

HAYWARD, JULIANNA MARTIN, D.M.A. An Exploration of *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano (1990)* by David Irving. (2017)
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The purpose of this study is to bring attention to the life and music of David Gerow Irving, in particular, his *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano*, composed in 1990. As no previous academic writing has been committed to this subject matter, the study includes an introduction to the life and career of David Irving as well as an overview of his compositional techniques. Chapter 2 includes biographical information about his life in general, his career as a horn player, and his journey to composition. Chapter 3 gives a detailed description of his progression from student to composer. Chapter 4 provides an overview of some of his characteristic compositional tendencies found in a number of his compositions with examples. Chapter 5 focuses on the history and process in composition of the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano*, including a detailed analysis of each of the songs with comments from the composer. The appendices include a full score of the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano*, full list of works by David Irving, a written interview with the author, and permissions granted for the use of his correspondence with the author as well as the inclusion of his self-published works.

AN EXPLORATION OF *FOUR SONGS FOR SOPRANO, HORN, AND PIANO (1990)*

BY DAVID IRVING

by

Julianna Martin Hayward

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APPROVAL PAGE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the process of choosing works for my M.M. chamber recital, I consulted with my sister, a horn player who holds a B.M. from The Peabody Conservatory in Horn Performance. I was interested in programming literature that is rarely performed. She suggested three songs for piano, horn and soprano written circa 1830 by a rather obscure Romantic composer, Franz Lachner (1803-1890). After listening to works for this trio, I was fascinated with the combination, in particular, the beautiful relationship between the horn and voice created by the unique timbre and technique of the horn. Thus began my interest in repertoire for piano, horn and voice. When I set out to choose repertoire for my final D.M.A. dissertation recital, I searched again for a piece for this same trio, however, this time I specifically searched for late 20th or early 21st century pieces.

During my search, I discovered a very unique composition, *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano*, on YouTube. This piece was composed by David Irving in 1990 and was premiered in April of the same year at St. Michael's Church in New York City. It was performed a few times in the following year but has remained largely unknown and unperformed since.

David Irving, born 1935 in Kankakee, Illinois, is an accomplished hornist with a lengthy performing and composing career. After serving in the 7th Army Symphony during the Korean War period, he attended the New England Conservatory from 1955-57

where he studied with Willem Valkenier. When Valkenier retired in 1957, Irving left NEC and went to Vienna to study with the renowned Gottfried von Freiberg. While in Austria, Irving became a member of the Graz Opera and Graz Philharmonic, second in Austria only to the Vienna State Opera and Philharmonic.

After returning to the U.S., Irving continued his career on the horn, playing in many orchestras and ensembles, including Boris Goldovsky's New England Opera Theater, the Oakland Symphony, and the San Francisco Ballet, always keeping sight of his desire to compose. He returned to college at Columbia University with determination in 1975, earning his B.A. in 1980 and an M.A. in music composition in 1983.

After completing his degrees Irving formed the organization named *Phoenix* in New York City whose cause was to champion new and innovative music from current composers, performed by a number of accomplished musicians in New York City.

Over the last four decades, Irving has composed nearly 70 works for orchestra, chamber music, chorus, solo voice (with piano or instruments), instrumental solos (including a horn concerto), electronic media, and a one act opera. He has written for a wide range of instrumentations including experimental combinations such as *Stars* for violin quartet, a *Duet for Horn and Bass Flute*, and a piece titled *A Warm Summer Afternoon: Variations for 2 Flutes & Bass Clarinet or String Bass*.

According to Irving, his musical influences span from William Byrd to Prokofiev with several of the greats in between: Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Bartok, Stravinsky, to name a few. Yet in his own compositions he has worked to avoid being specifically influenced by other composers in order to maintain an independent style. He

professed that his style developed over many years of careful musical thought, which has enabled him to compose with a certain fluidity through the use of chromaticism within a non-tonal and tonal framework. Irving believes these techniques allow him to “move [more] freely in compositional space according to the direction suggested by the musical material [being employed].”¹

With his background as a horn player, David Irving was naturally drawn to chamber music for his instrument, which inevitably included the trio for voice, horn, and piano. The first composition ever composed for the ensemble, Franz Schubert’s *Auf Dem Strom* of 1828, was written in part to display the agility of the relatively new valved horn. With that composition, a new genre was born. Schubert is credited with inspiring Franz Lachner to compose a few sets of songs for this medium (from which I chose selected titles to perform on two occasions), but it is Schubert’s *Auf Dem Strom* that was and still is considered by many horn players to be the quintessential example for the trio. Even so, only a handful of trios suitable for concert performance had been written prior to the mid - 20th century in spite of the unique qualities of the ensemble. To address the apparent lack of material, the International Horn Society sponsored a contest for compositions for the trio in 1979, resulting in a handful of new repertoire. Nevertheless, even with added exposure in the 20th century, this “horn trio” has never been as widely embraced as the traditional trio of piano, cello, and violin, resulting in a far fewer pieces composed for the ensemble. This scarcity, however, is not for lack of beauty of the trio, particularly

¹ David Irving, written interview with the author, October 31, 2016.

because the horn is a very agreeable companion to the human voice, owing in part to overlapping technical characteristics.

Irving was eager to write a trio himself if the opportunity ever presented itself. He had been working with British mezzo-soprano, Sally Porter Munro, for whom he wrote several songs, in addition to the internationally acclaimed French hornist and concert soloist Francis Orval. Irving and Orval already had a working relationship as Orval had invited Irving to compose a work, *Spectra 2 for Horn and Piano*, for his American debut concert. Munro and Orval, along with pianist Walter Hilse, were eager to join in for the premier performance.

The decision to set four songs was derived from Irving's admiration of Richard Strauss' *Four Last Songs* written in 1948 for Soprano and Orchestra. Irving was drawn to the contemplative nature of these songs and this became the model in choosing the texts for his own four songs, *Grieg Being Dead* by Carl Sandburg, *There is a morn by men unseen* by Emily Dickinson, *Song* by Edith Sitwell, and *A Clear Midnight* by Walt Whitman, all with their own overarching but unique representations of life beyond the present.

Irving composed the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano*, he estimates, in about three months and considers it to be one of his best compositions.²

² David Irving, written interview with the author, October 31, 2016.

Need for Study

The purpose of this study on the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn and Piano* is threefold.

First, I would like to bring attention to the life and career of David Irving, which I believe has a special place in the annals of 20th and 21st century music. His development, experiences, and connections as a musician are diverse and have shaped his style as a composer.

Secondly, I want to address David Irving's compositional style and process. This is an imperative part of the research. Each composer's musical language is unique and often complex, especially those of the late 20th century. An awareness of their history and personal intricacies are important elements of an informed analysis. Despite his extensive musical career and connections to many well-known composers and theorists, David Irving and his music have yet to be documented in academia. I believe that Mr. Irving's approach in developing a unique, individualist style of composition also falls outside the mainstream of music criticism and musicological interest only because it has yet to be recognized. This study will hope to bring greater recognition to David Irving's music in general.

The third and final portion of my study will provide a thorough analysis of the *Four Songs* with input from the composer. Access and analysis are important to provide exposure to a genre like the trio of voice, horn and keyboard, that has a limited repertoire. As an indicator of the relative obscurity of repertoire, in a 1990 annotated bibliography of songs written for piano, horn, and voice published between 1830 and 1986, of the 272

songs written the author was only able to obtain 123 of the scores. I was incredulous that the scores for over half of these documented compositions were unavailable. In fact, I had difficulty procuring copies of the out-of-print Franz Lachner songs myself in 2010. The only way I was able to find them was through an exhaustive search by a music librarian. I also was without a quality recording or program notes to aid my preparation for performance.

David Irving's *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano* has had only four performances known to the composer to this date—the premier in 1990, two other performances not long after, as well as my own recital in March of 2017. A concern is that these songs will ultimately end up in the category of “non-procurable” pieces and remain unknown.

My goal through this research is to provide David Irving and the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn and Piano* more exposure with the expectation that the songs will be heard and performed more often. This research is necessary to provide salient details such as context, analysis, and guidance for a more informed performance. It is also imperative that this research be completed while Mr. Irving is able to contribute to the collection of information and the performance process.

Method

My exploration of the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn and Piano* involves detailed interviews and correspondence with the composer. These interviews include a compiling of thorough biographical profile on the composer and examine his influences and compositional language. I have interviewed Mr. Irving by email and in person. We have also corresponded more informally to discuss his life, his career, and the *Four Songs* in detail, which I reference as well.

My research offers a formal analysis of the *Four Songs*, highlighting the relationship of the music to the text, structural relationships, and the relationship between trio members, specifically the horn and voice. I include score examples as well as listening excerpts that are available through YouTube links. This dissertation also includes performance considerations gleaned from my learning and analysis of the songs.

CHAPTER II
THE LIFE OF MUSICIAN AND COMPOSER DAVID IRVING

David Gerow Irving was born, along with his twin brother, Darrel, on May 23, 1935 in Kankakee, Illinois to Laurence and Adeline Irving. A year later the family moved to Connersville, Indiana, where it remained the next seven years before settling in Bluffton, also in Indiana, a rural town nestled next to the Wabash River.

The Irving's were a musical family, with David's parents singing in church choirs and also serving in other church capacities. Adeline was self-taught on piano but played proficiently and regularly played for various church services. Laurence would often conduct the music for Sunday school, though he had no formal training.

This musical ability was passed down to the Irving children as well. David's older brother, Bill, studied the clarinet (although he did not pursue it as a career) and his older sister, Ann Irving, began singing with the Chicago Lyric Opera at an early age. She would go on to become one of the leading sopranos with the Kansas City Lyric Opera. She also sang with the Chicago Opera Theater. In an email to David Irving from respected mezzo-soprano Janice Meyerson, upon hearing a recording of Ann singing she stated,

Oh, my. I am alternately in tears and speechless. Ann's singing is what defines vocal artistry. What a treasure. Not a false note, ever. The beauty and roundness of her tone...the coloratura, the seemingly effortless high notes...Was there anything she couldn't do vocally? We singers could all take lessons from

Ann for eternity--in technique, in phrasing. The sheer beauty of her tone. She is simply masterful.³

With praise like this it is no wonder that without hesitation David refers to his sister as having been one of the great lyric sopranos of the 20th century.⁴ “Just listen to her ‘*Estrelita*’ or her ‘*Ch’il bel sogno*’ from Puccini’s *La Rondine*,”⁵ he says.

Introduction to the Horn

According to David, there was little opportunity to hear classical music in Bluffton, Indiana in the mid-20th century, but when he and his twin brother were in 8th grade, their parents insisted they play in the school band. For that purpose, they bought the twins a trumpet, which they shared. Both boys hated the "blatty sounding" instrument and, after learning enough to play in the band where they handed the instrument back and forth to each other, they rebelled and “refused to play it further.”⁶ Their parents did not relent so easily and made participation in sports dependent on playing some kind of instrument. This demand coincided with a fortunate event. As David described it,

Fortunately, a new high school band teacher had just been hired at the start of our freshman year. This was J. Robert Schlatter, who happened also to be a very fine French hornist...My parents got in touch with Schlatter, and he brought two French horns to the house. He told Darrel and me how to form an embouchure and had us blow a note or two on the horns. I was sold from the very first moment.⁷

³ Janice Myerson, email to David Irving, January 17, 2016, David Irving personal collection, Sidney, NY.

⁴ To sample Ann’s singing, refer to “Anne Irving Sings *Sempre Libera*”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_Jrk-COAMQ, *Depuis le jour*,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPXccIP1Npw>, *Caro Nome*,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ipjncRrSxyw>.

⁵ David Irving, email message to the author, July 8, 2017.

⁶ David Irving, written interview with author, October 31, 2016.

⁷ Ibid.

Mr. Schlatter also served as the principal hornist in the Ft. Wayne Philharmonic. Irving considers Schlatter to have been his first musical hero.⁸ “Though I didn’t have regular lessons with him,” David remarked, “whenever I needed to study some piece...we would go over it together. He gave me the necessary confidence to believe that I could play [the horn].”⁹

While both twins excelled at their instrument, from the very first note he played, David knew that he wanted to become a professional horn player. Everything from that point forward related to the horn in some fashion.

The world of classical music began to blossom as David learned the names of composers from his horn excerpt books or from band arrangements of orchestral pieces like Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony*, Rossini's overture to the *Barber of Seville*, or J.S. Bach's *Komm Süsßer Tod*. He would check out 78 RPM records from the library and play them on an old Victrola in the attic of his home. As he described it, “this was how, for example, I first heard the *Nocturne* (horn solo) from Mendelssohn’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Sometimes I would pretend to be sick so that I could stay home from church to listen to the Boston Symphony broadcasts on Sunday mornings.”¹⁰ On these occasions, if any of the pieces on the program being performed were listed in his excerpt books, David would listen for the solo horn passages, and as soon as he recognized them, attempt to play along. Additionally, on Sunday afternoons he often tuned in to the chamber music

⁸ David Irving, email message to the author, May 2, 2017.

⁹ David Irving, written interview with author, October 31, 2016.

¹⁰ David Irving, written inter with the author, October 31, 2016.

broadcasts from Carnegie Recital Hall in New York City. Then at 2:00 p.m. he would listen to the New York Philharmonic when the mood struck him.

Another monumental occasion for David occurred after Esther Pease, the pianist at David's church attended a recital given by Sergei Rachmaninoff in Ft. Wayne.

She described what a wide stretch [Rachmaninoff's] fingers could make. She played his *Prelude in C# Minor* to demonstrate his music which was [my] first hearing of Rachmaninoff. I loved the piece. It was the first great composition I had ever heard of a living classical music composer.¹¹

By his sophomore and junior years in high school, David was learning and performing movements from the Mozart 3rd and Strauss 1st *Horn Concertos*, and playing them in regional and state competitions where each year he won gold medals. David also played in the high school woodwind quintet and horn quartet. In addition, he performed solos for various local events that arose such as services at his church and community events in nearby cities. David's motivation to perform was further sparked when Schlatter invited him to play a concert with the Ft. Wayne Philharmonic. This was a dream come true, to play in a symphony orchestra, which he did, under renowned conductor Igor Buketoff.¹²

One key learning session for Irving occurred at summer music camp at Indiana University at Bloomington. He enjoyed the music camps immensely and was invited to

¹¹ David Irving, email message to the author, October 4, 2017.

¹² Buketoff would make a name for himself not only as a conductor but for orchestrating Rachmaninoff's unfinished opera *Monna Vanna* and for supplying a new orchestration for Modest Mussorgsky's opera *Boris Godunov* which was premiered at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City. Allan Kozinn, "Igor Buketoff, 87, Conductor and Expert on Rachmaninoff," *New York Times*, September 11, 2001, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/11/arts/igor-buketoff-87-conductor-and-expert-on-rachmaninoff.html>, accessed July 25, 2017.

play in the concert band and the student symphony. There he became acquainted with the Beethoven *6th Symphony* and the Tchaikovsky *6th Symphony* for the first time, and participated in a performance of the latter under the baton of Ernst Hoffmann.¹³ Both works immediately became favorites.

In his senior year of high school, David had several scholarship offers from universities and colleges, some of which he had never heard of, such as Indiana State University. As he recalls, however, they did not seem to offer full scholarships in those days, at least in music, and he did not have the financial means to attend. In fact, he did not even own his own horn. For this reason, he decided to volunteer to be moved ahead in the draft for the Korean War in order to complete the mandatory two years of military service. This would give him access to the GI Bill and enable him to attend college at a later date.¹⁴

Life as a Horn Player

David was first stationed at Ft. Knox, Kentucky for basic training and subsequently was sent to Göppingen, Germany where he was assigned to the 28th (later changed to 9th) Division Band. While there he met and took a few lessons from horn player Abby Mayer, a graduate of the New England Conservatory, and a member of the 7th Army Symphony Orchestra, located in Stuttgart, Germany. David recalls,

¹³ Hoffmann, an American, had been the music director of the Breslau Opera and Philharmonic in Germany, until the Hitler regime forced him to leave. Back in America, he became the conductor of the Houston Symphony and then the director of orchestral music at Indiana University. Ref: Hubert Roussel, *The Houston Symphony Orchestra 1913-1971*. (Austin: University of Texas, 1972).

¹⁴ David Irving, written interview with the author, October 31, 2016.

as soon as [I] heard that an army symphony orchestra existed, [I] wanted to be a member, but there were no openings. Despite this, [I] auditioned and when a position in the horn section was open, [I] was given a chair, making [me] the youngest member of the 7th Army Symphony Orchestra at the time. This orchestra was formed as a part of the effort to improve relations between postwar Germany and the United States and played concerts all over West Germany, France, Italy, England, Scotland, and Wales.¹⁵

The time Irving spent in the 7th Army Symphony with Kenneth Schermerhorn as conductor was a time of great inspiration and musical growth. During his time in the symphony he recalls that he “met many young musicians on their way to occupying major positions in orchestras all across the country or otherwise becoming involved in music in some essential way.”¹⁶

While a member of this orchestra David was also introduced to a large array of literature from the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. Irving writes of his impression of the experience.

Though I was just out of high school, I was suddenly in the company of some really great musicians [,] many who had already graduated from some of the best music schools - Curtis, Juilliard, the New England Conservatory, Eastman School of Music...For me it was an amazing experience. With this orchestra I first heard Beethoven's *3rd Symphony* by playing it. The same for the Brahms *3rd Symphony*, the Brahms and Beethoven violin concertos, and a host of other works like Mozart's *Symphony No. 40 in G minor* or the Hector Berlioz *Overture to Benvenuto Cellini*. Now I was also introduced to 20th Century music for the first time through pieces like Aaron Copland's *El Salon Mexico*, Hindemith's *Symphonic Metamorphosis*, the Bela Bartok *3rd Piano Concerto*...The Bartok instantly became one of my favorites and has remained so ever since.¹⁷

¹⁵ David Irving, email message to the author, June 8, 2017.

