan of the prelude and fugue.

The form of the prelude is A B A. The tonality scheme, although not established conventionally, corresponds

to the following plan: the tonal center of B-flat is followed by a middle section with D as its center, and then is returned to B-flat. Melodic and textural aspects also fall into an A B A plan.

The dance also follows a ternary plan. A theme is presented in B-flat minor for a few measures and is expanded. The first rhythmic idea is presented in C-sharp minor at measure 55. Following this, another motive of the theme is heard in A major. A third motivic idea is stated at measure 69. The modulatory section which follows leads back to the statement of the first theme in B-flat. The closing is also based on thematic motives.

Summary. The Prelude and Dance I exploits limited melodic material--a few fragmentary ideas--which are prominent in the texture. Melodic ideas which have similar contour provide unity in the dance. Fast harmonic rhythm and non-traditional use of consonant harmonies are characteristic of the work. Parallel chordal movement is typical of the prelude. Rhythmic figures vary stress and phrasing. Both the prelude and the dance have ternary formal arrangement. The piece is tonal, although not usually in a clearly major or minor key.

Prelude and Dance II

The Prelude and Dance II, opus 29, was composed in 1942. A "meditative" prelude precedes the dance which is of a dramatic, passionate character. Forceful rhythmic figures

and contrasting dynamic markings are characteristic of this piece. Few major technical demands are made regarding its performance. General technical competence of medium ability is required.

Melody. The melodies of the prelude and dance have similar contours. An oscillating-note figure in a narrow range is a characteristic part of the structures. The opening melodic idea uses this basic design in a pentatonic scale context; however, diatonic melodic progression in which rhythmic patterns change is characteristic of both sections of the piece. A sixteenth-note version of the first melody of the prelude is used in the dance, and the middle section centers on a three note motive of the opening theme. Similarities in melodic ideas can be seen in the following example.

Example 35. Prelude and Dance II.

(a) mm. 1-2



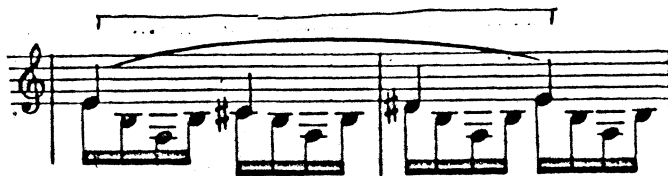
(b) mm. 14-15



(c) mm. 27-28



(d) mm. 55-56



The character of the melody is continuous rather than climactic. For example, the melody at measure 14 is harmonically rather static on B-major. The melody is often repetitious. The most melodic activity is found in the phrases which connect sections of the dance. Measures 44 through 55 and measures 97 through 105 are two such connective sections.

Harmony and tonality. Bichordal structure is occasionally evident in this work. In the first measure of the prelude, the right hand defines B-major while the left hand states B-minor. Although harmonies are often indefinite, the opening measures have clear tonic, dominant, and diminished seventh chords in the key of B-major.

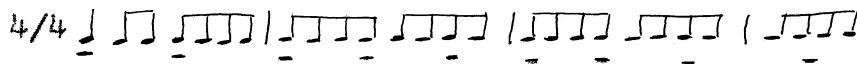
The harmonies are static in several places, for example, the section from measure 14 through 62 of the dance. The rate of harmonic change is sometimes as much as six measures in these two portions of the piece. The quarter-note

arpeggiated figures in the bass clef define triadic harmonies in the latter part. Chromaticism near the end of sections gives added harmonic variety.

Texture. The homophonic texture of the prelude is full, although dynamics are often soft. The last few measures, however, use a thinner fabric of octave spacing.

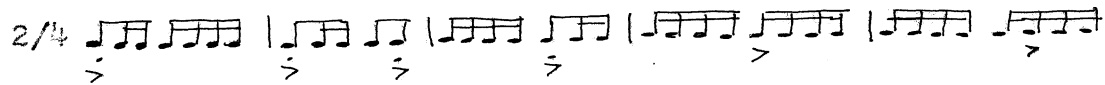
The opening measures of the dance alternate full chords with sixteenth-note octave figures and some arpeggios. Spacing of chords is conventional. Two-voiced writing prevails in the middle section of the dance, but the quickness gives a full textured effect. A reiterated bass is notable in the texture of the middle part of the dance, and sixteenth-note octave motives are used at the beginning and the end of the piece.

Meter, tempo, and rhythm. The prelude is in 4/4 meter at $\text{♩} = 60$. Stress marks which constantly change in relation to the bar-line create a rhythmic climax at measures 20 through 26. Changes from regular subdivision to irregular subdivision to regular subdivision overlapping are evident as follows:



The dance is in 2/4 meter at $\text{♩} = 152$; thus, the predominantly sixteenth-note movement in the dance adds to the quick effect and intensifies the contrast of the dance to the prelude, which has melodic movement primarily in

eighth notes. The first rhythmic idea, presented in measures 27 through 33, is characterized by syncopation as follows:



Form. The overall two-part form is similar to that of the preceding piece. The form of the prelude is binary, the main contrast between the two sections being that of texture. The dance is A B A form. The return of "A" is complete but not literal. The "B" section contrasts in dynamics, rhythm, texture, and overall character. It is related to the "A" part because of its similar melodic motives.