¹⁶ David Irving, email message to the author, September 21, 2017.

¹⁷ David Irving, written interview with the author, October, 31, 2016.

It was also during this time that Irving heard the late, great horn virtuoso, Dennis Brain, perform in Edinburgh. He was immediately impressed by Brain's incredible virtuosity and tremendous sense of musicality which greatly influenced his own playing, and, as well, his virtuosic writing for the horn in his compositions. Brain has remained the horn player that he admires "above all others."¹⁸

Following his time in the 7th Army Symphony, Irving returned to the U.S. and, due to the influence of Abby Mayer, enrolled in the New England Conservatory of Music in 1955. There he studied with the renowned Willem Valkenier. Irving remained at the New England Conservatory until 1957 when Valkenier retired. In the two years spent at the New England Conservatory, Irving was introduced to many new pieces of chamber music for the horn and other instruments. As a student he performed the Beethoven *Horn Sonata, Op 17* and Hugo Kauder's *Trio for Horn, Violin, and Piano*, a piece Kauder had dedicated to Valkenier.

While at NEC, Irving received his first introduction to music theory under the teaching of Warren Storey Smith, who taught theory and history at NEC from 1922-65. (David also studied in the class of composer and theory instructor Leland Procter.) Warren Storey Smith was an author of influential texts on music theory as well as a composer and renowned as musical editor for the *Boston Post*.¹⁹ Irving comments that with the "basic knowledge of harmony I obtained from that class...I wrote a piece for piano. I think one could say that it was expressive perhaps in the way folk painting is

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ "Warren Storey Smith," <http://necmusic.edu/archives/warren-storey-smith>, accessed July 20, 2017.

expressive.”²⁰ Thus the seeds for composition were planted, although, according to Irving, their genesis actually arose from conversations about music composition with Ken Schermerhorn and other musicians while he was a member of the 7th Army Symphony.

After leaving the New England Conservatory, Irving then sailed for Europe on a Holland America student ship to study in Vienna with Gottfried von Freiberg, principal hornist with the Vienna Opera and Philharmonic.²¹ During his time in Europe, David not only took horn and chamber music classes but also joined the Graz Opera Orchestra and Philharmonic for the 1958 season on second horn. Irving acquired a wealth of experience in Graz. While there, he and other members of the horn section recorded Leopold Mozart’s *Concertante for Four Horns* for radio broadcast.

Following his time in Austria, David again returned to the U.S. to continue his career on horn. At first, he freelanced around Boston and subsequently toured with the Goldovsky Opera Theater on second horn. Along with his brother, Darrel, they played 46 performances of Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*.

In 1966 David auditioned for and obtained a position with the Oakland Symphony in Oakland, CA as assistant first horn under conductor Gerhard Samuel. While with Oakland Symphony he played first horn on children’s concerts featuring pieces like *Peter and the Wolf* and for special events, one in particular being a production of Menotti’s opera *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. During this time he also taught for the San Francisco Community Center where he teamed up with other faculty for chamber music concerts.

²⁰ David Irving, “Composition Style and Approach to Composing,” February 5, 2017, personal collection of the author, Winston-Salem, NC.

²¹ Freiberg had performed the world premiere of Richard Strauss’s *Horn Concerto No. 2* in 1943.

In the early 1970's. Irving returned to study for a while with John Cerminaro, principal horn with the New York Philharmonic, who encouraged him to attend the Aspen summer music festival. He remembers this endeavor with some chagrin: "That was a mistake. Suddenly I was a student again, though I benefitted much from my study with Cerminaro."²² His time at Aspen was not wasted, however, as he was able to reminisce with Philip Farkas (former principal horn with the Chicago Symphony) about Farkas' time spent with Irving's former teacher, Valkenier, in the horn section of the Boston Symphony. Irving "also met and played with some great horn players including Priscilla (Prill) McAfee who had just been appointed principal horn with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and at Aspen displayed her considerable skill in a beautiful performance of the Haydn Horn Concerto No. 1."²³

During his time as a professional hornist, Irving performed with the aforementioned symphonies as well as others such as the Boston Civic Symphony, the Springfield Massachusetts Symphony, the Hartford Connecticut Symphony, the Harkness Ballet, the Marlboro Festival orchestra, the Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, the Caramoor Festival Orchestra, the San Francisco Ballet, the San Francisco Opera, the Western Opera Theater (subsidiary of the S.F. Opera), as well as with many chamber groups.

Irving's last professional job was in New York City circa 1975 when he was called in for a rehearsal for Cherubini's opera, *Medea*, for the Caramoor Festival in Katonah, New York with Julius Rudel conducting.

²² Ibid.

²³ David Irving, email message to the author, September 12, 2017.

Looking back, Irving stresses how great the privilege has been to have played with or alongside many stellar musicians and contemplates these times with the greatest respect and reflection.²⁴

Excluding horn players and composers, of which there have been dozens, while some [names] may not be familiar to everybody, I like to list them because of their relevance, in one way or another, to my life as a musician. My only fear is that I may have overlooked someone. These musicians include Claudio Arrau, Susan Belling, Eubie Blake, Tom Buckner, Richard Burgin, Igor Buketoff, Sarah Caldwell, Harriet Cohen, Richard Conrad, Dennis Russel Davies, Linda Diamond, Meryl Ettelson, Arthur Fiedler, Graham Fitch, Larry Foster, Boris Goldovsky, Hiroshi Hatoyama, Walter Hilse, Ernst Hoffmann, Ron Holgate, George London, Fritz Mahler, Spiro Malas, Henry Mancini, Shelly Mann, Zubin Mehta, Sherrill Milnes, Sally Porter Munro, Francis Orval, Mark Perchanok, Daniel Pinkham, Michael Rabin, Julius Rudel, Barry Salwen, Gerhard Samuel, Ken Schermerhorn, Jeanette Scovatti, Midhat Serbagi, Richard Serbagi, Kirsten Sorteberg, Eileen Stempel, Hans Swarowsky, Seymour Wakschal, Ralph Zeitlin, and many others. I associate some kind of personal or professional experience (or both) with these names which carry with them so many years of learning and growing as a musician.²⁵

Return to Schooling

Needing to pay the rent, Irving obtained a secretarial job with the Economics department at Columbia University in New York City. Irving quickly learned that his employee benefits allowed him to take up to 21 credits of free classes per year. He took his first class in the spring semester of 1975, a music history class with Joel Newman. Of this time Irving writes,

I continued to seriously practice the horn and enrolled in a chamber music class at Columbia Teachers College where I rehearsed pieces like the Haydn *Divertimento in E \flat* for horn, violin and cello. This high horn piece impressed the instructor

²⁴ David Irving, email message to the author, September 12, 2017.

²⁵ David Irving, email message to the author, September 23, 2017.

considerably, and pleased me as well, though my schedule made it very difficult to keep my playing up to standards.²⁶

Irving's serious study of music composition began as his career as horn player gradually drew to a close. In recalling this transition he states, "This great new musical interest that had been hovering in the background was making itself known more and more as the horn gradually gave ground."²⁷ A fractured vertebrae incurred in a softball game of an employer also caused problems that aided in the transition as he was unable to play his horn for an extended period of time.

Irving had long contemplated how he could begin the journey of composing music. He had recently attended performances of Prokofiev's ballet, *Romeo and Juliet*, and there, he remembers, in the darkness of the theater, vowed that somehow he would embark on that journey. As he combed through the Columbia music catalog, it was as if the doors for everything he wanted to accomplish had been suddenly thrown open. As he described it, "everything he needed to become a composer was at his fingertips, served up on a platter and all he had to do was reach out and take it."²⁸ Armed with academic scholarships, in combination with free tuition, he worked his way through school, graduating Magna Cum Laude (Phi Beta Kappa), earning a Bachelor of Arts in Music in 1980 and a Master of Arts in Music Composition in 1983.

²⁶ David Irving, email message to the author, September 23, 2017.

²⁷ David Irving, email message to the author, June 13, 2017.

²⁸ Ibid.

Career as a Composer

After earning his degrees, Irving founded and directed an organization in New York City dedicated to the presentation of new music, titled *Phoenix*. Its formal debut was at Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 West 69th St., New York City, on December 12, 1985. (Illustration A) Notably, flutist and early pioneer of electronic and synthesized music, Otto Luening, was on the program. At Irving's invitation he addressed the audience.

Irving had become acquainted with Luening at a Composer's Concordance concert at Bruno Walter Auditorium at the New York Public Library in Lincoln Center on February 10, 1984. It was on this occasion that his *Spectra for Piano* was premiered by pianist Kirsten Sorteberg, with whom Irving worked closely in the mid-1980s. "She was a brilliant pianist who also had a beautiful voice," Irving said. "I can't imagine the pieces being presented better."²⁹ At the reception following the concert Luening told Irving that *Spectra* had impressed him. This was the beginning of a friendship that lasted until Luening's death in 1996.³⁰

During the years when *Phoenix* was fully active, Irving received a number of reviews in various new papers around New York. In his review of the *Phoenix* premiere, "Concert: 8 Composers in New-Music Program," *New York Times* writer Bernard Holland wrote of David Irving's composition *Three Dance Movements*, that the composer "gives resonant yet pointillistic effect to the combination of marimba, bass clarinet, violin

²⁹ David Irving, email message to the author, September 23, 2017.

³⁰ David Irving, email message to the author, June 13, 2017.

and cello, and Mr. Irving has a way of holding on to brief melodic and rhythmic ideas and gradually making us care about them.”³¹

program seemed to “welcome a certain Catholicity” among composers. He also noted that it did not “seem to be one of these new music groups which takes some absolute dogmatic and never to be dissuaded stand on where music is going.”³² In Irving’s opinion, Page, had assessed the purpose of *Phoenix* rightly. “The major function of *Phoenix* was to present quality works of new music without consideration of musical ideology,” Irving said.

These reviews were not the first that Irving had received. Earlier, in May of that same year, Christopher Rumery, writer for the *New York City Tribune*, wrote that Irving’s piano composition *Clouds* had “an almost Impressionistic flavor...beautiful music that has a strong ethereal quality.”³³ In a 1989 *New York Times* review, Allan Kozinn hailed Irving’s vocal compositions as “inventive” calling his settings of *Three Emily Dickinson Songs* “evocatively dramatized.”³⁴ Al Kmist noted in a 1992 review for *Woodstock Times* readers that “David Irving’s *The Music Makers* celebrated music in service of poetry in service of music. The warmth was palpable even in the chilly church.”³⁵ Irving’s electronic score for Sandra Fenichel Asher’s play *Once in the Time of Trolls* received a

³¹ Bernard Holland, Concert: 8 Composers in New-Music Program, *New York Times*, December 16, 1985, <http://www.nytimes.com/1985/12/16/arts/concert-8-composers-in-new-music-program.html> , accessed February 6, 2017.

³² Recorded interview with Tim Page, December, 1985, David Irving private collection, Sidney, NY.

³³ Christopher Rumery, “Composer Irving present at recital,” *New York City Tribune*, Need Source info

³⁴ Allan Kozinn, “Review/Concert; The Eclectix Impetus: New Music in Old Mode,” *New York Times*, September 10, 1989, <http://www.nytimes.com/1989/09/10/arts/review-concert-the-eclectix-impetus-new-music-in-old-mode.html> , accessed February 6, 2017.

³⁵ Al Kmist, “Restaurants and Entertainment: Music,” *Woodstock Times*, March 5, 1992, 9.

favorable review in the *Catskill Mountain News* in 1994, noting that “David Irving...has created an imaginative electronic score which evokes the magic of the play and its characters.”³⁶

Tim Page, who interviewed Irving about the *Phoenix* inaugural program, commented on his show, “New, Old, and Unexpected” for WNYC-FM radio that the On the other hand, John Rockwell, writer for the *New York Times*, gave a review for the occasion of the premier of Irving’s *Spectra 2* for horn and piano in 1988. Referring to the review, Irving writes that the reviewer “could at best only muster up the phrase ‘extremely arid’ to describe the piece, applying it collectively to the other world premiers on the program as well.”³⁷ *Spectra 2* had been composed for Francis Orval’s New York recital debut at Merkin Hall in New York City. In commenting further on the review he that perceived as undesirable, Irving stated:

Every listener can decide for themselves the quality of the piece. I recommend the second movement. Tell me that is arid, or the brisk, energetic finale, or, for that matter, the distant, evocative first movement functioning as an intro. Of course composers are going to defend their works.³⁸

Of the reviews Irving received, “it would be difficult to surpass the four page feature article in the *North County News* in 1986,” he says, describing the presentation of his one act opera in seven scenes, *The Witch*.³⁹

³⁶ “New family plays highlights trolls, wolves,” *Catskill Mountain News*, July 6, 1994.

³⁷ David Irving, email message to the author, September 21, 2017.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Beth Waterfall, “On the Tale of a Witch,” *North County News*, October 15-21, 1986.

Figure 1. Program from the First Concert Hosted by *Phoenix*

Modern Music Originals
A Collection of Vocal and Instrumental Music

December 12, 1985, Thursday Evening, 8 P.M.
Christ and St. Stephen's Church
120 West 69th Street
New York, New York

With a Special Address by Otto Luening

PROGRAM

Tom Johnson	David Moore, Bass	<i>Falling</i>
Darrel Irving	Darrel Irving, Guitar	<i>2 Preludes</i>
Kirsten Sorteberg	Kirsten Sorteberg, Piano and Soprano	<i>Let Me Dance</i>
Brooke Halpin	Barry Salwen, Piano	<i>August 1983</i>

INTERMISSION

Carlos Rausch	The New Calliope Quartet Margery Daley, Soprano Lori Henig, Alto; David Frye, Tenor; John Arbo, Bass;	<i>Rounds</i>
Patrick Hardish	Marilyn Reynolds, Violin	<i>Sonorities II</i>
David Irving	Jerry Weir, Marimba Seymour Wakshal, Violin Daryl Goldberg, Cello James Douglas, Bass Clarinet David Irving, Conductor	<i>3 Dance Movements</i>
Otto Luening	Kirsten Sorteberg, Piano	<i>Short Sonata for Piano #4</i>

A Phoenix Presentation

Irving lists over 69 compositions in his catalog of works. This includes works for orchestra, a wide range of chamber ensemble pieces, vocal solos and song cycles with piano, vocal solos and song cycles with other instruments and piano, piano solos, works for a cappella chorus and for chorus with instruments, incidental electronic music for a play, a one act opera, a concert band arrangement, and music written to express animal rights. A complete list of Irving's compositions are included in Appendix B.

The works of David Irving have been performed largely in New York City but also in a number of places in New York State and in several other states (Alabama, California, Delaware, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Utah). This includes performances in venues such as at Weill Hall, the International Horn Society Conference in Athens, Georgia and the International Bartok Festival in Szombathely, Hungary. Internationally, Irving's music has been performed in Cologne, Germany, Vienna, Austria, Montreal, Canada, and, as noted, Szombathely Hungary.

In addition to his composing and performing, David has taught music classes for the United Federation of Teachers Retiree Program, the Continuing Education Department of Marymount Manhattan College, and the Spence School where he was the French horn and trumpet instructor.

The composition of his song sets *The Music Makers* and the *Four Songs from Shakespeare* marked the end of a major period in the compositional life of David Irving. He describes the years that followed as a time of self-reflection and new resolve:

After spending more than ten years in the mainstream of the highly competitive New York modern music scene, I had a pretty good idea of what it was all about. This was the time of the battle between the so-called uptown (academic) and downtown (chance/aleatoric) camps. [This debate is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.] I had little interest in the fight because I saw the value of both sides and also what was wrong with both sides. There is little question, though that the uptown/downtown battle impacted in some way the lives of almost every composer across the country and many in Europe, too, by virtue of its monopolistic control over the new music scene. Both blamed each other but both were responsible.

From 1978 through 1992, I was fortunate to have quite a few performances of my pieces presented in a wide variety of concert settings, though I suppose from the standpoint of big name composers, the number was small. With the composition of the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano* in 1990, I felt I had arrived at a certain place from which the future direction of my music would be new and different. It had actually begun probably a year or two earlier with the composition of the songs I worked on and *Spectra 2* for horn and piano, which I wrote in late 1987. Anyway, in 1992 I dissolved *Phoenix*. The road ahead would be to continue to strive always to write better compositions, combined with an occasional performance, but from the sidelines which offered a far less distracting place to work.

A few other performances of works have followed. Nothing, though, could have prepared me for the unexpected turn my music journey - perhaps better stated as my “non-music journey” - would eventually take.⁴⁰

Hiatus from Composing

In December of 2002 Irving moved to the upper Catskill mountain region in central New York. He lived there for two years, busy composing music, but returned to New York City for three years in order to earn enough money to pay for his home.

During this period his awareness of the world beyond the musical sphere continued to grow. Increased observation, contemplation, and study, which he relates

⁴⁰ David Irving, email message to the author, July 13, 2017.

first began around the time of the composition of *Clouds* in 1985, brought with it the unmistakable realization [of] the largest problem facing human beings responsible for all the violence, warring and killing. This was their disrespect and indifference for the life force that inhabits all living beings.⁴¹

He concluded that the obvious way for reversing human destiny as it presently exists was “to begin respecting all living beings and to stop excluding the non-human population of the earth from the love and compassion which is a major part of the nature of human beings, when they choose to use it.”⁴²

Upon his return to his home in the Catskills in December of 2007, the importance of Irving's life as a composer “seemed like a luxury he could no longer afford.”⁴³ He “purposely devoted his life to communicating this greater truth which pervaded his entire being and thought. He believes this was not something negative to endure, rather, that he had been given a gift of enormous proportions. It was like an entirely new consciousness. The gift and the honor came from the great above and was connected to a deeper spiritual self.”⁴⁴ For the next ten years, Irving spent his time writing a variety of articles and books in an attempt to “realize this greater objective to the best of his ability.”⁴⁵

No doubt many people who knew [me] personally, or even more distantly, thought that [my] life as a composer had come to an end. But the hiatus from music was temporary. “Had not the great Beethoven taken a break from composing,” I asked myself? “And had I not always used the example of the great composers for guidance when it came to compositional matters?”⁴⁶ While [I] was busy writing words [I] was also continuously writing music in [my] head and on occasion would return briefly to music to sketch out a piece. In general, though,

⁴¹ David Irving, email message to the author, September 21, 2017.

⁴² David Irving, recorded interview with the author, June 20, 2017.

⁴³ David Irving, email message to the author, June 13, 2017.

⁴⁴ David Irving, email message to the author, July 8, 2017.

⁴⁵ David Irving, email message to the author, September 21, 2017.

⁴⁶ David Irving, email message to the author, September 11, 2017.

music had to sit quietly by as [I] put [my] creative energies to work writing books on animal protection matters.⁴⁷

Finally, in late 2016 his work in writing began to ebb and he sensed that it was nearly time for him to return to music composition. The realization came with the knowledge that somehow, “now his future music and his life as a composer would be in the service of the ideals he had been bequeathed, backed by the new knowledge he had acquired as the result of his work on behalf of the non-human animal population of the world.”⁴⁸

David Irving regards the year 2017 as his inevitable return to composition. He reports that he is slowly beginning to implement some of the compositional ideas he has been contemplating over the past decade.

⁴⁷ David Irving, email message to the author, June 13, 2017.
A listing of his books and their availability can be found on his personal website,
<http://www.booksandmusicbydavidirving.com>

⁴⁸ David Irving, email message to the author, July 8, 2017.

CHAPTER III
COMPOSITIONAL HISTORY AND INFLUENCES

To say that David Irving’s musical influences throughout his lengthy career—two decades of performing (1954-1974), and three decades of composing (1975-2007) are eclectic may be an understatement. He acknowledges as well that along the way many doors on his musical journey opened “rather serendipitously.”⁴⁹

For Irving, composers such as Mozart, Beethoven, Bach, Schubert, and Haydn hold special places in his heart and mind - in that specific order. It is no surprise that these composers rise to the top as he would have been well acquainted with them from their repertoire for solo horn and from their chamber music, and orchestral works that contain iconic horn passages. In his individualistic way, David also puts Chopin in the same category even though Chopin wrote almost exclusively for piano. Each of these composers’ unique expression as well as Irving’s personal emotional connection to their music influences his attitude toward them. Of Mozart he writes, “His musical expression comes as close to perfection as is humanly possible. It is especially compelling in some of his slow movements in works like the *Serenade for 13 Winds*, the *Clarinet Concerto*, the piano concertos Nos. 21 and 23, or his *Symphony No. 36*.”⁵⁰ Similarly, he expounds on Beethoven, “It’s as though he reaches the depths of the human heart more fully than

⁴⁹ David Irving, written interview with author, October 31, 2016.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

any other composer. And he expanded the art of musical development of thematic material in undreamed of ways.”⁵¹ As for Schubert, Irving believes that it is the “absolute purity of his musical expression in all its dimensions - melody, harmony, counterp[oint], form, orchestration, vocal understanding - it’s all there.”⁵² With Haydn, Irving finds “a composer of great intellectual genius, practically inventing single handedly the constructs of a new music that would serve to unify music of the heart and mind for centuries.” In contrast, his love of J.S. Bach stems from Bach's ability to construct “magnificent edifices intricately woven together in a display of unimaginable intelligence yet imbued, at times, with great passion and feeling.”⁵³ Finally, with Chopin he believes that, “here we find another composer in a league of his own set apart especially because he wrote most of his compositions for piano. But he too dwelled among the stars and that is the journey where his compositions take us when we follow.”⁵⁴

Irving’s admiration for composers does not stop with those in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. His connection to 20th century composers is as strong, if not stronger, than any other century. He considers Bartok, Hindemith, Stravinsky, and Prokofiev to be among his favorite composers as well but his favorite list runs long, from Britten to DeFalla and Khachaturian to Orff, Poulenc and more. All of these names offer insight into the compositional values of David Irving.

⁵¹ David Irving, email message to author, June 18, 2017.

⁵² David Irving, written interview with the author, October 31, 2016.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ David Irving, email message to author, July 8, 2017.

Becoming a Composer

For Irving, the idea of studying to be a composer had been forming many years before he enrolled in formal study at Columbia University.

The seeds for becoming a composer were planted...in the 7th Army Symphony in conversations with Ken Schermerhorn and other members of the orchestra. At the New England Conservatory I dabbled just a bit when I wrote a short piano piece...Then when I played with the Oakland Symphony, I suddenly found myself in a situation where the conductor, Gerhard Samuel, was intensely involved in programming pieces of contemporary music. Samuel was an excellent composer himself. Several members of the orchestra were also very much involved in modern music, and I would sometimes join them for improvisation sessions.”⁵⁵

Bob Hughes, assistant conductor and principal bassoonist of the Oakland Symphony, was also particularly influential. According to Irving,

Hughes introduced me to Lou Harrison, one of the foremost composers in American music. All three, of us along with my wife at the time, Tysonia Read, plus a friend of Hughes, spent an evening together nourished by a gourmet table set by Hughes. We discussed all matter of things, but I was especially attentive to what Harrison had to say about composition and influences from other cultures, notably China.⁵⁶

On another occasion, Hughes brought Ned Rorem over to Irving’s house unannounced and the three “spent an enjoyable afternoon surveying the colorful scene of the Haight Ashbury where every manner of Hippie and Flowerchild were everywhere displayed, all doing their revolutionary thing.”⁵⁷ Little did Irving know that Rorem would go on to become a Pulitzer Prize winner and composer in practically every musical genre.

⁵⁵ David Irving, written interview with the author, October 31, 2016.

⁵⁶ David Irving, email message to the author, September 21, 2017.

⁵⁷ David Irving, email message to the author, September 11, 2017.

Concurrent with his career in horn, Irving collaborated with two other musicians in a jazz ensemble, Woody, a guitarist, and pianist, Richard White. The latter was keenly interested in Arnold Schoenberg and Eric Satie. Irving was already familiar with Satie's piano music through a recording by Aldo Ciccolini that he had acquired in New York. The group played only once in public, according to Irving, "on the coast in Big Sur, joined by avant garde artist and film producer Bob Branaman on percussion instruments of his own device."⁵⁸ The ensemble used themes from the works of both Satie and Schoenberg as inspiration for their improvisations and eventually went on to record one of their sessions. "It was truly a great recording session," Irving insists. "But years later when I tried to acquire it, I was unable to track down the man who did the recording. He was an adjunct professor at the University of San Francisco."⁵⁹ Even still, the influence of this experience and the exposure to Schoenberg and Satie remained with Irving. He hopes to find this recording one day.

Irving remembers one of the final experiences that set him on his path to composing which happened when he returned to living in New York City.

One evening I went out for a walk and headed past the fountain on the plaza at Lincoln Center...in front of the Metropolitan Opera (which was just a couple of blocks from where I lived.) Suddenly a woman came running toward me who I knew only casually. She had an extra ticket for a performance of Prokofiev's ballet *Romeo and Juliet* (for which the audience was already filing into the opera house)...Did I want to go? Indeed I did! (The principal dancers were Margot Fonteyn and Rudolf Nuryev.) And there I heard for the first time this great masterpiece of 20th century music.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ David Irving, email message to the author, September 21, 2017.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ David Irving, email message to the author, June 13, 2017.

Irving was so impressed by the ballet that he went to see it again a few days later. It was at that second performance, with the music of Prokofiev swirling around him, and the spectacle of the dance before his eyes that Irving “was filled with inspiration and an overwhelming sense that [his] future destiny was to write music.”⁶¹

Once he had enrolled at Columbia University, Irving realized that he would need a much stronger background in music theory before delving into composition. In a very calculated manner, he chose to treat all theory assignments as nearly like composition studies as he could manage. In the theory classroom of Richard Taruskin – who would become famous for his work on Stravinsky and as a music historian and critic - Irving ambitiously took the opportunity to compose a setting of Shakespeare’s *Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer’s Day* for soprano and piano in fulfilling an analysis assignment. “I didn’t know what to expect,” Irving says, “but Taruskin responded by marking the composition with an A, a smile, and verbal aside that I was a composer of ‘deep passion.’”⁶²

During his time at Columbia, Irving also studied orchestration with Dennis Riley. While in Riley's class, Irving wrote a few short compositions, most notably a short orchestral study, which he titled *The Nights of Big Sur*.

In his counterpoint class, taught by Walter Hilse, Irving composed a short contrapuntal piece for an assignment. David recalls that another student in the class remarked, “That sounds like Bach,” to which Hilse replied, “I wouldn't totally

⁶¹ David Irving, written interview with the author, October 31, 2016.

⁶² David Irving, email message to the author, July 8, 2017.

disagree.”⁶³ While Irving remarked that he would not consider that he would stand even close to falling within the shadow of great composers like Bach, the compliment encouraged him and suggested he was on the right path.

Coincidentally, years later after both Hilse and Irving had left Columbia, Walter would become the pianist for the premier performance of the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn and Piano*.

Composition Studies and the use of the 12-tone Method

After two semesters of undergraduate study at Columbia, Irving attended his first official composition class taught by Mark Zuckerman, a recent graduate of Princeton and a student of Milton Babbitt. (Babbitt was one of the top advocates of the serialist method of composition in the United States and Europe.) In Zuckerman's class Irving learned to utilize the 12-tone method of composition, a technique largely invented and pioneered by Arnold Schoenberg during the first half of the 20th century. To teach the method, as Irving recounts, Zuckerman began his class by suggesting the students write a composition using only six notes, one-half of a tone row. A complete tone row consists of all 12 tones from the chromatic scale in a prearranged order.

Using six notes, or pitches as they would be called in 12-tone parlance, [I] learned how to experiment with some of the transformational techniques. These techniques consist of inversion (playing the row upside down), retrograde (playing the row backwards), retrograde inversion (playing the backwards row upside down), transposition, and in using chordal constructs such as, but not limited to, trichords (3 notes) tetrachords (4 notes), pentachords (5 notes), and

⁶³ David Irving, “Composition Style and Approach to Composing,” personal collection of the author, Winston-Salem, NC, February 5, 2017, 2.

hexachords (6 notes), both vertically (harmonically) and horizontally (melodically).⁶⁴

Irving admits that from the beginning he did not strictly follow the 12-tone method in his first formal composition, *Piece for Piano in Two Movements* (1978). In spite of this, Zuckerman appears to have approved as he encouraged Irving to submit it for a Columbia Composers' concert. It was selected and performed on April 28, 1978 at the Barnard College Parlor by pianist Michael Skelly.

Today, Irving credits Zuckerman as having been “the perfect person with whom to start composition studies. He helped transform a fledgling would-be composer into a legitimate composer in the space of a semester’s time.”

Besides Zuckerman, Irving would benefit from his composition studies as an undergraduate at Columbia with Max Lifchitz, and as a graduate student with Fred Lerdahl and Jack Beeson. Irving describes Lerdahl, renowned for his theoretical writings and compositions, as “an exceptionally gifted composer whose compositions exhibit real architectural beauty and substance.” Irving knew of Beeson long before he attended Columbia.

I heard Jack Beeson's opera *Lizzie Borden* in 1965 at the New York City Opera.. It made a deep impression on me as a contemporary opera that I liked as much as any other I had heard including Berg's *Lulu* or any opera by Menotti. I could never have imagined at the time that I would one day study with the composer of this masterpiece and write my Master's thesis *Five Dances for Orchestra* [since retitled *Theme and Variations for Orchestra*] for his composition class.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ David Irving, *Compositional Style and Approach to Composing*,” personal collection of the author, Winston-Salem, NC, February 5, 2017.

⁶⁵ David Irving, email message to the author, October 7, 2017.

After leaving Columbia, Irving exchanged letters with Beeson, a fellow Hoosier from Muncie, Indiana, and remembers him fondly.

Irving's next composition in Zuckerman's class was for woodwind quintet for which he was rewarded with another outstanding performance in a Columbia Composer's concert on March 29, 1979. Several years later the work received a round of performances, first at a Composer's Concordance Concert at Cami Hall in New York City on April 24, 1987 and the following day at the University of Delaware/Newark.

In Irving's compositional process, he began the woodwind quintet with a full 12-tone row but within a few measures, strayed from the formal row. This practice is not unusual for Irving. In fact, although he used the techniques associated with the 12-tone method for his earliest compositions, including his *Music for String Quartet* (1979) and the first movement of his *Trio for Horns* (1982), he acknowledges he is not confident that he ever wrote a full work that followed the 12-tone method from start to finish except for the first movement of the *Trio for Horns*. Irving recalls referring to his *Music for String Quartet* as a 12-tone composition to Max Lifchitz, his composition teacher at the time. Lifchitz, who had conducted the piece in a Columbia Composer's reading with members of the Emerson Quartet, laughed and commented: "That's no 12-tone piece." In good humor, Irving said he could do nothing but agree with Lifchitz.⁶⁶ Still, it was in moments like this that Irving realized he preferred his "non-12-tone" compositions much better than the 12-tone compositions that were being lauded in music journals and theory

⁶⁶ David Irving, email message to the author, July 8, 2017.

treatises he read. To his perception, they looked extremely impressive on paper but offered far less in giving the listener a rich musical experience.⁶⁷

Despite the presence (or not) of formal tone rows, Irving continued to gain ground with his *Trio for Horns*. It was first performed by Stewart Rose, Bob Carlisle, and Julie Landsman at another Columbia Composers concert on April 29, 1982 and then at a Caecelia Society concert on May 24, 1982 at the Turtle Bay Music School in New York City.

Good fortune continued to be in store for his *Trio for Horns* when New York Philharmonic hornists Philip Myers, Eric Ralske, and Howard Wall performed the piece in Boston and then at the International Horn Society Convention in Athens, Georgia on May 21, 1999 “to an enthusiastic audience,” according to Irving. “To what extent the enthusiasm was for the performance or the piece, however, I did not venture a guess. Hopefully for both!”⁶⁸

Contending with Modern Music in the Late 20th Century

Concurrent with Irving’s development as a composer, a plethora of methods and techniques were being employed by mainstream composers. In addition to tonal composition, these included atonal, microtonal, electronic, minimalist, post-minimalist, neo-romantic, improvisational, and a free eclecticism in which composers borrowed from jazz, ragtime, folk music, rock and other music sources. Irving notes that some of these

⁶⁷ This is the reason, in Irving’s opinion, that the 12-tone method went into such rapid decline after its initial successes.

⁶⁸ David Irving, email message to the author, September 23, 2017.

genres also fit into two dominant movements of the time: (1) chance music, also called aleatoric, and (2) 12-tone composition which often extended into serial composition. In serial composition, pre-determined orderings can be applied to various elements of music in addition to pitches, such as dynamics, note duration, rhythm, etc.⁶⁹

Irving distinctly remembers the rivalry between camps of composers and describes it as such:

Aleatoric, 12-tone, and serial composition was sometimes loosely characterized as "downtown," which implied a nonconformance with traditional European models, and "uptown," which implied an acceptance of the European model. Downtown audiences would welcome composers like John Cage, Morton Feldman...and Pierre Boulez. Opposite them, with tastes more in accord with the European side, audiences were receptive to composers like Roger Sessions, Charles Wuorinen, Milton Babbitt, George Crumb, Otto Luening...and Luigi Dallapiccola. Some composers, like John Adams, Luciano Berio, Pierre Boulez, and Bob Hughes could be listed in either camp.⁷⁰

Even though with time there has come some softening of this rivalry, during this period these two camps were, at their very core, pitted against one another. This is exemplified by Charles Wuorinen's text, *Simple Composition* published in 1979. Wuorinen stated in the preface that his book is merely "theoretical" but then later famously asserted that "while the tonal system, in an atrophied or vestigial form, is still used today by popular and commercial music, and even occasionally in the works of backward-looking serious composers, it is no longer employed by serious composers of the mainstream. It has been replaced or succeeded by the 12-tone system."⁷¹ Just as

⁶⁹ David Irving, "Finding a Voice," personal collection of the author, Winston-Salem, NC, May 17, 2017.

⁷⁰ David Irving, email message to the author, July 8, 2017.

⁷¹ Charles Wuorinen, "Simple Composition," (New York: Longman Music Series, 1979), 3.

famously, Richard Taruskin would later refer to this and similar pronouncements as “fantasies of infantile omnipotence.”⁷²

The previous examples display the broad musical landscape that surrounded Irving during the time in which he was writing his *Piece for Piano in Two Movements*, the *Woodwind Quintet*, *Music for String Quartet*, as well as his *Trio for Horns*. What concerned Irving the most, however, was not the “uptown/downtown” debate, but rather how to find his own compositional voice.

Even though Irving was well acquainted with aleatoric methods, it held no interest for him. Irving also felt no attraction to minimalism and, though he admired the work of Harry Partch, did not think and had no interest in thinking in microtones. He would eventually study electronic music in the class of Vladimir Ussachevsky and Bulent Arel, but felt no real kinship with that either, though it pleased him to be studying in the class of Ussachevsky who had studied with Sibelius.⁷³

In regard to the 12-tone method, before studying at Columbia, Irving's limited exposure came from a small amount of self-directed reading which contributed to no specific opinion for or against the method. In his understanding, the philosophy underlying the 12-tone method was to free the composer from the “tyranny” of a hierarchical system of tonality where the dominant/tonic relationship, particularly in regard to the cadence, controls the composition. (Additionally, Irving observes that a philosophy of rejection also underlay “chance music” in the desire to eliminate past

⁷² Richard Taruskin, “Classical View; Calling All Pundits: No more Predictions,” *The New York Times*, November 2, 1997.