Summary. The melodies of this piece are related in contour and intervallic structure. Melodic structure usually maintains a smooth contour and is often repetitious. Harmonic statements are more traditional and more consonant than is usual in earlier pieces by Creston, although there is occasional polyharmony. The texture is dominated by repeated accompaniment figures. The rhythm is generally straightforward with some overlapping rhythms and syncopation periodically adding rhythmic interest. The form of the prelude is binary, and the dance is A B A.

Six Preludes

The Six Preludes, opus 38, were composed in 1945. The pieces were written as examples of the methods of rhythmic structure of which Creston wrote in his book Principles

of Rhythm.¹⁰ The preludes are of medium difficulty. The first performance of them was given by Earl Wild at Carnegie Hall in New York City. The expressive and metric markings of each piece are:

No. 1 Moderately Fast	♩ = 116
No. 2 Tranquil	♩ = about 52
No. 3 Fast	♩ = 126
No. 4 Moderately Fast	♩ = 120
No. 5 Moderato	♩ = 92
No. 6 Moderately Fast	♩ = 126

Melody. The melodies usually are within an octave range and progress diatonically. Each prelude has a unique linear interval arrangement. The first prelude has a short four-note motive given in the first two measures. It is constructed of major thirds and a second. This single idea and variations of it permeate the entire piece. It appears in different keys, or with changed intervals, but is easily recognized because of its rhythmic structure--duple subdivision of the $3/4$ measure. The closing section of the piece, beginning at measure 32, presents the motive in octaves. The following example will illustrate two presentations of the melody.

Example 36. Six Preludes, No. 1.

(a) mm. 8-9



¹⁰Creston, op.cit.

(b) mm. 13-14



The theme of the second prelude moves more freely, has a wider range, and is made of longer phrases than the first piece. It is based on diatonic progression and requires almost half (nine out of nineteen measures) of the piece for its complete statement. The character of this melody is also influenced by the rhythm, which is flexible and flowing.

The melody of the third piece is constructed of tones which ascend to a climax in the third measure and are followed by three measures of descending melody. These contours are used in the melodic structure throughout the piece. The scale basis for the opening melodic phrase is B-major.

Example 37. Six Preludes, No. 3, mm. 1-3.



The opening melody is used in a manner similar to that of the first prelude: changes occur in rhythm, intervallic relationships, phrasing, and key. The preludes of this set are characterized by similar repetition and modification of their original melodic statements.

The melody of the fourth piece is predominantly in F-sharp major. The linear progression is often major and minor seconds. The use of a triplet rhythmic figure in the 5/4 meter gives the structure a pronounced individuality:



The fifth prelude has melodic structure which is founded on whole and half step motion and has a descending fourth interval which is used to figure the main melody.

Example 38. Six Preludes, No. 5, mm. 1-2.



The last piece consists of the most chromatic melodic structure. It is the only prelude of the set whose melody does not give indication of major or minor tonality. Often groups of six successively different notes occur, as they do in the opening melody.

Example 39. Six Preludes, No. 6, mm. 1-2.



Harmony and tonality. The harmonies are predominantly dissonant, although each piece has a relatively consonant chord at the end. The opening measures are typically indefinite in key. Two different chords often are outlined simultaneously, indicating polychordal treatment.

The first piece, for example, begins by stating a broken A-major chord in the treble clef while the left hand plays notes which could be the subdominant and dominant chords of A-major.

Example 40. Six Preludes, No. 1, m. 1.

The harmonic structures of the other pieces use similar treatment. An example in the third piece is the D-minor chords and F-major chords which occur simultaneously in measures 30 through 33.

A characteristic of the repeated accompaniment patterns is that usually more than one triad is outlined within each basic rhythmic pattern. An example can be found in the second prelude in which the bass has an harmonic ostinato, and continuous rhythm maintains the basic contour which introduces new progressions.

Example 41. Six Preludes, No. 2, m.1.

Similarly, the opening ostinato patterns of the fourth and fifth pieces introduce new chords.

Fast key change is characteristic of all of the works. For example, the first prelude moves from a statement which is in the key of A-major and D-major to harmony in the key of B-flat in the third measure. The central sections of all of the pieces are modulatory. The harmonies change unconventionally, and definite keys are not stated in the traditional manner. An example is the final C-sharp minor chord in the right hand of "Prelude No. 6" which is accompanied by an octave A in the bass.

Texture. The textures of the preludes are characterized by the use of repeated accompaniment figures. Some of these have distinctive melodies, providing a contrapuntal aspect to the predominantly homophonic textures.

The textures show a variety of vertical spacing and number of parts. The first piece is in two-voice texture. The second has a treble melody accompanied by three-voice chords. Quick arpeggiated accompaniment prevails in the third piece in which the melody is alternately presented in octaves, thirds and then three- or four-voice chords. Arpeggios of a relatively wide range characterize the texture of the fifth prelude, and an octave melody accompanied by an ostinato, chordal figure in the right hand is typical of the last piece.

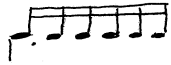
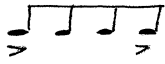
The two hands remain within a comfortable range in all of the pieces, and do not cross or reach the extremes of the keyboard.

Meter, tempo, and rhythm. Rhythmic variety

characterizes the preludes. Both the melodies and the ostinato accompanying patterns have distinctively individual and dominant rhythmic structures. This dominance of the rhythmic aspect is partly explained by the following paragraph which is found in the score:

These Preludes were written as examples of the methods of rhythmic structure which are: 1. Regular subdivision, 2. Irregular subdivision, 3. Overlapping, 4. Regular subdivision-overlapping, 5. Irregular subdivision overlapping.¹¹

The first prelude is an example of mixed rhythmic methods. The theme uses regular subdivisions; however, rhythmic patterns differ between the two hands. The pattern is four notes grouped against six notes. Rhythmic interest of this nature characterizes the piece.