⁷³ David Irving, “Finding a Voice,” personal collection of the author, Winston-Salem, NC, May 17, 2017.

associations with music because they were thought to be an obstacle to the creation of music in the present.⁷⁴⁾

In an effort to be freed from what was considered to be the tyranny of the traditional rules of tonality, in a 12-tone composition each pitch is to be equal to any other pitch with no particular note or note sequence having dominance over another. While Irving did not feel tyrannized by tonal music he did feel that the major/minor system of tonality imposed rules that did not coincide with what he hoped to achieve as a composer.⁷⁵ Similarly, Irving felt that the 12-tone and serial methods imposed their own boundaries and he questioned some of the basic premises.

One of Irving's reservations about 12-tone composition involves the desire to eliminate pitch hierarchy.

Acoustically speaking, it seemed obvious enough that the acoustical fact that any pitch produces overtones according to its position in the overtone series with lower notes being richer in overtones than higher notes precluded the possibility of pitch equivalency. A B \flat two octaves below middle C sounds much richer than a B \flat two octaves above middle C. So it seemed to me that the only real claim for hierarchical pitch equivalency the 12-tone system could legitimately make, existed on paper only, and not in actual acoustical sound.⁷⁶

Beyond this claim, Irving was bothered by the fact that once the parameters of a composition were set up, they exerted far too much control over the ordering of notes, and in the case of serial music, what other elements followed each other (dynamics,

⁷⁴ David Irving, email message to the author, July 8, 2017.

⁷⁵ David Irving, "Composition Style and Approach to Composing," personal collection of the author, Winston-Salem, NC, February 5, 2017, 3.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

duration, etc.) He also disliked what “seemed to be a certain essential dissonance that pervaded 12-tone compositions.”⁷⁷ For Irving, dissonance is a powerful and necessary compliment to consonance that in 12-tone music had taken its place.

As Irving searched for the compositional course he could pursue, when it came to the actual music being written, his compositional heroes were not John Cage, Morton Feldman, et al, as much as he admired some of the work of this group of composers. He also believed that the 12-tone method could be used to produce great works of music such as Berg’s *Lulu*, Schoenberg’s *String Quartet No. 2*, Stravinsky’s *Requiem Canticles*, Webern’s *Concerto Op. 24*. He asked in his own words, however, “‘Was this the kind of music I wanted to write?’ The answer came immediately. ‘No, it was not.’ And I found myself more and more in rebellion against the method.”⁷⁸

In searching for his own style, Irving says he drew inspiration from composers like Igor Stravinsky, Bela Bartok, Paul Hindemith, and Sergei Prokofiev, all of whom, in his understanding, had managed to find their own compositional voices independently of any new prescribed method of composition invented in the 20th century. Irving points out that even when Stravinsky began using the 12-tone method late in his career, he molded it to suit his compositional skills such as in his invention of rotational arrays where each successive tone row would begin on the succeeding note of the original tone row transposed at a given interval.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ David Irving, “Composition Style and Approach to Composing,” personal collection of the author, Winston-Salem, NC, February 5, 2017.

Development of a Personal Style

A pivotal moment arose as Irving began his *Trio for Horns*. By this point he had quite a bit of experience in using 12-tone techniques so for the first movement he followed the method carefully. Even so, one of his favorite instructors, in describing what he considered to be too “loose construction” of the tone row in this piece wrote that, “Regardless of how well the piece turns out, a description of a compositional process wherein the composer feels he must fight, rather than enjoy, properties of his material is disturbing.”⁷⁹

Irving knew he was not the only composer to use the tone row freely, however. Such use is described by composer, teacher, and music critic Kyle Gann. He notes that 12-tone composer Luigi Dallapiccola, in his *Piccola Musica Notturna*, begins and ends his second row on E. Gann writes that in between, Dallapiccola “reiterates and dwells on row fragments in a languorous, non-Schoenbergian manner” in order to produce a “fresh, invigorating effect that is rare in 12-tone music.” In conclusion, Gann asks, “if you have to torture and subvert a technique that much to make it yield an effect so modestly gratifying, what is the use of the technique?”⁸⁰

For Irving, his compositions came from a place of his creativity and not any one prescribed method. He believed his instructor had hit the nail on the head when he talked about fighting rather than enjoying the process. What appealed to Irving about the 12-

⁷⁹ I inquired as to who actually made this comment. Irving was reluctant to share and requested that I not report the name of the instructor. However, Irving believes this interaction was a pivotal moment for him in defining his path as a composer.

⁸⁰ Kyle Gann, “Once More Into the 12-Tone Breach,” *PostClassic: Kyle Gann on music after the fact*, March 20, 2005, https://www.artsjournal.com/postclassic/2005/03/once_more_into_the_12tone_brea.html, accessed July 29, 2017.

tone method when he first started using it was not the philosophical ideas underlying the method, but the techniques employed to produce it, such as inversion, retrograde, retrograde inversion, transposition of the elements and the kind of melodic and chordal constructs that could be derived from the tone row. From this, a personal method evolved in which Irving began to add tonal elements to a semi-atonal framework.

This style of composition is chromatically unrestrained and allows Irving to move freely in musical space in any direction at will, shifting directions gradually or suddenly with ease, accompanied by consonant and dissonant harmonic content. Though he would continue to discover and use new compositional techniques, this became the centerpiece of his compositional ideal. He experimented also with modulation by means of common tones in chords. Irving first learned about this age-old procedure in his theory class with Richard Taruskin and he found it a useful tool in his own works. In this respect, his approach would grow to include and benefit from any technique ever used by any other composer as long as he could make it fit into his own personal language.⁸¹ In addition, he solidified his understanding and use of various 20th century techniques by studying Vincent Persichetti's book, *Twentieth-Century Harmony*.

⁸¹ David Irving, personal interview with the author, Sidney, NY, June 20, 2017.

CHAPTER IV
COMPOSITIONAL TECHNIQUES AND DISTINGUISHING STYLE
CHARACTERISTICS

Irving first began to develop a personal compositional methodology while composing the third movement of his *Trio for Horns*. The movement begins with a recapitulation of the opening nine notes of the tone row from the start the first movement. At this point, however, Irving made the conscious decision to break completely from the row.⁸² His reasoning was that adherence to the row did not allow him the full range of expression. This break allowed him to “unleash a more personal, powerful and expressive presentation of the musical material. Repetition - anathema to the concept of 12-tone equivalency - now began to play an important role.”⁸³ Irving felt that he had tuned into a kind of free compositional style in this movement and eagerly added it to his compositional palette to be used in the future.

Compositional Techniques

By 1990 Irving felt more at home in his own compositional world. This was the year in which he composed the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano*. In summation of this transition he said,

⁸² Robert Carlisle, Julie Landsman, Stewart Rose, horns, “Trio for Horns (1982),” by David Irving, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XowIIIpfeSI>, accessed August 9, 2017. (Example at 2:19 – 3:22)

⁸³ David Irving, email message to the author, September 11, 2017.

The task for me from about the time of the composition of the *Horn Trio* in 1982 forward became to find a system of composition in which I could best express my own musical world, not the theoretical results of a system of composition. What I sensed intuitively that I needed was to find a kind of free chromaticism which would give me the tonal freedom I wanted.

When a sense of tonal freedom is established, the ear does not sense any need to start or end a piece on a particular scale step, though it may do so if it chooses. Any kind of tonality (including bitonality) based on diatonic, chromatic, major, minor, modal, or mixed scales can also be used. Any kind of chord, major, minor, augmented, diminished, half diminished, added chords, chords in 4ths, 5ths, etc., can be used at any place in the composition, and the same for any kind of chord progression. Any kind of intervallic relationship can also be established between notes. All these elements partner with the other elements of the composition, tempo, time signature, note duration, dynamics, range, melody, form, thematic development, and musical feeling which can only come from that place where music resides in a person and which needs to be constantly involved in how a piece proceeds to completion once it is begun. The latter is the primary controlling factor [of a composition].⁸⁴

This method allowed Irving to employ dissonance and consonance freely without the bonds of the 12-tone system or the hierarchy of chord progressions in tonal music and allowed for drawing artistic inspiration from other sources. To achieve this objective, he “assiduously tried to avoid being directly influenced by other composers while at the same time learning from their tendencies.”⁸⁵ In the compositions that followed, Irving drew inspiration from many sources, experimenting along the way. One such experiment was *Clouds* (1985), one of his favorite pieces.⁸⁶ His objective was to write a piece

⁸⁴ David Irving, written interview with the author, October 31, 2016.

⁸⁵ David Irving, email message to the author, September 11, 2017.

⁸⁶ To view a lecture recital on *Clouds* given by the composer see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YqGhFkFgHTo>.

wherein the interval of the perfect fourth played a dominant role over a bass progressing by half or whole steps.⁸⁷

The interval of the perfect fourth pervades the entire composition and functions melodically, harmonically, and rhythmically. For example, two trichords constructed on fourths and separated by a diminished 5th begin the composition with a broad melodic sweep that, after several repetitions, ascends higher and higher by the interval of the 4th, and, upon arriving at its destination, sits high above, poised and serene, supported by the opening trichord in an inverted position.⁸⁸ (Example 1)

In another instance, Irving imposed upon himself a challenge to write a piece with a repeated rhythmic motif and just a couple of themes, while maintaining the same key. He compared the exercise analogously to Ravel's *Bolero*. This challenge resulted in Irving's *Grand Processional March for Orchestra* composed in 2002 which is constructed on a static quarter note ground bass moving in fifths, written in 4/4 time.⁸⁹ Irving used counterpoint, parallel harmonies in fourths and fifths, and high counter melodies to create interest.

In finding his compositional voice, Irving was especially concerned with harmonic content. He found that one way for controlling harmonic content was to control the intervallic relationships or distance between notes in harmonic constructs. The interval of a minor second becomes a minor ninth an octave apart or a major seventh when inverted, which, in both cases, though still dissonant, is aurally perceived as less

⁸⁷ Kristen Sorteberg, pianist, "Clouds (1985)," by David Irving, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bzknydC_1-w, accessed July 12, 2017.

⁸⁸ David Irving, "Clouds," personal written collection of the author, Winston-Salem, NC, May 15, 2017.

⁸⁹ David Irving, "Grand Processional March for Orchestra (2002)," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IqnwBgQH0X8>, accessed August 17, 2017.

dissonant than a minor second. Irving employs this technique in his settings of Emily Dickinson's *Morning* (1989) and in *I dwell in possibility*, both from his collection of *Three Emily Dickinson Songs*.⁹⁰ In both instances, the dissonances between the two voices of the accompaniment are separated by at least an octave. (Example 2 & 3)

Example 1. David Irving, *Clouds*, mm. 1-2

Clouds
for Kirsten Sorteberg David Irving

The musical score for "Clouds" by David Irving is presented in four systems. The first system shows the beginning of the piece in 3/8 time with a tempo of quarter note = 60. The piano part starts with a *ppp* dynamic and includes markings for *poco cresc. mf cresc*. The second system, labeled 'A', features dynamics of *f* and *ff*, with a *sempre ff* marking. The third system, labeled 'B', includes dynamics of *fff* and *pp*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

⁹⁰ Graham Finch, piano, Sally Porter Munro, soprano, "Three Emily Dickinson Songs (1989)," by David Irving, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5ljQLcCTGE>, accessed July 20, 2017.

Example 2. David Irving, *Morning (Three Emily Dickinson Songs)*, mm. 1-6

Andante (♩ = 90-100)

Will there really be a Morning

8va

p sempre legato

ped ped ped ped sempre simile

A

mp

Is there such a thing as Day

mp

In the second movement of *Spectra 2 for Horn and Piano*, mm 3-6 contain four chromatic tones, B \flat , B \natural , C \natural , and C \sharp , spaced at octaves, diminishing the clash of the dissonances. (Example 4) Similarly, *A little madness in the spring* contains a metered trill of sorts in both voices of the accompaniment, containing the tones A \flat , A, B \flat , D \flat , E \flat , and F spaced at the octave. (Example 5) Irving uses the same technique pervasively in *Song* from the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn and Piano*. In some instances, the dissonances are separated by four octaves. (Example 6)

Example 3. David Irving, *I Dwell in Possibility* (Three Emily Dickinson Songs),
mm. 1-75

I dwell in Possibility

Andante ($\text{♩} = 100$)

sempre legato

*ped * ped * sempre simile*

Pos si bi li ty

Example 4. David Irving, *Spectra 2 for Horn and Piano*, II. Lento, mm. 1-6

Musical score for Example 4, showing piano and horn parts. The tempo is Lento (♩ = 50). The piano part is in the lower register, and the horn part is in the upper register. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p* and *ppp*.

Example 5. David Irving, *A Little Madness in the Spring (Three Emily Dickinson Songs)*, mm. 69-71

Musical score for Example 5, showing vocal line and piano accompaniment. The tempo is Lento (♩ = 50). The vocal line includes the lyrics: "who pon- ders this tre men- dous scene". The piano accompaniment features complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings such as *ped* and ** 5-55*.

Example 6. David Irving, *Song (Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano)*, mm. 26-28

Musical score for Example 6, showing piano and horn parts. The tempo is Lento. The piano part is in the lower register, and the horn part is in the upper register. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p* and *ppp*, and a box labeled "C".

Another technique used by Irving to create a more consonant sound from dissonant relationships employs dissonant notes that are not sounded together but in succession, creating an effect in which the notes "slide" into the one another to create the dissonance. This can be seen in his *Kyrie* for chorus and orchestra, an arrangement of the 5th variation of the *Circus Variations for Piano*.⁹¹ It is evident in some of the compositions that are slower in tempo like *Song* from the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn and Piano*. Throughout the work, not only are there instances of widely spaced dissonances but they are played successively rather than simultaneously. (Example 7)

Example 7. David Irving, *Song*, mm. 25-29



Irving applies no rules to the degree of tonality or atonality a piece can or should possess. In a composition that is more tonal in nature, the addition of dissonances can add a welcome contrast, even when used minimally, and enrich the harmony. This can be seen, for example, at rehearsal letter B in Irving's setting of Shakespeare's *Shall I*

⁹¹ Kristen Sorteberg, piano, "Circus Variations (1984)," by David Irving, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxsnF6iTusY>, accessed August 9, 2017. (Example at 3:51-6:08)

compare thee to a summer's day. This measure is followed by lesser dissonance that gradually leads to greater consonance three measures later.⁹² (Example 8) The same technique is used in Irving's *Elegy for Shelly Scheps*.⁹³ To Irving, the occasion of the death of a colleague called for a more traditional, more consonant sounding piece. But even so, he believed that a certain amount of atonality added a special touch and dramatic seriousness appropriate for the piece and the occasion.⁹⁴ Yet another example of this can be found in the opening material from *A Clear Midnight* from the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn and Piano* wherein the bitonality diminishes into a brief moment of tonality at rehearsal B only to quickly transition back into bitonal territory. (Example 9)

Example 8. David Irving, *Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day* (*Four Songs from Shakespeare*), mm. 20-23

The image shows a musical score for three staves. The top staff is a vocal line in 4/4 time, starting with a box labeled 'B' above the first measure. It contains the lyrics 'Rough winds do' under the notes. A dynamic marking 'mp' is placed above the staff. The middle and bottom staves are piano accompaniment. The middle staff has a dynamic marking 'mp' and 'stacc.' above it. The bottom staff is a bass line with various chords and notes.

⁹² Graham Finch, piano, Sally Porter Munro, soprano, "Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day," by David Irving, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IwN8AC3ZjWw>, accessed August 9, 2017. (Example at 0:52)

⁹³ Scheps was a doctoral candidate in the Anthropology Department at Columbia and a friend of Irving. He was planning to make a career in anthropology when he unexpectedly passed away from drowning. Irving wrote this elegy in memoriam.

⁹⁴ Kristen Sorteberg, piano, "Elegy for Shelly Scheps (1983)," by David Irving, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcJakVGb4zO>, accessed July 20, 2017. (Example at 1:08)

Example 9. David Irving, *A Clear Midnight* (Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano), mm. 13-21

The image displays a musical score for Example 9, consisting of two systems of music. The first system features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a *mf* dynamic and includes the instruction *cresc. poco a poco*. The piano accompaniment also starts with *mf* and includes *cresc. poco a poco* and *ped. simile*. The second system continues the piano accompaniment, marked with *f* and *subito p*, and includes the instruction *cresc. poco a poco ma non troppo*. Both systems include a boxed section labeled 'B' with a tempo marking of *♩. = ♩*. The piano part in the second system also includes the marking *loco*.

Irving found the use of dissonant/consonant contrasts both vertically and horizontally to be valuable additions to his compositional palette.

Irving also searched for a way to create freely flowing melodic lines that could change direction at any time, if desired or required. For this purpose, “he found that taking harmonic constructs like dyads, trichords, or tetrachords, and spreading them out

horizontally could produce a different and exciting melodic/harmonic sound”⁹⁵ as in the introduction of the Dickinson setting of *A little madness in the spring*.⁹⁶ (Example 10)

In addition to this technique, Irving sought to produce lyrical lines, free to soar where they may, by reducing note content and creating wide spaces between harmonies between which the melodies can appear. The procedure is apparent even in his earlier, more atonal works that rely heavily on dissonance as in the middle, slow movement of *Spectra for Piano* (1985).⁹⁷ This is especially evident at about 2/3 of the way through the movement when in mm. 14-19 a very simple melodic line appears between very widely spaced supporting tones. (Example 11) Irving employed the same method he used in *Spectra* in *Night Dance for Orchestra* that is an orchestration of the third variation of his *Theme and Variations for Piano*. He composed the theme to complete an assignment in his graduate composition class with Fred Lerdahl. Later, in the class of Jack Beeson, Irving wrote four variations on this theme and orchestrated the entire piece to fulfill the thesis requirements for his Masters in Music.

To further solidify his free approach to composition, Irving has found inspiration from excerpts or motives of other composers. “To be truly free as a composer, as idealistic as it may seem, Irving determined that he should be able to employ the methodologies of any kind of composition ever invented or written, tonal, atonal, or a

⁹⁵ David Irving, email message to the author, September 11, 2017.

⁹⁶ Graham Finch, piano, Sally Porter Munro, soprano, “Three Emily Dickinson Songs (1989),” by David Irving, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5ljQLcCTGE>, accessed July 20, 2017. (Example at 1:49)

⁹⁷ Kristen Sorteberg, piano, “Spectra (1985),” by David Irving, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLuXwUiYlNs>, accessed August 8, 2017. (Example at 0:55 – 2:27)

mixture of the two.”⁹⁸ This included using simple diatonic music as inspiration. Irving does not shy away from and on occasion searches for opportunities to incorporate simplicity into his music.

Example 10. David Irving, *A Little Madness in the Spring*, mm. 1-14

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece. At the top, the tempo is marked "Vivace Con Brio". The score consists of two systems of staves. The first system has a treble clef staff with a whole rest and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a piano accompaniment. The piano part starts with a piano (*pp*) dynamic and includes the instruction "sempre cresc poco a poco". The melody in the right hand is simple and diatonic, while the bass line is more complex with chromatic changes. The second system continues the piano accompaniment, ending with a *mf* dynamic marking.

In his *Circus Variations for Piano*, for example, he sustains an essentially diatonic theme with just a couple of chromatic changes over a simple ostinato bass for 97

⁹⁸ David Irving, *Compositional Style and Approach to Composing*, personal collection of the author, Winston-Salem, NC, February 5, 2017.

measures.⁹⁹ When Irving wrote the 6th variation, he quickly recognized the notes in the ostinato as being similar to the notes in Bach's first *Cello Suite*, both in G major,¹⁰⁰ so he decided to use a variant of the motif for the melodic accompaniment in the 7th variation.¹⁰¹ He confirmed that the melodic line and the compositional decisions for the 6th variation came only from him.

Example 11. David Irving, *Spectra for Piano*, II. Andante, mm. 14-19

The image shows a musical score for two systems of piano music. The first system (measures 14-17) is in 4/4 time. The right-hand part starts with a melody marked 'a tempo' and 'f', featuring a four-measure phrase with a slur and a four-measure phrase with a slur and a '2' marking. The left-hand part has a bass line with dynamics 'f' and 'ff'. The second system (measures 18-19) is in 3/4 time. The right-hand part starts with a melody marked 'a tempo' and 'mp', featuring a three-measure phrase with a slur and a '3' marking, followed by a two-measure phrase with a slur and a '2' marking. The left-hand part has a bass line with dynamics 'mp' and 'p'. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

⁹⁹ Kristen Sorteberg, "Circus Variations (1985)," David Irving, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxsnF6iTusY>, accessed August 31, 2017. (Example at 7:24-9:00)

¹⁰⁰ Irving's familiarity with the piece came from practicing the first four of the suites on the horn in the original key for several years. This is a practice technique used by horn players in building a good low register on the instrument.

¹⁰¹ Kristen Sorteberg, "Circus Variations (1985)," David Irving, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxsnF6iTusY>, accessed August 31, 2017. (Example at 9:06-10:20)

An additional example of using excerpts of another composer is present in *Grieg Being Dead* from the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano*. Irving pieces together various excerpts from the Grieg *Piano Concerto* and the *Peer Gynt Suite*. This is addressed at length in Chapter 5.

In order to take his study of composition even deeper, Irving drew inspiration from specific types of works of other composers. For example, his *Ave Maria* was written after learning that many other composers besides Schubert and Gounod had written an *Ave Maria* he decided to compose his own version in 1989.¹⁰² (Example 12)

Example 12. David Irving, *Ave Maria*, mm. 1-11

The musical score for David Irving's *Ave Maria* (mm. 1-11) is presented in a four-staff format. The top staff is the soprano line, which begins with a rest and then enters with the lyrics "Ave ma-ria be-ne-dic-ta". The tempo is marked "Lento (♩ = 60)" and changes to "A Tempo." The piano accompaniment consists of two staves (treble and bass clef). The piano part includes markings for "Piu Mosso", "Poco Rit", and "Simile". Dynamics range from "pp" to "p". Pedal points are marked with "ped" and asterisks. The lyrics are: "Ave ma-ria be-ne-dic-ta / tus Lau-da-mus te Ave ma-ria Ave Ma-ria".

¹⁰² In order to avoid misleading anyone about his religious beliefs Irving used a simple Latin text: "Ave Maria benedicta tu; laudamus te. Ave Maria credo in spiritum. Ave Maria laudamus te; dona nobis pacem." ("Hail Mary. You are blessed. We praise you. I believe in the Holy Spirit. Grant us peace.") The text praises Mary as a woman and mother of Jesus and her connections and powers through God.

Similarly, he was inspired by Handel's *Where'er you walk* and composed a setting to the same text. His piece titled *Flowers of Paradise* (2008), written for SATB and string quartet, is modeled after Mozart's *Ave Verum Corpus*. (Example 13)

Example 13. David Irving, *Flowers of Paradise*, mm. 1-6

The musical score is for the first six measures of David Irving's *Flowers of Paradise*. It is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time, with a tempo marking of *Andante* and a dynamic marking of *mp* (mezzo-piano). The score is divided into three systems. The first system contains the vocal parts: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The lyrics for all parts are: "An - cient peo - ple in sha - dow sur vive in". The second system contains the string quartet parts: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The third system is labeled "Rehearsal Only" and shows the string parts with a *mp* dynamic marking. The vocal parts enter in measure 1, while the string parts enter in measure 2.

While in a theory class at Columbia taught by Pat Carpenter, Irving learned the power of half-step and whole step harmonic progression. He recalls,

I became convinced that the grand harmonic climax in Wagner's opera, *Tristan and Isolde*, was achieved through half-step progressions until the climactic moment where the progression is by whole step. The change is as dramatic, if not more, than any climatic dominant/tonic cadence.¹⁰³

Consequently, Irving began focusing more on using half-step/whole step progressions in his compositions, as illustrated in the opening bars of *A Little Madness in the Spring*.¹⁰⁴ (Example 10) For the first 13 measures, nearly all movement in the independent parts is by half step. This continues in a modified fashion for 42 measures. Half-step and whole-step progressions are a key function in the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn and Piano* as well.

From Stravinsky, Irving learned an additive technique by which new musical elements can be added to musical phrases as they are repeated. In his *Country Dance*, for example, a short piece for orchestra, Irving adds a new contrapuntal line to each repetition of the theme. He also used Stravinsky's additive technique in his *Aald Reel and Waltz for Orchestra (2002)* composed on Shetland Islands themes in which he wrote a section that adds a contrapuntal line to each repeating strain and then subtracts them one by one, creating a near musical palindrome.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ David Irving, email message to the author, July 8, 2017.

¹⁰⁴ Graham Finch, piano, Sally Porter Munro, soprano, "Three Emily Dickinson Songs (1989)," by David Irving, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5ljQLcCTGE>, accessed July 20, 2017. (Example at 1:49)

¹⁰⁵ David Irving, "Aald Reel and Waltz for Orchestra," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJ7tJZNKcvU>, accessed August 10, 2017. (Example at 1:24-2:17)

Though he no longer strictly employs the 12-tone method, Irving believes that he did benefit significantly from Schoenberg's 12-tone techniques. For example, he has carried over the feature of irregular phrase lengths from his atonal works into some of his more tonal compositions. Irving finds that this technique can add an entirely different dimension to a composition. The two themes in his short *Country Dance*, for example, consist of 7 and 9 measures respectively and in the Waltz in his *Aald Reel*, he manipulates the theme through uneven phrase lengths, creating sections and modulations in an odd place to produce a non-traditional effect. Non-standard phrase lengths can also be found in Irving's *Ave Maria*, where it could be argued that the phrase lengths range anywhere from 5 to 14 measures. (Example 12) The *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano* is another example of Irving's frequent use of non-standard phrase lengths.

General Style Characteristics

In spite of, or possibly because of, his views on conventional and rigid compositional techniques, Irving displays a wide array of tendencies in his music. Many of these tendencies seem to stem from either his diverse musical background or from his desire to create his own unique sound.

Harmony – As has already been alluded to, Irving's harmonies can range anywhere from traditional diatonic progressions to trichordal, quartal, and quintal harmonies to pandiatonic, bitonal and non-tonal.

- Tonal works: *Flowers of Paradise*, *Country Dance*, *Aald Reel and Waltz*, *Carnival for Orchestra*

- Works which include bitonality: *Ave Maria, There is a Morn by Men Unseen* (from the *Four Songs*),
- Examples of trichords/: *Spectra for Piano, Four Songs for Soprano, Horn and Piano*
- Examples of quartal/quintal harmonies: *Clouds, Spectra 2, Four Songs for Soprano, Horn and Piano*

Cadences – Cadences are an integral part of Irving’s compositional process and his understanding of what a cadence represents is broad. He agrees fully with Vincent Persichetti’s concept that, “a cadence is an organization of melody and harmony in time having a connotation of rest...Tension and relaxation of consonance and dissonance help mold cadential shapes...Cadences may include any type of harmony: tertian, quartal, added-note, secundal, polychordal, compound, mirror, pandiatonic, or twelve-note.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Vincent Persichetti, “Twentieth Century Harmony: Creative Aspects and Practice,” 206-208

Example 14. Vincent Persichetti, *Twentieth Century Harmony: Creative Aspects and Practice*, “Cadential Devices,” pg. 208-209



In summary, Irving believes that a resolution, whether it is tonal or atonal, is still a resolution. It seems clear that cadences, regardless of their diatonic or non-diatonic status, are an important part of shaping the ebb and flow to his music. They are essential for supporting the movement of a horizontal (melodic) line in any direction in a free chromatic setting.¹⁰⁷

Accidentals – In his non-tonal works, Irving chooses to omit key signatures. At a glance it may sometimes seem that accidentals are randomly assigned as one note can change enharmonically even within a measure. Irving states that he determines the accidental based on where he perceives that note would function in traditional harmony. For

¹⁰⁷ David Irving, email message to the author, October 4, 2017.

example, if the passage appears or sounds as if it is in A major, he would use sharps but on the other hand if it seemed to fit within C minor, then he would use flats. He comments that if there are seeming inconsistencies, it is only because of the function that the particular accidentals play at that moment.

For example, the opening of the Whitman song¹⁰⁸ starts out with bitonal harmonies, C major against D major. The third measure, though, pits an A in the bass against an Ab in the right hand. Why not an A against a G# instead of an Ab? Because this note is functioning cadentially, falling from an Ab to a G. Also, it is followed sequentially in terms of a cadence in measure five where clearly the Bb in the right hand is the only note that could be employed against the A in the bass.¹⁰⁹

When Irving does use a key signature it is fully intentional. These works tend to be tonal in nature. Key signatures can be found in tonal works like *Flowers of Paradise*, *Country Dance*, *Auld Reel and Waltz*, and *Carnival for Orchestra*.

Melody – Irving is convinced that musical ideas can come from unexpected sources if one stays open to them. By comparing the general melodic sweep of Beethoven to Richard Strauss, Beethoven often being more narrow (ex. the principle theme of the first movement of his *Emperor Piano Concerto*) and Strauss quite expansive (ex. the soprano part of his *Four Last Songs*, or in many of his tone poems) Irving learned that the value of both are apparent and non-competitive. “Perceptions like these helped me from becoming overly critical and more appreciative of my natural tendency to write melodic

¹⁰⁸ From the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn and Piano*

¹⁰⁹ David Irving, email message to the author, July 8, 2017.

lines that were sometimes narrow in range, especially in some of [the] songs.”¹¹⁰

Examples of narrow melodic lines include his setting for Emily Dickinson's *A little madness in the spring*¹¹¹ (Example 15) or in *Grieg Being Dead* where he writes mostly within the range of a minor sixth. (Example 16) On the other hand, this concept freed him to write more expansively as he did with the horn part for *Spectra 2 for Horn and Piano*.¹¹² (Example 17)

Rhythms/tempi - In general, Irving writes with quick and forward moving rhythmic ideas. He heavily features eighth and sixteenth-note motion. Eighth-notes also provide an easy common figure when switching back and forth between simple and compound meters, which Irving frequently employs.

- Examples: *Clouds* (Example 18), *The Piper* (Example 19) for Solo Piano or Baritone and Piano, and *Mozart 1935* (from *The Music Makers*). (Example 20)

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Graham Finch, piano, Sally Porter Munro, soprano, “Three Emily Dickinson Songs,” by David Irving, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5ljQLcCTGE>, accessed July 20, 2017.

¹¹² Julie Nishimura, piano, Francis Orval, horn, “Spectra 2,” by David Irving, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1dVo6pZN4L4>, accessed August 10, 2017. (Example at 1:30-2:45)

Example 15. David Irving, *A Little Madness in the Spring*, mm. 53-59

Piu Mosso (♩ = 56)

A lit_tle Mad_ness in the
Spring Is whole__some e__ven for the King__

Example 16. David Irving, *Grieg Being Dead (Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano)*, mm. 13-27

Rit. **Ancora Lento** **Rit. poco a poco**
dim - mf

(art) Grieg be - ing dead we can talk a - bout
whether he was a - ny good or not Grieg be - ing with Ib - sen
Björn - son - Leif E - ric - son and the rest Grieg be - ing

B **f** **3**
C **Allegro** ♩ = 92
f

Example 17. David Irving, *Spectra 2 for Horn and Piano*, II. Lento, mm. 61-71

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with a horn part on a single staff and a piano accompaniment on two staves. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor). The time signature is 4/4. The first system (mm. 61-64) begins with a horn part marked *mp* and a piano accompaniment. The second system (mm. 65-68) features a piano accompaniment marked *p*. The third system (mm. 69-71) features a horn part marked *mp* and a piano accompaniment marked *mp*. A 'G' chord symbol is placed above the first staff of the third system. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Example 20. David Irving, *Mozart 1935 (Five Songs for Baritone)*, mm. 15-23

The image displays two systems of musical notation. Each system consists of a vocal line (bass clef) and a piano accompaniment (treble and bass clefs). The first system has the lyrics: "ric a ric its en - vi - ous ca - chin na - tion". The second system has the lyrics: "If they throw stones up on the roof While you prac - tice ar - peg - gi - os". A box labeled 'B' is placed above the vocal line of the second system. The piano accompaniment in the second system shows a clear rocking motion in the bass line, with eighth notes alternating between the outer and inner voices.

Accompanimental features – A number of Irving’s piano scores and piano accompaniments consistently display several idiomatic tendencies.

- Rocking motion: Irving frequently uses eighth-note motion in which an outer voice and an inner voice alternate, creating a rocking motion. (Irving described it as “undulating” in the case of *There is a morn by men unseen*.¹¹³) It can occur in each hand independently as well as concurrently. This occurs in *Grieg being dead*, *There is a morn*, *A Clear Midnight* (Example 9), *Morning* (Example 2), *I*

¹¹³ David Irving, email message to the author, July 8, 2017.

dwell in Possibility (Example 3), *Spectra 2* (II), *Ave Maria* (Example 12), *Mozart 1935*.

- Wide spacing between lines of accompaniment: This is more than likely a byproduct of two things. First, the spacing between dissonant tones and secondly, the desire to create open space in which the melodies can be present.
- Dissonant notes low in the bass, alternating hands : *Since Brass Nor Stone Nor Earth Nor Boundless Sea, The Piper, Shall I compare thee to a Summer's Day, Song*
- Triplet sixteenth + eighth-note figure: *Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day* (Example 21), augmented in *A Clear Midnight*. (Example 22)

Dynamic markings - In a number of Irving's works there are dynamic markings which serve to represent an acceptable range. For example, in the opening of *Since Brass Nor Stone Nor Earth Nor Boundless Sea* (from *Four Songs From Shakespeare*) he indicates a "p (mp)" as the dynamic marking. This is the only score in which accompanying instruction is indicated by an asterisk. "When dynamic marking in parenthesis follows another dynamic marking, the intended dynamic lies between the two." A similar type of marking occurs often in the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano*. These are indicated by a dash between the dynamic markings (Example 23) and indicates an acceptable range of dynamic. Many of Irving's works contain quickly changing dynamic contrasts, which often coincide with character shifts, a change in text, or section breaks.

Example 21. David Irving, *Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day*, mm. 13-15

Example 22. David Irving, *A Clear Midnight*, mm. 7-10

Example 23. David Irving, *There is a Morn (Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano)*, mm. 12-14

CHAPTER V

CONTEXT AND ANALYSIS OF THE FOUR SONGS FOR SOPRANO, HORN AND PIANO (1990)

The idea for the composition of a work for voice, horn, and piano was formulated many years before Irving composed the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn and Piano*. “As a horn player,” he writes, “I was, of course, aware of the near void in the repertoire and so wanted to write a piece for this combination practically from the first days I began composing.”¹¹⁴ Added to this, as a well-versed horn player, Irving had been exposed to a plethora of solo, orchestral and chamber works involving the horn and understood its potential as a diverse instrument.