The second prelude, an example of regular subdivision, has triple subdivisions in the right hand, while the left hand plays duple subdivisions. The rhythmic pattern of the third piece overlaps the bar-line: 2/4 . The fourth piece consists of irregular rhythmic divisions in 5/4 meter: 5/4 . In the fifth prelude both the treble and bass clef parts overlap the measure simultaneously. The last piece has a rhythmic structure which Creston calls "irregular subdivisions overlapping." The accents fall unevenly throughout, both in the right hand and between the hands.

¹¹Paul Creston, Six Preludes, Op. 38 (New York: Leeds Music Corporation, 1949).

Example 42. Six Preludes, No. 6, mm. 9-10.

Form. The form of all of the preludes is similar. The pieces conform to the definition given by Willi Apel of nineteenth century preludes: "pianistic character pieces, usually based on a short figure or motive which is exploited by means of harmonic modulations."¹² The harmonies are often ambiguous, but the melodic line helps define the direction of harmonic movement.

Summary. Each of the Six Preludes has a melody which is distinctly different from that of the others. The melodies are usually based on diatonic scales. The harmonies have some conventional structure, some bichordal arrangements, and are generally employed without adherence to strict patterns of progression. Harmonically complex ostinato accompaniment figures are characteristic of the textures of all of the pieces. The rhythm is the most important aspect because the pieces were written as examples of methods of rhythmic structure which the composer has

¹²Willi Apel, "Prelude," Harvard Dictionary of Music (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), p. 598.

described in a book. The form of each piece is based on free use of a theme or motive which is presented in the first few measures.

Three Narratives

The Three Narratives, opus 79, were composed in 1962. They are dedicated to Mildred Victor, Claudette Sorel, and Earl Wild. The set takes approximately twenty-four minutes to perform. This is the longest playing time of any of the works discussed in this paper. Each piece has characteristic themes whose basic contours are repeated or varied during the melodic activity of the section.

The expressive character of the "Narratives" is contrasting. The first piece opens majestically, and has rhythms and melodies of a stately, dignified character. "Narrative II" is of a more gently flowing nature. The predominance of the upper registers of the keyboard, soft dynamics, and "zigzag" melodic lines create an impressionistic feeling. The last piece has a highly dramatic character manifested in chromaticism, restless repeated-note figures, dissonance, and often percussive alternation of right and left hands. A general feeling of expectancy and conflict is exhibited.

The three pieces, although intended for performance in a unit, are, in the present writer's judgement, also effective individually. The Three Narratives appear to be composed without restriction of difficulty level. Mature

technical abilities, including good arm action, are needed to perform the work.

Melody. "Narrative I" has one main melody in each of its three sections. The range of the theme of the first movement is almost three octaves; however, the thematic motive which appears most often encompasses only an octave. The opening theme is marked by rising intervals of a fifth and a third followed by a descending minor second. The first thematic statement is in F-sharp minor. Modifications of the theme occur throughout the section in the form of intervallic alterations; for example, the theme is heard in measure 24 with a rising fourth instead of a fifth.

Example 43. Three Narratives, "Narrative I."

(a) mm. 13-17. (first portion of melody only)



(b) mm. 24-25.



The melody which is introduced in the "Allegretto" at measure 53 is in the key of E-major. Its movement progresses by mostly seconds and thirds. It is treated similarly to that of the first part of "Narrative I"; that is, motives

of the theme recur but often have different intervals than in the first statement. One idea of the theme is presented in measure 66 with the modified rhythm and different intervals.

Example 44. Three Narratives, "Narrative I."

(a) mm. 53-54. (melody only)

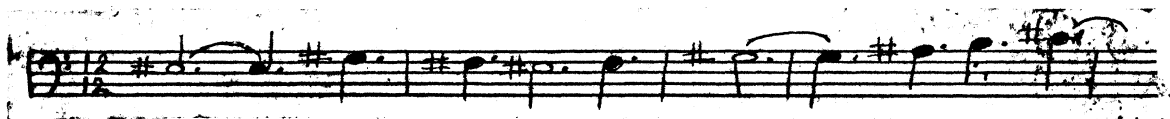


(b) mm. 66-67.



The theme of the third section, beginning at measure 155, is built mainly of intervals of seconds and thirds. It, like the themes of the other two movements, is often heard with slight changes. This theme can be seen, beginning at measure 188, a third higher than the original statement.

Example 45. Three Narratives, "Narrative I," mm. 155-158.



The thematic material of the three parts of "Narrative I" are similar in contour. It can be noted in the preceding examples that each melody has one measure of

ascending contour followed by two notes which descend by whole or half steps. Although the intervals and rhythmic structure differ, this similarity in the contour of the melodic motives can be heard and is an important formal unifying device, as well as a melodic factor.

"Narrative II" has an opening pentatonic melody which occurs above the ostinato accompaniment in the right hand. The overall melodic structure is based upon two ideas which undergo changes similar to those of the first piece. The main theme of the opening and closing "Lento" sections, has characteristic intervals of a descending minor sixth followed by an ascending fifth. It indicates the key of D-flat and is often slightly altered in order to change the key. For example, the melody in measure 14 defines A-major and that melody, altered in measure 15, implies the key of G-sharp.

The second thematic idea is a descending scalar melody which occurs in varied forms throughout the central part of the piece. General similarity of contour of the two themes to the opening pentatonic idea is evident.

Example 46. Three Narratives. "Narrative II."

(a) m. 1.

(b) mm. 3-5



(c) m. 31.



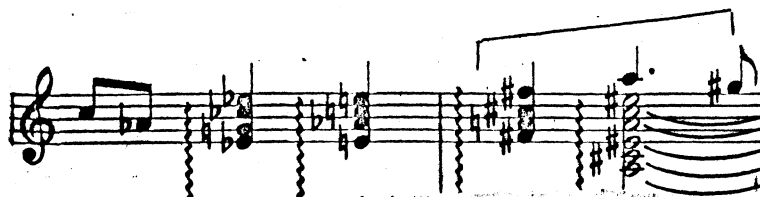
The themes of "Narrative III" are developed in a manner similar to that of the other two pieces. In addition, melodic ideas are similarly related in contour and intervallic structure. They are characterized by a predominance of whole and half-step progression, and frequent chromaticism is evident in the melodies of accompanying figures. The examples below which are taken from each of the three major divisions of this piece, will illustrate the similarity of melodic contour.

Example 47. Three Narratives, "Narrative III."

(a) mm. 20-21.



(b) mm. 81-83.



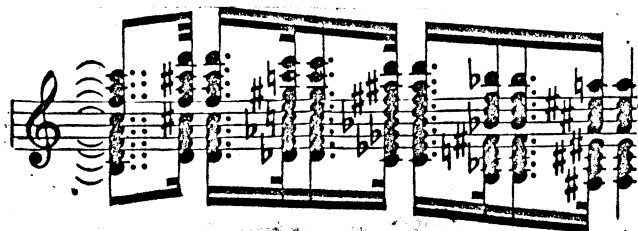
(c) mm. 155-156.



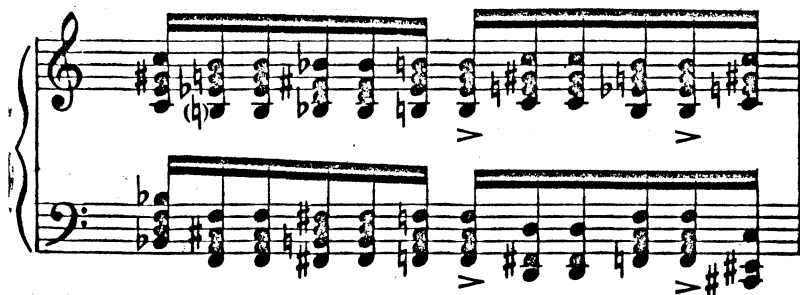
Harmony and tonality. The harmonic structure of "Narrative I" is characterized by chromatic movement. Harmonic rhythm is usually quick, and chord structures are triads with sevenths and ninths and with occasional added notes. A diminished seventh chord, outlined by the combined top notes of four arpeggiated figures, appears in measures 121 through 123 of the "Allegretto." Bichordal structures are found frequently throughout the piece.

Example 48. Three Narratives, "Narrative I."

(a) mm. 8-9.



(b) m. 119.



A typical feature of the harmonic structure throughout this work is that the resolutions of dissonance coincide

with new dissonance; that is, dissonance is resolved to new dissonance.

"Narrative II" is pentatonic in the opening "Lento" section. The first theme is introduced in D-flat major. There is a return to the opening key in the last section at measure 98. The harmonic statements of this piece are often very clear at the beginning of phrases, for example, at measures 14 and 31. Progressions often are unconventional. The middle section, "poco piu mosso," beginning at measure 31, is characterized by rich chords with added notes.

Example 49. Three Narratives, "Narrative II" m. 62.



The third "Narrative" has harmonic structure similar to the other two pieces; however, the opening "Adagio" is more dissonant, and a tonal center is not established. There is a variety of structures in the four sections which comprise this piece: ninth chords in measures 42 through 43; parallel first inversions of triads in measure 55; and quartal harmony in measure 57.

Example 50. Three Narratives, "Narrative III," m. 57.



A characteristic of the "Andante," which begins at measure 71, is that chord progressions do not define key, but chord structures are often tertian.

The harmonic tension levels of the first and third pieces are higher than that of the second piece, which offers contrast in its relatively greater use of consonance.

Texture. The texture of the opening part of "Narrative I" has block chords which contrast to thirty-second note ostinato patterns in the bass. The return to the original texture is a unifying device. Registration varies: both the upper and lower extremes of the keyboard are occasionally employed. The "Allegretto" section usually has three to four-voice texture, and a variety of repeated accompaniment patterns. The polyphonic and rhythmic possibilities of ostinato accompaniment figures are exploited in this movement. Ostinato patterns usually have duration of only two to three measures, followed by changes in either pitch or part.