The modern horn’s inception occurred in the late-17th century as an English hunting horn and gradually expanded to a sophisticated instrument with a prominent role in the modern orchestra. From the early days of its inclusion in the orchestra, it has been utilized as an accompaniment to vocal works by a number of composers. By 1705, the horn had found its way into the conventional orchestras of the opera houses, appearing in Reinhard Keiser’s *Octavia*. Johann Sebastian Bach first used the horn in 1716 in his Cantata *BWV 208*, known as the “Hunting” Cantata.¹¹⁵ In a similar fashion to the early operas, Bach’s earliest uses of the horn were written in a hunting style, however, he

¹¹⁴ David Irving, written interview with the author, October 31, 2016.

¹¹⁵ Bertil van Boer, “Some Observations on Bach’s Use of the Horn,” *The Horn Call*, 1, no 2, (1989), 59.

quickly expanded to using the horns as a doubling or reinforcement of the cantus firmus/vocal lines as well as obbligato lines to complement the voices. He employed horns in thirty of his church cantatas.

Other notable instances of the horn's use as a complement to the voice are found in a number of opera arias. Examples of this include the aria, *Per pietà, ben mio*, from Act Two of W. A. Mozart's *Così fan Tutte* wherein the horn plays an introductory role as well as a complement to the soprano line. In Beethoven's aria from Act One of *Fidelio*, *Abscheulicher! wo eilst du hin?*, a horn trio is featured as a heavy complement and support for the vocal line. Another example is a Vincenzo Bellini aria, *Eccomi In Lieta Veste*, from Act One of *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*. A solo horn introduces the vocal line and serves as a lyrical duet partner.

With the introduction of the valved horn in Vienna the 1820's, the horn had an expanded ability to easily play in any key without changing crooks or being an incredibly cumbersome instrument. This broadened the scope of possibilities for the horn. According to Milton Stewart, "[a]n expansion in the use of horns with voices took place after the turn of the nineteenth century. Weber used horns extensively as instruments of color and also for their poetic value."¹¹⁶ The first piece for voice, horn and piano, *Auf Dem Strom*, was composed in 1828 by Franz Schubert in part to demonstrate the agility of the newly improved horn. *Auf Dem Strom* was premiered as a concert aria by Ludwig Tietz (tenor), Joseph Lewy (horn), and Schubert himself on piano. In *An Exploration of*

¹¹⁶ Milton Stewart, "Chamber Music for Voices with French Horn: Performance Problems for French Horn," *The Horn Call*, 18, no.2, April 1988, op 68.

Selected Works for Horn, Voice and Piano, Jon Anderson comments, “The writing in *Auf Dem Strom* exploits the valved horn, allowing the horn to be much more expressive with its new chromaticism. The horn is not just accompaniment to the voice, but carries extensive melodic content and is an equal partner with the voice.”¹¹⁷ In a survey of repertoire for voice, horn and keyboard after the Baroque era, Laurie Shelton further expounds upon the functions of the horn in the ensemble: “(1) as word painter, (2) as embodiment of the singer’s emotion, (3) as an unnamed textual character, (4) in its favorite guise as a hunting horn, and (5) as a virtuosic soloist.”¹¹⁸

Other composers would go on to include the horn in vocal chamber music. Franz Lachner, a friend of Schubert, wrote several sets of songs for piano, horn and voice inspired by Schubert’s trio. Johannes Brahms, a horn player himself, used the horn in conjunction with voice in his *Der Gartner* from his *Four Songs for female voices, two horns and harp*, *Op 17* (1860). The two horns provide an obbligato figure, “used primarily at the end of phrases to complement the motion which began in the vocal parts...The horns’ sustained tones also help bind the ensemble together when both the voices and the harp have rapidly moving parts.”¹¹⁹

It has been argued that the horn is well suited as an equal partner with the voice because of similarities in their tone production, which have been attributed in part to the

¹¹⁷ Jon Anderson, “An Exploration of Selected Works for Horn, Voice and Piano: Performance Considerations for the Horn Player,” A Lecture Recital Essay, May 2014, University of Miami, 18.

¹¹⁸ Laurie Shelton, “Singing on the Horn: A Selective Survey of Chamber Music for Voice Horn and Keyboard,” *Journal of Singing – The Official Journal of the National Association of Teachers of Singing* 54, no. 3 (Jan 1998): 25-39, accessed January 3, 2017.

¹¹⁹ Milton Stewart, “Chamber Music for Voices with French Horn: Performance Problems for French Horn, Part 3,” *The Horn Call*, 19, no 1, 1989, 71.

development of early horn technique in conjunction with *bel canto* vocal instruction.

Laurie Shelton, in her article entitled *Singing on the Horn: A Selective Survey of Chamber Music for Voice, Horn and Keyboard*, elaborates on this intersection.

The development of horn technique through vocal instruction, particularly methods from the Bel Canto school, is a very old approach and surfaces frequently in horn literature, most notably during the so-called golden age of hand-horn playing from about 1770-1830, when horn study began in singing school and virtuosic performances were the rule rather than the exception.¹²⁰

Furthermore, Shelton refers to a number of physical similarities between horn and vocal techniques such as a dropped jaw to release tension, creating vowel sounds to produce a specific tone, training the tongue to sing/play high and low, and opening the throat.

Shelton surmises that, “Because of the great similarities between horn and vocal techniques, tonal qualities, and historic performance practices, the union of voice and horn in chamber music performance creates a unique marriage of instrumental and vocal sound achieved by no other chamber ensemble.”¹²¹

Composition of Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano

By 1990, David Irving had already composed a number of works and had firmly established an individual method of composition. The *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano* is a prime representation of Irving’s individual method of composition at the

¹²⁰ Laurie Shelton, “Singing on the Horn: A Selective Survey of Chamber Music for Voice Horn and Keyboard,” *Journal of Singing – The Official Journal of the National Association of Teachers of Singing* 54, no. 3 (Jan 1998): 25-39, accessed January 3, 2017.

¹²¹¹²¹ Shelton, 25.

time and displays a number of his characteristic compositional techniques. Irving considers the *Four Songs* to be one of his best works.¹²²

With the resource of colleagues who were aware of his reputation, Irving already had a few specific performers in mind before he began composing the *Four Songs*. These were British mezzo-soprano Sally Porter Munro and Belgian hornist, Francis Orval.

Sally Porter Munro came to New York from London in 1986 and contacted Irving upon the recommendation of a mutual friend. “Munro's, clear, high mezzo voice and her exquisite phrasing and warm tone provided the perfect vehicle for the output of songs for mezzo and soprano that would follow,”¹²³ Irving remarked.

Francis Orval is an internationally known Belgian hornist and concert artist. He and Irving met at a recital in Carnegie Hall in 1986 where Irving's composition, *Stars*, a violin quartet, was being performed. Orval requested that Irving compose *Spectra 2* for his New York recital debut on February 21, 1988. At the first rehearsal for *Spectra 2* Irving recalls hearing “one of the most beautiful, refined, warm, liquid tones he had ever heard produced on the horn, accompanied by a fabulous, virtuoso playing technique.”¹²⁴ This was the beginning of a collaboration, which would result in several new works by Irving for the horn.

In his search for a pianist, Sally Porter Munro suggested Walter Hilse, as he had accompanied her in previous performances. Coincidentally, Hilse had been one of

¹²² David Irving, written interview with author, October 31, 2016.

¹²³ David Irving, email message to the author, August 11, 2017.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

Irving's professors at Columbia. Irving acted on Sally's recommendation and contacted Walter who accepted the invitation.

Irving began work on the *Four Songs* by choosing to set four poems, after the example of Richard Strauss' *Four Last Songs*, written in 1948, a work which Irving had always admired. Themes of death are evident in three of the Strauss songs, but Irving liked the thought of addressing the subject according to his own ideology. He spent several days pouring through poetry examples trying to find suitable examples to set. He

decided on four English texts that, though vastly unique and each presenting in a different style, contrary to the Strauss texts, reveal a certain unity in their perspective about life beyond the present. Thought, humor, vision, metaphor, feeling, understanding, contemplation – these are some of the means chosen by the poets to convey their message.¹²⁵

In this work, the poems are ordered specifically for the sake of flow. The titles for all four songs are taken from their poetry titles. In Irving's estimation, he spent about three months composing the songs.

Not long after their completion, the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano* was premiered in a *Phoenix* concert by the aforementioned performers on April 20, 1990 in New York City at St. Michael's Episcopal Church. The songs were also performed a year later on March 9, 1991 by Sally Porter Munro (mezzo-soprano), Walter Hilse (piano), and William Purvis (horn) at Central Presbyterian Church in New York City as a part of a Melodious Accord Symposium. A month later on April 29, Melanie DeMent

¹²⁵ Program notes from premier of *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn and Piano*, April 20 1990, author's personal collection, Winston-Salem, NC.

(soprano), Francis Orval (horn), and Julie Nishimura (piano) performed the songs at the University of Delaware in Newark.

The *Four Songs* employ a variety of compositional techniques such as atonality, bitonality, and heavily chromatic writing. The entire work is written without key signatures to allow for ease of chromaticism. Irving intends for thematic material, in conjunction with the texts, to be primary but with limitations. Voice leading and cadences function as strong supporting elements of the melodic line. Because harmony functions as a secondary result of the other key elements, all four songs begin and end in a different tonal center. Elaborating on the interplay of lines, or counterpoint, Irving stated, “Bach showed the way when he said his compositions were like conversations. So with my pieces (believe me I am not comparing myself to Bach—I would never dare) what is the conversation about? I think, at least in the *Four Songs*, they are about these relationships between notes.”¹²⁶

Each of the songs contain phrases of non-standard lengths, in many cases five or seven measures that may extend even to eleven. Quickly changing meter is a characteristic found in all of the songs as well, owing to the varying cadence of the poetry and speech patterns. Irving notes that he often uses changing meter to meet the natural flow of the thematic line as well as rhythmic demands.

While all four songs display certain similarities, they are unique in their composition, timbre, and tone. Irving has arranged the songs in specific order for flow of the poetry in conjunction with a more traditional value of arranging a multi-movement

¹²⁶ David Irving, email message to author, June 12, 2017.

piece with faster movements at the beginning and end, while slower movements occupy the middle portion. Songs I, III, and IV are through composed while II is strophic. The songs were conceived as a set and run about 12 minutes in performance length, though Irving believes that they would be suitable for individual performance as well. In this regard, he has arranged the Edith Sitwell *Song*, his favorite of the set, for just solo voice (soprano or baritone) and piano.

Figure 2. Program from the Premier of *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano*

<p>PHOENIX PRESENTS A PROGRAM OF MODERN MUSIC ORIGINALS IN HONOR OF OTTO LUENING Friday, June 20, 1990 St. Michael's Episcopal Church New York, New York</p>		
<p>P R O G R A M</p>		
<p>Guessing Barry Salwen, piano</p>		<p>Chen Yi</p>
<p>Miniature for Horn Francis Orval, horn, Julie Mishimura, piano</p>		<p>Robert Hogenson</p>
<p>Champaign Francis Orval horn, Randy Knee, piano</p>		<p>Francis Orval</p>
<p>ARABESQUE NIGHT ODYSSEY Darrel Irving, guitar</p>		<p>Darrel Irving</p>
<p>One Night of Snow (Elizabeth Coatsworth) Chang McTang McQuarter Cat (John Ciardi) Sally Munro, soprano, Patricia Sullivan, mezzo soprano, Walter Hilse, piano</p>		<p>Walter Hilse</p>
<p>Preciosilla Eve Beglarian, sampled voice, Suellen Hershman, bass flute</p>		<p>Eve Beglarian</p>
<p>I N T E R M I S S I O N</p>		
<p>Sonority Form 3 Chords at Night Short Sonata for Piano #3 Barry Salwen, piano</p>		<p>Otto Luening</p>
<p>Hebert's Bahies Francis Orval, horn, Bruce Richards, horn, Norman Marks, electric guitar</p>		<p>Robert Hughes</p>
<p>4 Songs Grieg being dead (Carl Sandberg) There is a morn by men unseen (Emily Dickinson) Song (Edith Sitwell), A Clear Midnight (Walt Whitman) Sally Munro, soprano, Francis Orval, horn Walter Hilse, piano</p>		<p>David Irving</p>
<p>???(?) Jerry Weir, Marimaba</p>		<p>Jerry Weir</p>

* * * * *

Analysis of the Four Songs

Grieg Being Dead

Pulitzer Prize winning, early 20th century, American author, poet, folk musician, biographer and lecturer, Carl Sandburg (1878-1967) is known for his working-man, no-nonsense approach to life. *Grieg Being Dead* is taken from Carl Sandburg's 1920 book of poetry, *Smoke and Steel*, under the section entitled "Accomplished Facts." (Refer to the complete score in Appendix A to see the full poem.)

In this poem Sandburg takes on the subject of how we regard public figures we immortalize - in this instance, composer and pianist Edvard Grieg - and, by extension, how we should think of ourselves in terms of our own mortality. The poem transcends an unspoken boundary and leads into somewhat irreverent territory, addressing our never-ending criticism of the deceased and their art. Sandburg lists "Ibsen, Bjornson, Lief Ericson and the rest," referring to famous Norwegians, also dead, of whom Grieg is one. Ibsen likely refers to the famous playwright for whom Grieg wrote the music to the play, *Peer Gynt*.

In the second indented paragraph of his poem, Sandburg references a few of Grieg's compositions by name. Interestingly these one and two-word titles also allude to time or events. *Morning* and *Anitra's Dance* are titles from Grieg's *Peer Gynt Suite, Op 46*. "Spring" is most likely referencing *To the Spring* from Grieg's *Lyric Pieces, Op 43*.

The historical reach of the poems' meaning is not lost on Irving as he begins his presentation with a tastefully neo-Baroque recitative style. His frequent use of changing

meters allows for much of the text to be sung in a speech-like rhythm.¹²⁷ Irving adds to the sense of "Griegness" by quoting from his works, namely the *Piano Concerto in A minor, Op 16*, and various movements from the *Peer Gynt Suite, Op 46*.

The solo piano accompaniment begins with six measures of sixteenth-notes, starting slowly in a low register and accelerating quickly while climbing by octaves. (Example 24) According to Irving, he modeled this opening after another of his songs for soprano and piano, *A little Madness in the Spring*, with text by Emily Dickinson which he composed in 1989. (Example 10) The opening intervals of a major 7th serve to create suspense, not unlike that of the opening timpani roll in the Grieg *Piano Concerto*. Two changes in meter elongate each register shift (mm. 2-3) and the left hand, which began with a major seventh, now plays full octaves beginning in m. 3 while the right hand plays bell-like tones. A G1 is maintained throughout mm. 1-6 and, as the bottom note, provides a ground upon which the upper dissonances are easily displayed. The climactic point of the introduction is postponed until m. 7, which coincides with a change to 5/4 time signature and the first instance of a diatonic chord, D major, in first inversion. For the purpose of traditional analysis, the G minor chord which follows provides a brief tonicization of G minor through a V⁶-I cadence, the hint of which continues until m. 15 where D⁶, the V⁶ of G minor, returns.

At rehearsal letter A, an arpeggiated D major chord signals the soprano to enter, a technique consistent with recitative. (Example 24) The soprano's opening declamation of Grieg's certain death begins on D5 and outlines a falling G minor triad with a simple

¹²⁷ The recitative style is reminiscent of Britten's *Canticle III*.

passing tone between $\hat{3}$ and $\hat{1}$. It is emphatic and grave. This motive is inspired by the horn solo in movement II of the Grieg *Piano Concerto in A minor*. (Example 25) (Also notice that it holds a similar shape to the falling motive in the piano's entrance from the same concerto.) Irving's interpretation of this motive in is a rhythmically augmented figure that follows the same contour as the Grieg horn motive. He also follows the same range and same non-transposed pitch for each of the first three lines of poetry. (mm. 7, 15, 21) (Example 24) In m. 8, the accompaniment quickly returns to the opening idea with the G in the bass while the right hand plays E \flat major (VI), then F \sharp major (enharmonically). These are not directly related diatonically, except that F \sharp is the leading tone and the whole trichord is related by half-step motion, which resolves to G minor (i). The significance of this figure lies not so much in the harmonic progression, as Irving would readily point out, but the motion in the top notes of the treble clef arpeggios – E \flat , D \flat , D - employing the upper and lower neighbors and then landing on D, the 5th scale degree. Irving writes, "The accompanying chords E \flat -F \sharp -G merely provide a colorful framework for the 'conversation' D is having with its neighbors, E \flat and D \flat ." The soprano augments the same ornamental figure while singing the word "art", as if to give dramatic emphasis to Grieg's credibility. This figure is repeated again by the accompaniment, this time in the left hand and is drawn out through mm. 12-14 as the soprano finishes the phrase. Further solidifying the temporary key center of G minor, in m. 10, a new but related cadence, a \flat II-I, is introduced.

For Irving, this temporary key center is merely a result of the melodic tendencies and, in this instance, his desire for the F# to resolve to a G. The corresponding chords that undergird the three tones in the uppermost range of the piano in mm. 8-9 foretell the soprano line in mm. 12-14. Irving explains his compositional process for this phrase:

Note also that in measure 10, this intervallic relationship of root/minor third/perfect 4th is repeated (C-Eb-Ab) at letter A and functions integratively. So what key are we in at letter A, C minor or Ab Major? A case could be made for either. I would answer Ab major because I am concerned with chord progression by half-step or whole step, which is not a component of key-centered music. So Ab is a half-step above G. What is important for me is how the notes are moving linearly and intervallically in establishing pitch relationships along a musical continuum. Once they are established, they can be used again straight or transposed but need to have some cohesion within the context of the piece just as you would have in a conversation using words. If you start talking about a certain subject, the conversation only makes sense if what you say is within the context of the subject. So the musical continuum must make sense.¹²⁸

Similarly, the last three measures of the phrase, mm. 12-15, contain diatonic chords Eb augmented, G augmented and G minor.