Example 51. Three Narratives, "Narrative I," mm. 57-58



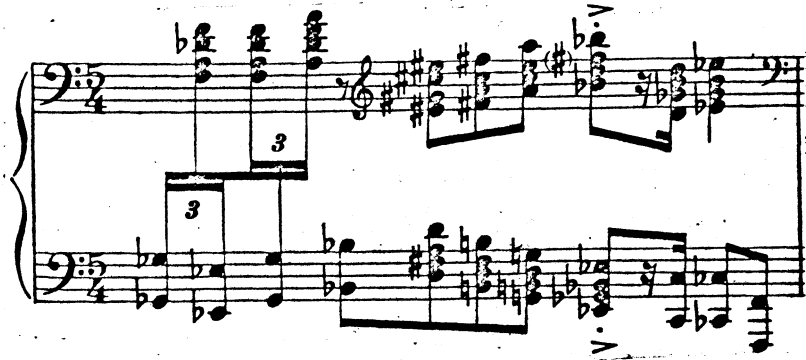
More than one-third of the piece is in the treble range. Vertical spacing is relatively consistent. Repeated accompaniment figures appear in both clefs.

The texture of the last section, beginning at measure 153, is characterized by doubled octaves and four-voice chords, which are contrasting to the triplet rhythmic groups in the bass line.

The second "Narrative" has texture characterized by a tremolo of the harmonic tones in the "Lento." The use of the upper register of the keyboard, a pentatonic melody, and repetition of the harmonies give a lulling, bell-like effect. This piece also has many wide arpeggiated figures. Two-part writing is found in measures 16 through 26 and 99 through 120. The texture is light and delicate even when not in two voices.

The third "Narrative" has a textural variety similar to the other two pieces in this set. Chordal melodies which are accompanied by quick arpeggios, scale passages, and ostinato figures are typical of the first part of the composition. Arpeggiated ten-note chords are used in the "Andante" which begins at measure 71. The last section of the piece, "Con moto," has an accompaniment figure which alternates the right and left hands in a dramatic, triplet rhythmic figure.

Example 52. Three Narratives, "Narrative III," m. 123.



Parallel chords in measures 105 through 106, and contrary motion in measures 171 through 179, are also notable in the texture of this piece.

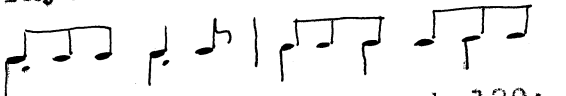
Meter, tempo, and rhythm. The tempo markings of the three sections of the first "Narrative" are: "Majestically" at $\text{♩} = 60$; "Allegretto," and "Allegro ma non troppo." The first ten measures have changes of meter from 4/4 to 5/4 to 3/4. The last named meter then continues to the "Allegretto." The "Allegretto" is in 6/12 meter and the "Allegro ma non troppo" in 12/12 meter. Similar meter signatures are found in the scores of the other two pieces in this group. Notes in the scores¹³ state that these two meter signatures are revised notation for the traditional 6/8 and 12/8 signatures respectively. Creston, in his book, Principles of Rhythm, calculates a twelfth-note based on the idea that a whole-note is equal to four pulses. His 12/12 meter is arrived at

by basing our calculations on the whole note as equal to four quarter-notes or eight eighth notes, etc....Consequently,

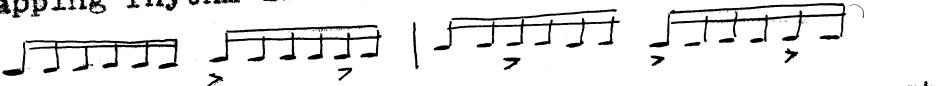
¹³Paul Creston, Three Narratives, Op. 79 (New York: Mills Music, Inc., 1966).

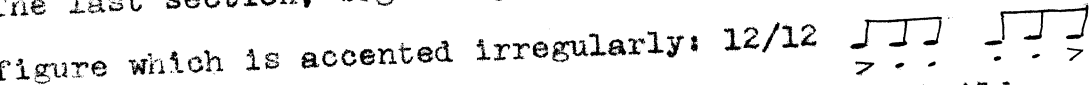
the whole note would logically be equal to three third notes, six sixth notes, ten tenth notes, and so on.¹⁴

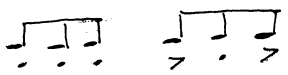
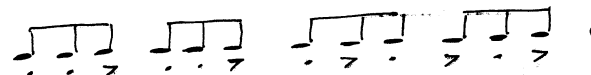
The meters 6/12, 9/12, 12/12 appear to be used in terms of duration; that is, twelve twelfth-notes (♩) equal one whole-note.

Subtle changes from duple to triple subdivision occur occasionally in the "Allegretto" (measures 53-152), for example in the following rhythmic scheme, which occurs at measures 54 and 55: 6/12 

Overlapping rhythm is evident in measure 119 through 120:

6/12 

The last section, beginning at measure 153, has an ostinato figure which is accented irregularly: 12/12 

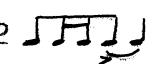
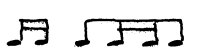
 . Uneven accents are used to build a climax in measure 163: 12/12 

These examples are typical evidences of the rhythmic interest and variety.

"Narrative II" has a Lento section at the beginning and end of the piece. The metric and tempo markings indicate 9/12 meter at $\text{♩} = 48$. Overlapping rhythms are present in measures 31 through 34. Uneven phrasing and varied stress and accents similar to that of the previous piece are also found.

"Narrative III" consists of four sections marked,

¹⁴Creston, Principles of Rhythm, pp. 13-14.

respectively, "Adagio" at $\text{♩} = 58$, "piu mosso" at $\text{♩} = 80$, "Andante" at $\text{♩} = 52$, and "con moto" at $\text{♩} = 104$. The meter of each section differs from the next. The "Adagio" is in $3/4$ meter and has sections of thirty-second and sixty-fourth notes juxtaposed with quarter and eighth-note chords. The "piu mosso," in $9/12$ meter, has quick arpeggios and scalar figures which accompany the melodies. Changes in accent and phrasing are evident, for example in measure 23: $9/12$  . The "Andante," which follows in $3/4$, is characterized by quarter and eighth-note motion. The uneven rhythmic divisions of the "con moto," in $5/4$, contrast to the simpler rhythms of the preceding section.

Form. The formal plan of "Narrative I" consists of three divisions; however, they are to be played without pause. Each section develops one main theme. Portions of the theme of each movement are exploited in different keys, with varying accompanying figures and, sometimes, with alterations in the intervallic structure. The form is freely composed, and there are few exact repetitions of phrases. Unity comes from similarity in the contours of the melodies.

The form of the second "Narrative" is similar to the first piece. It also has three major divisions to be played without pause. The divisions are partially defined by key and tempo. A theme is developed rather continuously from the theme of the first section. The newly developed theme is then stated several times in the middle part of the

piece. Its first appearance is in the top voice at measure 8. Then it becomes progressively more prominent in measures 18, 24, and 31. A second idea is evolved in measures 49 through 51. The changing themes, accompaniment figures, and textures indicate that this central section is also a type of continuation form, although the "Lento" returns to make an overall plan of A B A.

"Narrative III" has four major divisions. Only the last two divisions are continuous. As was noted in the discussion of melody, each division develops a thematic idea by thematic expansion of intervals and rhythm. The "piu mosso" section has several varied statements of the melody connected by passages of varying lengths and character. An example can be found at measures 51 through 61. All of the movements use great freedom in developing melodic ideas. Literal repetitions of phrases do not appear.

Summary. The melodic material of Three Narratives is developed through expansion of thematic motives. The rhythmic and intervallic changes which occur establish relatively new melodies derived from the first thematic statements. Basic triads are occasionally clearly stated; usually intermittent harmonies are constantly changing and are blurred by added notes and highly dissonant intervals. Texture and registration vary considerably. Repeated accompaniment figures and arpeggiated designs are characteristic of portions of the Narratives. Expressive markings are explicit.

Contrasts of tempo, uneven accents, and varied divisions of the measures are frequent. The formal organization is characterized by sections which usually coincide with rhythmic and tempo change. Exact repetitions of thematic material are rare. The forms of the individual sections are generally based on free expansion of motives in a continuously developed structure.

Metamorphoses

Metamorphoses, opus 84, was composed in 1964. It consists of a serial melody and twenty variations. The performance time required for the work is approximately eighteen minutes. The theme undergoes a "metamorphosis" by transposition, alteration, and embellishment of the theme, rhythm of the theme, and accompaniment. There is a variety of texture and harmonic treatment. The piece is difficult and requires mature technical and interpretive faculties.

The chart on page 83 lists the measures in which the variations are found, the register or voice and first note of the theme, and an indication of the treatment of the series as it appears in each variation.

Melody. The theme (or melodic series) is first stated as twenty-eight slow quarter-notes. It consists of two twelve-tone rows separated by three added notes and an added note at the end. The range is almost two octaves. All melodic intervals are used. The opening minor and major sevenths are notable because they occur only once in the

TREATMENT OF VARIATIONS

No.	Measures	First note of series	Register	Treatment
I	2-11	A	Treble	Single-line melody
II	12-21	B-flat	Bass	Single-line counterpoint
III	22-34	B	Bass	Counterpoint
IV	35-60	C	Treble	Invention-like
V	61-73	C-sharp	Bass	Octaves
VI	74-88	C (2nd note of series)	Bass	Octaves
VII	89-106	D-sharp	Treble	Half-note octaves
VIII	107-136	E	Treble	Half and quarter- notes
IX	136-148	E-sharp	Treble	Octaves rein- forced
X	149-169	F-sharp	Treble	Embellished melody
XI	170-200	G-sharp	Bass	Bottom notes of ostinato
XII	201-231	E	Lower	Single-line melody
XIII	232-256	F-sharp	Bass	Octaves
XIV	257-273	A	Treble	Top of arpeg- gios
XV	274-288	F-sharp	Bass	Octaves
XVI	289-320	D, E, etc.	Bass and treble	First 12 notes repeated often
XVII	321-347	A	Treble	Doubled Octaves
XVIII	348-374	G-sharp	Treble	Single-line melody
XIX	375-393	G-sharp	Treble	Top of four- voice chords
XX	394-420	G-sharp	Treble	Octaves of four voice chords

interval arrangement of the twenty-eight notes.

Example 53. Metamorphoses, "Theme," m. 1.



The theme always appears melodically in the twenty variations rather than in vertical or horizontal alignment. It is found as either the dominating idea or subordinate to other figures. The series is stated a half-step higher in each of the first twelve variations; thus it is stated on twelve chromatic tones.

Basic interval relationships of the theme remain the same in each variation although there is little restriction of interval direction. The original melody is used predominantly, rather than retrograde or inverted forms. In a few instances, parts of the twenty-eight note theme are heard in retrograde order, for example, at the end of the nineteenth variation (measures 388 through 389). Often a few of the intervals are inverted in such a way that complement intervals or harmonic inversions replace the original intervallic arrangement. This procedure occurs in the ninth variation at measure 137. Here, the first two notes of the series are separated by a major second instead of a minor seventh.

Example 54. Metamorphoses, "Variation IX," mm. 137-138.