¹²⁸ David Irving, email message to the author, June 12, 2017.

Example 24. David Irving, *Grieg Being Dead*, mm. 1-14

I. Grieg Being Dead
Carl Sandburg

David Irving

Andante

Soprano or Mezzo-Soprano

Horn in F

Piano

p

Andante *accel.*

sempre cresc. poco a poco

Vivace

Rit.

Rit.

"Grieg Being Dead" from *Smoke and Steel* by Carl Sandburg, copyright 1920 by Harcourt, Inc. and renewed 1948 by Carl Sandburg, reprinted by permission of the publisher.

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A *Lento* ♩ = 60
In a recitative style

f *mp*

Orig be - ing dead we may speak of him

A *Lento* ♩ = 60
In a recitative style

f *p*

Vivace *poco cresc.*

and his art

Vivace *poco cresc.*

Rit. *dim*

Rit. *dim*

Example 25. Edvard Grieg, *Piano Concerto in A minor, Op 16, II. Adagio*, Horn 1, mm. 21-29



At *Ancora Lento*, (m. 15) to begin the second phrase, the piano plays a D⁶ major arpeggio once more, with a slight alteration to the order of chord members from m.7. Unlike the first phrase at letter A, this time the entrance of the soprano occurs with the accompaniment, instead of after, causing the measure to be shorter in length by one beat. The soprano also begins on C# rather than D, beginning a transposition of the phrase that converts the D⁶ chord into a D^{M7}. Small changes like this reveal Irving's variational process, a technique Schoenberg referred to as the principle of “developing variation.”¹²⁹ (Example 26)

The sparse accompaniment continues to follow a recitative style throughout the next few soprano lines, providing an underpinning of rolled chords as well as an occasional commentary between declamations. With the text of the second line beginning with the same words as the first, Irving relies on the same motivic material to open the second phrase. After the first chord, however, the tonal center hearkens to F# minor (using a few enharmonic adjustments), further solidifying Irving’s inclination toward half-step relationships. The tonal center shifts again through half-step progressions in the bass until the phrase ends in m. 19.

¹²⁹ David Irving, email message to the author, October 1, 2017.

Another key element of this song is the use of perfect fourths which have gradually been introduced to this point and are employed more overtly in this phrase, corresponding with the text “we can talk,” (mm. 16-17) “whether,” and “good or” (m. 18). (Example 24)

The third phrase begins again (letter B) with the same motive as the first and second phrases. This occurrence is written in rhythmic diminution and is transposed to start at the highest point thus far for the soprano. Both of these factors contribute to an increase in intensity. The end of this phrase copies the notes of the previous, with the exception of rhythm, deferring to the cadence of the text. This little motive prepares the listener and the singer for the new melodic material at letter C by reiterating the interval of a perfect fourth in m. 25 that was first introduced in m. 18. (Example 26)

In m. 20, the piano falls into a low bass register and plays two B minor chords. This is a brief quote of the theme from Grieg’s *Death of Åse* from the *Peer Gynt Suite, Op 46*. Irving uses the motive again in m. 26 to complete the phrase and also uses this motive in its full form later at letter D. Its inclusion in m. 20 holds some significance as it introduces the line of poetry which references the list of dead Norwegians. It is also significant because of the perfect fourth in the top voices, which is another key element of the song that Irving introduces more and more approaching letter C. (Example 27)

Example 26. David Irving, *Grieg Being Dead*, mm. 15-26

Ancora Lento *mf* **Rit. poco a poco**

Grieg be - ing dead we can talk a - bout

Ancora Lento *mf* **Rit. poco a poco** *p* *mf* *f* **8va - loco**

Lento **B** *f* *f*

wh - ther he was a - ny good or not Grieg be - ing with

Lento **B** *mf* *pp* *f* **8va - loco**

subito mp

ib - sen Bjørn - sen - Leif E - ric - son and the rest

subito mp **8va - loco**

Example 27. Edvard Grieg, *Death of Åse, Peer Gynt Suite, Op 46*, mm. 1-4



Each of the opening three phrases (m. 7, 15, 21 respectively) correspond to the horn solo from the concerto but in a different order than they appear in their original form. (Example 25)

Additionally, all three phrases end with some form of neighbor tone embellishment. These embellishments not only enhance the neo-Baroque feel but bring a comedic seriousness to the irreverent nature of the punch line for each phrase.

At letter C the song reaches a high point of intensity, increasing in tempo, texture, and counterpoint with the addition of the horn. Interestingly, this abrupt shift in mood and character coincides with the plainly spoken summation of the whole poem; “Grieg being dead does not care a hell’s hoot what we say.” The soprano begins this section with an interval of a fourth, which was introduced in the previous section in mm. 18 and 25. The rising and falling 4ths and 5ths are the backbone of the section from mm. 27-37. They occur in all three voices. This style of writing is idiomatic to the horn as it mimics a hunting horn call. Irving is conscious of the texture here and doubles the first note of each measure of the soprano line in the accompaniment, making it a bit easier to stay on pitch despite the horn playing in exact conjunct motion. Each of the trio voices

trail off one by one, the voice first, followed by the horn and then the piano, by getting slower and softer. This tapering elongates the phrase even after the melodic material has ended. The phrase could be interpreted as a seven measure phrase from letter C to the end of the melodic line or an 11 measure phrase if the ensuing piano part is included in the phrase. Either way, this display of unconventional length phrases is typical of Irving. (Example 28)

Following the 4th line of poetry and the climactic addition of the horn, Irving takes his time with the transitional material. Until this point, the spacing between phrases has been at most one measure. Intentional or not, this transition is 15 measures long and serves well as a depiction of the physical space in the original setting of the poetry that separates and indents the last two lines.

At letter D, Irving quotes the first two full measures of *Death of Åse* with the only alteration being the time signature. (Example 28) After this point, the literal translation breaks down but Irving continues to use *Åse* as inspiration by using the upper notes in a scrambled order. This creates an entirely different texture that leads expertly into the *Lento* at letter E. Irving comments that, “this transition in a way also signifies Grieg, standing on the cusp of something new, or at the door, as is stated in the last line of the poem.”¹³⁰

¹³⁰ David Irving, email message to the author, June 13, 2017.

Example 28. David Irving, *Grieg Being Dead*, mm. 27-43

C Allegro $\text{♩} = 92$
f
Grieg be - ing dead does not care a hell's hoot — what — we —
f
Allegro $\text{♩} = 92$
f
ped. simile
Rit. poco a poco
say —
Rit. poco a poco
dim poco a poco

D Moderato $\text{♩} = 80$
mp
Sub. loco

Beginning at letter E, (Example 29) the voices build again but in the reverse order which they ended the previous section. The horn begins the phrase, followed by the voice, growing in sound and texture like a morning sunrise as referenced in the text. The horn line in this phrase is a quote of the horn solo from the middle of the second movement of the Grieg *Piano Concerto*, with the only alteration being an augmentation in meter. (Example 30) In this pleasantly arched phrase, the soprano reaches up to the highest point of the song, an F#, on the word “morning.” Interestingly, even though this is the highest pitch in the song it does not appear to be the intended climactic point in the phrase. Irving indicates a crescendo throughout the phrase to reach its peak on “Anitra’s dance,” leaving the piano to close the phrase by quickly diminishing through m. 55.

The transitional material which ensues, mm. 56-62, (Example 31) was inspired by a brief excerpt from Grieg’s *Anitra’s Dance*, mm. 15-22. (Example 32) This passage leads to letter F where yet another quote can be found from Grieg’s *In the Hall of the Mountain King*. (Example 33) Irving’s intention here is to create a soundscape that alludes to the stars as is referenced in the text.

A *Subito Lento* in m. 63 (Example 31) puts a sharp halt to the transitional material linked to *Anitra’s Dance* and brings our ear back to the register and texture of material from the opening. This time, Irving has augmented the rhythm by writing it in 3/8 time signature with three eighth notes in the LH and a thirty-second/dotted-sixteenth rhythm in the RH instead of using a quintuple figure. (Example 34)

Example 29. David Irving, *Grieg Being Dead*, mm. 44-55

The musical score consists of three systems of staves. The first system shows the piano accompaniment in the bass clef, marked *mf-f*. The second system introduces the vocal line in the treble clef, with lyrics "Mor - ning" and a dynamic marking of *mf*. The piano accompaniment continues, marked *p* and *cresc.*. The third system features the vocal line with lyrics "Spring A - ni tra's dance" and a dynamic marking of *f*. The piano accompaniment is marked *mf*. Performance instructions include "loco", "Lento $\text{♩} = 66$ ", "piu mosso", and "cresc.". A box labeled "E" is present above the piano part in the second system. The score concludes with a double bar line and a dashed line indicating the end of the excerpt.

Example 30. Edvard Grieg, *Piano Concerto in A minor*, Op 16, II. Adagio, Horn 1, mm. 63-70



Example 31. David Irving, *Grieg Being Dead*, mm. 56-67



Here also in mm. 63-78 is a prime example of Irving's characteristic use of trichords that have no diatonic grounding. At letter G, the recitative-like chord returns, this time in G minor. The soprano enters with the final line, imitating material from letter B, but now with a perfect fourth between the first two notes, like in m. 21. Measure 81 also returns to the recitative-style ornament, and much like the very first phrase, slowing to the end of the phrase with a half-step resolution to the final soprano note. The singing at this point feels almost as if it is in a free tempo but is deceptive as this is a result of

The meter changing in each measure. Also at rehearsal G, the accompaniment briefly returns to G minor but because of the implications of the melodic line, shifts to F# by m. 83, which is maintained until the end. (Example 35)

Interestingly, the song begins around the key center of G but ends with Irving's favored relationship, the lower neighbor, F#. The accompaniment at the end is curiously new (one could argue that it is related at m. 82 to the movement that occurs in the LH at letter C) but it is connected more to the opening of the next song than anything before it, perhaps preparing the listener's ear for what is to come, creating an aural link between the two songs. The horn gets the last word, entering immediately after the soprano has ended. This final horn passage is once again an iteration of the solo horn part from the Grieg *Piano Concerto*. (Example 25) It hearkens back to the song's opening motive in the vocal line but is marked "bouché." meaning to stop or mute with the hand, which lends a different color to the tone of the horn.

In all, *Grieg Being Dead* is a smartly calculated, adept weave of excerpts and wondering harmonic structure, yet it maintains coherence and highlights the poetry, all while keeping performer and listener alike on their toes.

Example 32. Edvard Grieg, *Anitra's Dance* (*Peer Gynt Suite*), mm. 15-22

Musical score for Example 32, Edvard Grieg's *Anitra's Dance* (*Peer Gynt Suite*), measures 15-22. The score is written for piano in 3/4 time. The right hand features a melodic line with various ornaments and dynamics, including *f* and *p*. The left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with chords and single notes. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes.

Example 33. Edvard Grieg, *In the Hall of the Mountain King* (*Peer Gynt Suite*), mm. 2-3

Musical score for Example 33, Edvard Grieg's *In the Hall of the Mountain King* (*Peer Gynt Suite*), measures 2-3. The score is written for piano in 3/4 time. The right hand features a melodic line with various ornaments and dynamics, including *pp*. The left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with chords and single notes. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. The instruction *sempre staccato e pp* is written below the right hand.

Example 34. David Irving, *Grieg Being Dead*, mm. 3, 63-67

Musical score for Example 34, David Irving's *Grieg Being Dead*, measures 3, 63-67. The score is written for piano in 4/4 time. The right hand features a melodic line with various ornaments and dynamics, including *p*. The left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with chords and single notes. The instruction *Vivace* is written above the right hand for measure 3. The instruction *Subito Lento* is written above the right hand for measures 63-67, with a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 66 - 72$. The instruction *p* is written below the right hand for measures 63-67.

Example 35. David Irving, *Grieg Being Dead*, mm. 77-91

The musical score is divided into several systems. The first system features a vocal line with lyrics "He dreams them at the door of" and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "Lento" with a quarter note equal to 60 (♩ = 60). Dynamics include *mf* and *mp*. A box labeled "G" is present above the vocal line. The second system continues the vocal line with lyrics "new stars" and piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "poco piu mosso". Dynamics include *p* and *mf*. The third system shows piano accompaniment with a tempo of "poco piu mosso" and dynamics of *p* and *mf*. It includes the instruction "ped. simile" with three asterisks. The fourth system features a vocal line with the word "bouché" and piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "Rit.". Dynamics include *p*. The score concludes with a final piano accompaniment system.

There is a Morn by Men Unseen

The poetry for the second song of this set was written by American poet Emily Dickinson (1830-1886). This is considered an early poem and was written circa 1858. It is titled simply with a #24 but, traditionally, the title given for this song is taken from the opening line. Characteristic of Dickinson, the poem is full of innocence coupled with a preoccupation with death and witty perception of the afterlife. This poem employs unconventional punctuation with the inclusion of many dashes, also characteristic of Dickinson.

#24

There is a morn by men unseen –
Whose maids upon remoter green
Keep their Seraphic May –
And all day long, with dance and game,
And gambol I may never name –
Employ their holiday.

Here to light measure, move the feet
Which walk no more the village street –
Nor by the wood are found –
Here are the birds that sought the sun
When last year's distaff idle hung
And summer's brows were bound.

Ne'er saw I such a wondrous scene –
Ne'er such a ring on such a green –
Nor so serene array –
As if the stars some summer night
Should swing their cups of Chrysolite¹³¹ –
And revel till the day –

Like thee to dance – like thee to sing –
People upon the mystic green –
I ask, each new May Morn.

¹³¹ An exceptionally rare yellowish-green gemstone.

I wait thy far, fantastic bells –
Announcing me in other dells –
Unto the different dawn!¹³²

Dickinson describes being transported to another world, the world after death, which in this instance, takes place on a “May Morn.” Some consider the poem prophetic as Dickinson died in May, like it describes. Not lost is the irony that, given her preoccupation with death, her fame was gained posthumously. Irving describes his interpretation of this poem as striving “to capture the mystic sense of the words which speak of a life beyond this one, after death. I wanted the music to convey the sense of something beyond.”¹³³

This second song is a significant contrast to the first in several ways. First, *Grieg Being Dead* is through-composed (as are III and IV) whereas *There is a morn* is strophic. The Sandburg poem is irreverent and humorous while Dickinson is contemplative and childlike with wonder, which definitely comes through in Irving’s setting. Also, the first song changes in mood and dynamic quickly and often. The second maintains a light, undulating, almost hypnotic texture in the accompaniment throughout. My personal interpretation is that it resembles the timbre of a music box. It is careful and innocent.

¹³² Dickinson, Emily. *Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*. Thomas Johnson, ed, (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1960),?.

¹³³ David Irving, email message to the author, June 12, 2017.

Example 36. David Irving, *There is a Morn by Men Unseen*, mm. 1-8

From the very beginning of *There is a morn*, bitonality is established, Ab major against A major. (Example 36) Because the bitonality is only a half-step apart, the result is that all 12 chromatic tones are available to be used freely, which Irving does. Using conventional analysis, the opening could be labeled as a $V^{6/5}$ of Ab in the LH, with the RH rotating through a $I/V^7/bII^6/I$ progression in A major. Irving would merely label this as a G/D \flat /Eb trichordal construct in the LH because it does not ever resolve to an Ab major chord. Its function is to establish a base on which both tonalities can equally thrive.

He indicates that the bitonality for this song is appropriate as the poem is speaking about two worlds, the world of the living and that beyond life.

Interestingly, there are points in the song when the ear could be certain that an E major tonality has been established as in mm. 19-28, only to be snapped back into another world by a persistent E \flat that returns in m. 29. (Example 37) The significance of this is realized at the end of the song when E \flat does not return but instead the piece ends on a B major chord.

In the accompaniment, the eighth-note is the pulse for the entire piece. Although the RH varies from time to time in rhythm, especially in conjunction with phrase breaks, the LH never stops the hypnotic, rocking eighth-note motion that also aids in maintaining constant forward motion. The LH keeps within a fairly small register around middle C while the RH changes register often between high and very high.

The melodic and thematic material for the first three verses is identical, save for the occasional rhythmic variation, which serves to fit the text. Between the second and third verse, the accompaniment includes an extra three measures of transition, providing the horn with an extra burst of commentary in mm. 53-55, while the harmonic motion remains the same. (Example 38)

In Dickinson's writing, the final verse is varied by the use of a different cadence and punctuation. Irving highlights this by using new transitional material and new melodic material in the soprano line. Up to this point, Dickinson has been describing what she sees on this "May Morn" but the last verse finally gets to the heart of the matter as she expresses the desire to be a part of these "festivities." To heighten the intensity,

Irving begins the phrase in m. 83 (letter D) with an upward arch sung on “Like thee to dance” and again on “like thee to sing.” This is in contrast to the three other verses, which open with a falling line. The accompaniment then omits three measures that occur in the previous verses and continues on with the repeated chromatic writing in m. 86. (Example 39) This maintains a certain level of continuity and allows the verse to continue like the others until the very last line, “unto the different dawn,” which is sung on new melodic and rhythmic material, accentuating each syllable in “different dawn.” The accompaniment aids in the feeling of closure but instead of using a traditional cadence, Irving reaches a point of single tonality, B major, writing narrowing, alternating intervals in the RH over an unchanging bass. To my ear, this indicates more finality than the endings of the previous verses. (Example 40)

Much like in *Grieg Being Dead*, the horn provides lyric oversight, punctuation and embellishment of the vocal line and again, following the last sung phrase, the horn again has the final word. However, unlike *Grieg Being Dead*, the vocal phrase ends in m. 103 and the horn plays an entire 8 measure phrase of its own. It is as if, with a series of prominent perfect 4ths and 5ths, much like a hunting call, the horn is beckoning us to investigate the “May Morn” a little closer. (Example 40)

Example 37. David Irving, *There is a Morn by Men Unseen*, mm. 19-31

The musical score is presented in three systems. Each system contains a vocal line (top staff), a piano accompaniment (middle and bottom staves), and a grand staff (left and right staves). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system (measures 19-22) features a vocal line with lyrics: "all day— long with dance and game and gam - bol I may ne - ver name". Dynamics include *f*, *mp - f*, and *f*. The piano accompaniment includes markings for *f*, *mp - f*, and *f*. The second system (measures 23-26) continues the vocal line with lyrics: "play their ho - li - day— Here". Dynamics include *f*, *mp - f*, and *p*. The piano accompaniment includes markings for *f*, *mp - f*, and *p*. The third system (measures 27-31) concludes the piece. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. A dashed line labeled "loco" spans across the piano accompaniment in the first two systems. A box labeled "B" is placed above the vocal line in the third system, indicating a section boundary. The piece ends with a final chord in the piano accompaniment.