Other instances of this melodic treatment can be found in the eighth and fourteenth variations.

All twenty-eight notes of the series usually appear in each variation. The theme occasionally is fragmented, for example, in the sixteenth variation in which the first twelve-note row is presented alone in the opening (measure 289), repeated in the following measure and in measures 293, 295, and 297.

Example 55. Metamorphoses, "Variation XVI," mm. 289-290.



An embellished application of the theme is often employed in this work. It occurs as the top notes of an embellished, treble melodic line in the tenth variation.

Example 56. Metamorphoses. "Variation X," mm. 149-150.



Melodic phrasing throughout this piece varies

considerably because each new statement of the theme is rhythmically different from the others.

Harmony and tonality. Although the harmonies often are not traditional tertian structures and are comparatively dissonant, there is usually a high degree of consistency of harmonic treatment within each variation. There is a great deal of overall harmonic variety between variations.

The harmonic structures are not readily classified because their harmonic context is not traditional. The second variation, for example, appears to state chords directly, with few non-harmonic tones; however, vertical intervals of major sevenths and diminished fifths do not resolve in a conventional manner. Steadily changing harmonies and unexpected sonorities are the general rule. This is characteristic of the harmonies of all of the variations.

Dissonance levels vary. Several portions of the piece are very consonant in spite of the atonal nature of the theme. "Variation VIII" has relatively consonant harmonies consisting of arpeggiated figures in which diminished seventh chords often are outlined. Tertian structures also occur in the harmonic scheme of the sixth variation, although they receive polychordal treatment.

Example 57. Metamorphoses. "Variation VI," mm. 75-76.

The last variation is the least dissonant. Major and minor triads are characteristic. Harmonies change in every measure without establishing a key.

Vertical major and minor seconds and sevenths often cause dissonance in the variations. Ambiguous harmonies frequently result from the use of dissonance. Chromaticism, such as that in the seventh variation, and augmented triads, similar to those which are characteristic of the twelfth piece, also contribute to the indefinite nature of the tonal structures.

Texture. The texture of each variation is uniform; however, the variations differ from each other in this respect. The texture of the first few pieces progresses to noticeably more complex structures. In the first variation, for example, the single melodic line sounded over an E-flat pedal contrasts to the bass melody which is accompanied by three-part harmony of the following variation. The third piece consists of eighth-note motion and wider spacing than

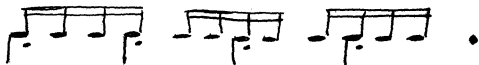
than the previous variation. It is followed by a variation in contrapuntal sixteenth-note texture. The texture of the sixth piece is more dense. Thick polyharmonic chords accompany the octave melody. Four-voice chords which are doubled in the left hand present the heaviest texture and the most strictly homophonic treatment. The most consistent application of this texture occurs in the last variation.

Example 58. Metamorphoses, "Variation XX," mm. 400-401.

Other examples of variety in texture are the arpeggiated figures of "Variation VIII," the doubled octaves in "Variation XVIII," the chord clusters in "Variation XVIII," and the contrapuntal texture of "Variation IV."

Rhythmic aspects. Rhythm is a major factor of variation of the melodic series. The phrasing and rhythm of melody are altered in each succeeding piece. These transformations are emphasized because of the exceedingly

simple rhythm of the original thematic statement--quarter notes at $\text{♩} = 66$. The third variation, for example, presents the theme as $\text{♩} \cdot | \text{♩} \text{♩} | \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} | \text{♩} \text{♩} | \text{♩} \text{♩} | \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \cdot$

All of the variations are in $3/4$ meter. Metronomic markings change often as new variations are stated. Both duple and triple divisions of the measures are found. An example of duple division is in "Variation IV," at measures 51 through 60. "Variation V" combines both duple and triple divisions beginning at measure 61: . Overlapping rhythms are evident in "Variation XI" at measures 183 through 189. Rhythmic stress is highly varied. Almost every variation has instances of unexpected changes in stress or accent. An example of the varied rhythm and phrasing which is typical of many of the pieces can be found in "Variation XII," at measures 221 through 225.

Form. Metamorphoses is a theme and twenty variations. The length of the variations ranges from ten measures to thirty-one measures. Every piece contains the theme or part of it, and it is varied freely; therefore, formal unity does not result from merely repeated use of the theme. Instead, the organization of accompanying melodic, harmonic, and textural aspects provide unity and variety in the set. A characteristic of the pieces is that the last measure of each prepares for a smooth motion to the first note of the piece which follows. The overall form is also characterized by diversity in textures and contrasts between subtlety

and dramatic expressiveness. The last variation is one of the most harmonically consonant and one of the least contrapuntal, whereas the first variations are more contrapuntal and are highly dissonant. The musical "metamorphosis" which takes place contributes to the design of the composition.

Summary. Metamorphoses is a set of variations on a theme of twenty-eight notes which includes two twelve-tone rows. The theme is employed melodically only. It appears on various pitches, in different registers, with diverse rhythmic structure, and with a variety of accompaniments. The basic intervallic relationships of the theme remain unchanged. Harmonic progressions are unconventional and usually do not establish keys. Textures vary widely: chord clusters, reinforced octaves, and arpeggios are found. The rhythmic figures are also highly varied, with rhythmic stress changeable and frequently uneven.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The solo piano music of Paul Creston is interesting and original performance literature which is written in basically modern language. The music is characterized by strong melodic lines and vivid harmonies with frequent use of dissonance and polytonality in both homophonic and polyphonic textures. The most systematic compositional exploitation is rhythm. The strength of rhythmic figures and their frequent complexity affects the expressive characters of the pieces. The compositions are expressive of a variety of moods and emotions, and they manifest both lyrical and objective qualities. The pieces provide performance material of varying levels of technical difficulty. Some of the writing is advantageous for virtuoso performance. The works are well adapted to the keyboard medium, although infrequently exploiting pianism for its own sake. The music generally is developed in its own terms and is secondarily limited by the resources of the piano.

The melodic style is distinguished by uneven phrasing, extension of thematic material, and a highly individual arrangement of linear intervals. A variety of techniques is used for the construction of melody. These include the use of

modality, pentatonicism, chromaticism, and the employment of twelve-tone rows. Melodic figures and motives frequently are based upon schemes of expanding intervals as germinal units of construction. Melodies, often scale-derived, frequently are related in contour or by motivic repetition. Melody is an integral part of the form in all of the pieces, and is exploited through repetition and expansion of intervals, motives, and phrases.

The harmonies are characterized by unconventional progressions and a regulated dissonance level for expressive purposes. The harmonic procedures include some tertian structures with non-functional progressions and frequent use of heterogeneous harmony. Harmonic combinations of seconds, thirds, and fourths used in parallel motion, polyharmonic structures, and considerable use of chromaticism are also an integral part of Creston's style. Basic tertian harmonies frequently are blurred by added notes and superimposed triads. Chord structures which are employed without adherence to strict patterns of progression are typical. A tonal center usually is identifiable, although often rapidly shifting; thus, relatively traditional structures are used chromatically as well as harmonic structures less firmly based upon thirds.

The textures are marked by a divergence in density, spacing, and registration. The melodic line usually is prominent in the fabric of the pieces. Polyphonic texture, in which more than one voice of the texture has an independently strong contour, occurs frequently, and parallel motion

is used often. Repeated accompaniment figures are distinguished by harmonic complexity and unusually extended lengths. Consistent texture is often maintained in individual works and becomes a unifying device. There is much usage of melodic and rhythmic motives, figures, and phrases in contrapuntal texture. Some less difficult pieces are comparatively simple homophony.

The rhythmic structure is emphasized more than other aspects in the compositional style. It is used as the main formal device in one piece in which patterns of changing meter are repeated, and the character of individual pieces is influenced greatly by the employment of different rhythmic structures. Rhythmic motives frequently are a predominant part of the music. Creston's use of rhythmic patterns generally results in uneven stress and accent, and steadily changing rhythmic figures. Contrasts in tempo and varied divisions of the measure are frequent.

The composer does not limit himself in regard to form. He uses the outlines of traditional sectional and continuous musical forms as well as contemporary processes of composition in free structures. First-movement form, rondo form, theme and variation form, binary and ternary structures, and imitative designs are used for casting individual pieces and movements. The smaller forms are characterized by traditional contrast and balance within each piece, although phraseology is frequently uneven and non-traditional harmonic structures are employed. The use of

traditional forms is free in regard to key statements and melodic repetition. The compositions are distinguished by a large amount of thematic development and change and a scarcity of exact phrase repetitions. The designs of several of the piano pieces are free forms based on variations and transformation of a germinal motive. The solo piano compositions are typically structurally free except for the general contrast and unity provided by the use of traditional forms and original free repetition and variation of ideas.

Creston's compositional technique is not procedural, but rather, the material is usually exploited in its own terms and within its own possibilities rather than according to preconceived plans or external considerations. His style is characterized by spontaneity and a broad creative viewpoint.

200

A P P E N D I X

288
APPENDIX

HONORS, AWARDS, AND COMMISSIONS

- 1965 Choreographic Suite commissioned by the Harkness Foundation
Pavane Variations commissioned by La Jolla Musical Arts Society
Chthonic Ode commissioned by Detroit Symphony Orchestra
- 1961 Board of Directors--American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers
- 1960 State Department Grant--American Specialist in Israel and Turkey
Violin Concerto No. 2 commissioned by Ford Foundation
- 1959 Janus commissioned by Association of Women's Committees for Symphony Orchestras
- 1958 Christopher Award for original score to television film "Revolt in Hungary"
- 1957 Toccata commissioned by the Cleveland Orchestra
- 1956-60 President--National Association for American Composers and Conductors
- 1956 Citation of Honor--National Catholic Music Educators Association
Suite for cello and piano commissioned by Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation
- 1955 Fifth Symphony commissioned by the National Symphony Orchestra
- 1954 Dance Overture commissioned by the National Federation of Music Clubs
- 1953 Invocation and Dance commissioned by the Louisville Orchestra
- 1952 Walt Whitman commissioned by Thor Johnson
Symphony No. 1--First Place--Paris International Competition
- 1950 Third Symphony commissioned by Worcester Music Festival
- 1947 Fantasy for Trombone and Orchestra commissioned by Alfred Wallenstein
- 1945 Poem for Harp and Orchestra commissioned by Alice M. Ditson Fund
- 1943 Citation of Merit--National Association for American Composers and Conductors
New York Music Critics' Circle Award for Symphony No. 1
Music Award--American Academy of Arts and Letters
Frontiers commissioned by Andre Kostelanetz
- 1941 Citation of Merit--National Association for American Composers and Conductors
- 1939 Guggenheim Fellowship (renewal)
- 1938 Guggenheim Fellowship

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