Example 38. David Irving, *There is a Morn by Men Unseen*, mm. 50-58

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system features a vocal line with the lyrics "and summer's brows were bound—" and a piano accompaniment. The piano part includes a section marked "S^{ma}----- loco" and a dynamic marking of *mp*. The second system continues the vocal line with the lyrics "N'er" and includes a dynamic marking of *p*. The piano accompaniment in the second system includes a section marked "C" and a dynamic marking of *p*. The third system continues the piano accompaniment with a section marked "C" and a dynamic marking of *p*. The score is written in 2/4 time and includes various musical notations such as clefs, notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Example 39. David Irving, *There is a Morn by Men Unseen*, mm. 81-87

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system includes a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "Like thee to dance like thee to" and features a dynamic marking of *mf - f*. The piano accompaniment includes a dynamic marking of *mp* and a performance instruction "(8va)----- loco". A boxed "D" is placed above the first measure of the piano part. The second system includes a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "sing - Peo - ple up - on the mys - tic" and features a dynamic marking of *mp*. The piano accompaniment includes a dynamic marking of *mp* and performance instructions "(8va)-----", "8va, loco", and "8va-----, lo". A boxed "D" is placed above the first measure of the piano part. The score is written in 4/4 time and includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Example 40. David Irving, *There is a Morn by Men Unseen*, mm. 100-110

The musical score consists of four systems of staves. The first system shows the vocal line with lyrics: "un - to the dif - fer - ent dawn". The piano accompaniment features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The second system continues the piano accompaniment, marked *mp*. The third system includes performance markings: "broader un poco rit." and "ten." for both the vocal and piano parts. The fourth system concludes the passage with further piano accompaniment.

Song

Dame Edith Sitwell (1887-1964) was born in Scarborough, England and is notably the only English poet among the *Four Songs*. She was highly intelligent, sensitive but eccentric, and thoroughly convinced she was a disappointment to her parents from the day she was born.¹³⁴ She, along with her two brothers, were all published poets. She received an honorary doctorate from Oxford in 1951. Her most well-known poem, *Still Falls the Rain*, was set to music by Benjamin Britten in *Canticle III* for baritone, horn, and piano. *Song* is found in Sitwell's 1943 collection of poems, *Street Songs*. Britten also composed a setting of *Song* as part of his song cycle, *The Heart of the Matter*. (Refer to the complete score in Appendix A to see the full poem.)

Irving elaborates on his interpretation of *Song*.

We are the unreturning smile of the lost one," is something we all encounter, for that is the human condition, to lose those we love. And who are we? The summers' children hoping for all, yet waiting for death, our sun. Still undeniably, we are more, we are "beauty's daughter," "the heart of the rose" with which we are one...above all looms the unremitting reality which we are powerless to resist, the sun which provides life and takes it, relentless and harsh, yet there must be something beyond so that its scorching life-taking reality must be false. My purpose in writing this song was to capture the fullness of its deep meaning and beauty.¹³⁵

Song begins in the tonal area of D with upper neighbor Eb and lower neighbor C# creating a dissonant trichordal construct. (Example 41) According to Irving, "the wide

¹³⁴ G.A. Cevasco. "Family Matters." *The Sitwells; Edith, Osbert, and Sacheverell*. (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1987), Twayne's English Author Series 456. Gale Virtual Reference Library, <http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?p=GVRL&sw=w&u=gree35277&v=2.1&id=GALE%7CCX3000700012&it=r&asid=c136d10b0fac394d8708c7e0e03a078e>, accessed June 15, 2017.

¹³⁵ David Irving, email message to the author, June 13, 2017.

spacing of the voices serves to soften the sting of the dissonance, creating an ethereal, stratospheric timbre in the process.”¹³⁶ As the voice enters in m. 3, the C and E \flat are inverted in the accompaniment, a technique Irving frequently employs as part of his variational technique. Irving maintains the secundal relationship between the bass and treble voices until the first consonance is reached in m. 6. These 7th and 9th dissonances serve to obscure the tonal center and creates tension that is released by the consonance which functions cadentially.

One factor that differentiates *Song* from the other three in this set is the use of doubling (or tripling) of the vocal line in the horn part and the piano accompaniment. Much of the melodic line is sung on straight quarter notes. Irving says this type of writing functions well to convey the simplicity and beauty of this song: “If Mozart used quarter notes to convey great beauty as he did, for example, in his magnificent *Ave Verum Corpus*, then so can I.”¹³⁷ Writing a melodic line with all quarter notes could have the potential to become stodgy, however, Irving uses a variety of techniques to bring interest to the line. He highlights key points in the text by building intensity through doubling voices and/or increasing dynamics as in mm. 52-55, and adding fermatas on specific words as in m. 63 and 65. (Example 42)

The bass also moves more freely in this song than the others in the set and the use of half-step vs whole-step progression is brought to the fore.

¹³⁶ David Irving, email message to the author, October 6, 2017.

¹³⁷ David Irving, email message to the author, October 1, 2017.

Example 41. David Irving, *Song*, mm. 1-12

The musical score for Example 41 consists of two systems. The first system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment for measures 1-4. The vocal line starts with a whole rest, followed by the lyrics "We are the dark-ness in the heat of the". The piano accompaniment begins with a piano (*pp*) dynamic and includes markings for *loco* and *legato*. The second system covers measures 5-12. The vocal line continues with the lyrics "day The root-less flo-wers in the". The piano accompaniment features dynamic markings of *pp*, *mp*, and *pp*, along with *loco* markings and a rehearsal mark 'A' in measure 10.

This is seen early on in the opening vocal line, highlighting the word “darkness” by having it sung on a falling half-step to differentiate from the just previously sung words, “are the,” sung on a falling whole-step. (Example 41) Another even stronger example occurs after rehearsal C in mm. 34-35. Even though this section centers around an E major construct, the half-step progression in the bass from G to F \sharp in mm. 34-35 followed by a whole-step progression in mm. 35-36 produces a powerful sense of arrival on the word “heart.” (Example 43)

The poetry references the sun - the underlying meaning being both life-giving and death-taking - and its vast heat which has drunken us. At rehearsal C the intensity is built through an elevated register in the voice (the highest pitch in the vocal part), a consistent increase in dynamic and a doubling of the melody in the horn and piano in mm. 29-31. This could be interpreted as a rage against the sun. The intensity is maintained in mm. 32-33 by the horn and piano as they slow and introduce the new melodic material that will be repeated in mm. 34-35. According to Irving, the purpose of the repetition here is to delay the climactic point of 'beauty's daughter' by announcing it first in the horn and piano and then repeating it with the voice. Unique to this phrase, Irving then begins the next line of poetry with no break or hesitation. This begins the phrase that is (in my estimation) the most poignant, meaningful moment of the song, "the heart of the Rose and we are one."¹³⁸ In m. 36, in conjunction with the word "heart," the tension of the previous section is released through the large leap in the vocal line, the return to the opening tempo, and a settling in the tonal center of B major. The bass line motion from mm. 34-38 displays Irving's adept use of half-step and whole-step motion in creating and releasing tension, and in this instance, bringing the ear to a certain tonality with the motion from G - F# - E - B in m. 38 on the word "we." This finally breaks the tension that has been building since m. 29. (Example 43)

Coincidentally, beginning in m. 66, the song concludes with a return to the tonal region of B major, serving as a kind of recapitulation not of the beginning of the piece, or

¹³⁸ David Irving, email message to the author, June 13, 2017.

even the high point at rehearsal C, but from what Irving believes to be the most moving moment in the song, mm. 36-39.

Example 42. David Irving, *Song*, mm. 57-66

we are the un-re-tur-ning smile of the

last one seen through the sum-mer leaves— That sun

E *mf-f* *f*

mf-f *f*

E *mf-f*

Rit. *p* A Tempo *mp*

Rit. loco A Tempo *mp*

Example 43. David Irving, *Song*, mm. 26-36

The musical score consists of three systems of staves. The first system (measures 26-31) features a vocal line with lyrics "and its vast heat has drunken us" and a piano accompaniment with a horn line. The piano part includes a box labeled "C" and dynamic markings *f* and *mf-f*. The second system (measures 32-35) features a vocal line with lyrics "Beauty's daughter The heart of the" and a piano accompaniment with a horn line. The piano part includes dynamic markings *mf-f* and *mp*. The third system (measures 36-36) features a vocal line with lyrics "Beauty's daughter The heart of the" and a piano accompaniment with a horn line. The piano part includes dynamic markings *mf-f* and *mp*. The score includes tempo markings "Rit." and "A Tempo".

A point of uniqueness for this piece is that the horn plays more of a harmonizing role with the vocal line and its motion is largely conjunct as a result. Its first entrance in m. 9 is a doubling of the vocal part. At rehearsal B, the horn serves to accentuate the first note of each measure. The doubling of parts becomes intense at letter C when the voice reaches a peak of intensity on the words “and its vast heat has drunken us,” and just following in m. 32 the horn announces the next two measures of the vocal line before the voice sings alone, as mentioned by Irving previously. The only ornamental figures that

the horn plays are at mm. 40-41 with an up and down whole step figure, and then the same figure at the very end of the piece. (Example 44) The horn takes over completely to end the song, as Irving puts it, “in a kind of peaceful acquiescence and respect for the world of the unseen and unknown where the smile of the lost ones find their home.”¹³⁹

¹³⁹ David Irving, email message to the author, October 6, 2017.

Example 44. David Irving, *Song*, mm. 62-72

The musical score consists of three systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4.

System 1 (Measures 62-64):
Vocal line: *mf-f* **E** we are the un - re - tur - ning smile of the *f*
Piano accompaniment: *mf-f* **E**

System 2 (Measures 65-68):
Vocal line: lost one seen through the sum - mer leaves — That sun *p* **A Tempo** *mp*
Piano accompaniment: **Rit.** *mp* **A Tempo**

System 3 (Measures 69-72):
Vocal line: and its — false scor - ning ten. *mp* **Rit.** ten.
Piano accompaniment: *mp* **Rit.** ten.

A Clear Midnight

This is thy hour O Soul, thy free flight into the wordless,
Away from books, away from art, the day erased, the lesson done,
Thee fully forth emerging, silent, gazing, pondering the themes thou lovest best,
Night, sleep, death and the stars.¹⁴⁰

Commonly known as the greatest of American poets, Walt Whitman (1819-1892) published this work in 1881 in his collection, *Leaves of Grass*. This poem comes at the end of the section, *Noon to Starry Night*. One critic, Jimmie Killingsworth, references the poem rather diminutively: “The section ends patly with a short epilogue-poem.”¹⁴¹ However, its simplicity does not diminish its profundity as it concisely describes the weighty matter of the releasing of a soul back into the universe. Irving chose to interpret this poem in a manner that “allows the words to stand of their own accord.” He writes, “I see Whitman as being at the end of the day. He was tired, and he wanted to get to what was important to him, the contemplation of more serious subjects, night, sleep, death, and the stars.”¹⁴²

Irving chose a quick tempo for this song to mimic the final movement of a multi-movement work. “I was further inspired by the final movements of all 4 of Mozart’s horn concerti,” Irving says, “which are in rondo form with a 6/8 time signature, and I consider this song to be in a quasi-rondo form.”¹⁴³ The 6/8 time signature is idiomatic to the

¹⁴⁰ Francis Murphy, ed. *Walt Whitman: The Complete Poems*. (Baltimore, MD :Penguin Books, 1975)

¹⁴¹ M. Jimmie Killingsworth. *The Growth of Leaves of Grass: The Organic Tradition in Whitman Studies*. (Columbia, SC: Camden House,1993), 151.

¹⁴² David Irving, email message to the author, June 12, 2017.

¹⁴³ David Irving, email message to the author, October 1, 2017.

traditional horn calls as well and is used often in hornistic writing. Distinctive to this song, the time signatures change back and forth between compound and simple meters with the eighth-note pulse being maintained throughout.

The introduction, longest of the *Four Songs* at nearly 29 measures, is spirited and angular. Irving begins with a full statement of the main motive, m. 1-4, which is introduced bitonally (D/E \flat) in the piano. This is similar to *There is a morn* with the half step relationship, however, the bitonality is not merely present between bass and treble but is also integrated into the motive. The contrary motion between the bass and treble voices contributes to the angular effect. A third layer is added by the horn in m. 5 with a slightly altered statement of the theme, resulting in some tasteful dissonances between voices. The horn is brought to the fore in this opening, as the writing for the horn is more intense and virtuosic. Much of this piece is built around this snappy motive that is well suited to the character and timbre of the horn. (Example 45)

The interlude and second statement of the theme by the horn, mm. 8-18, brings a new forward motion with the perfect 4th/5th movement in the bass and the chromatic line in the top voice created by the various trichords centered around a new bitonality, E \flat /E. Even though A \sharp must be analyzed as B \flat , the aural perception of the bitonality is obviously the same. (Example 46)

Example 45. David Irving, *A Clear Midnight*, mm. 1-8

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system consists of a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (grand staff). The tempo is marked 'Allegro Moderato' with a quarter note equal to 108. The piano part begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system continues the vocal and piano parts, with the piano part marked *mf*. A box labeled 'A' is placed above the piano part in the second system, indicating a specific musical feature.

At letter B, Irving introduces a rocking motion (he prefers to use the term “undulating”¹⁴⁴) in the accompaniment, hearkening back to the accompaniment of *There is a morn*, but with more intensity. Irving prepares the listener and the singer for the starting pitch in m. 29 by introducing a B at the top of the RH trichords for 9 measures before drawing to a standstill at letter C. Here the piano announces the theme in C#

¹⁴⁴ David Irving, email message to the author, October 6, 2017.

major. The soprano then follows imitatively, entering a perfect 5th above the piano on the declamation, “This is thy hour O soul.” (Example 47) It could be argued that this iteration of the main theme centers around C# minor in both the vocal line and accompaniment. A C# minor chord is outlined in the accompaniment as the soprano iteration of the main theme centers around C# minor in both the vocal line and accompaniment. A C# minor chord is outlined in the accompaniment as the soprano begins the short statement on a B but ends on C#, a sort of $\hat{7}-\hat{1}$ movement with the outline of a III chord in between. Otherwise, it could also be argued to have ties to E major.

The following material forms a sort of development featuring arpeggiated chords beginning at m. 33 and undergird the second statement in the vocal line. (This three measures of arpeggiation, which centers around B major, returns in m. 52 as the V of the final key center of F#.) Another variation of the theme at m. 36, latches onto the diminished 5th/augmented 4th from the main theme, introducing another fragmented interpretation of the theme arpeggiated by the horn in mm. 40-44. (Example 48)

In keeping with the bitonal nature of the main theme, the melodic line in mm. 45-51 centers around A major/minor while the accompaniment mimics the material from the very opening of the song. Because of the returning statements of the “prime motive,” as Irving calls it, the song takes on the character of that of a loose rondo form.¹⁴⁵ (Example 49)

¹⁴⁵ David Irving, email message to the author, June 13, 2017.

Example 46. David Irving, *A Clear Midnight*, mm. 9-21

The musical score for Example 46, David Irving's *A Clear Midnight*, measures 9-21, is presented in three systems. The first system features a grand staff (bass and treble clefs) and a single treble clef staff. The grand staff part begins with a *cresc. poco a poco* instruction and includes a *ped. simile* marking. The single treble clef staff part starts with a *mf* dynamic and also includes a *cresc. poco a poco* instruction. The second system continues the grand staff and single treble clef staves. The grand staff part includes a *mf* dynamic and a *cresc. poco a poco* instruction. A section marker **B** with a tempo change $\text{♩.} = \text{♩}$ is indicated. The single treble clef staff part starts with a *f* dynamic. The third system continues the grand staff and single treble clef staves. The grand staff part includes a *f* dynamic, a *subito p* instruction, and a *cresc. poco a poco ma non troppo* instruction. A *loco* marking is present in the bass clef of the grand staff.

Example 47. David Irving, *A Clear Midnight*, mm. 26-33

The musical score for Example 47, David Irving's *A Clear Midnight*, measures 26-33, is presented in three systems. The first system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The piano part features a characteristic 'rocking motion' in the bass line, with a dynamic marking of *dim poco a poco* and a forte (*f*) dynamic. The tempo is marked 'A Tempo' and the time signature is 6/8. The second system shows the vocal line with the lyrics 'This is thy hour O soul' and the piano accompaniment. The piano part features a dynamic marking of *mp*. The third system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment, with the piano part featuring a dynamic marking of *mp*.

In the final section, beginning at letter E (m. 58), the same pattern of accompaniment returns from mm. 19-27, but plays a different transitional role as the mood changes quickly along with the final tonal shift to F# major. The vocal line slows to a crawl with long, expansive tones on “night, sleep, death.” Irving judiciously saves the largest leap in the vocal line, a full octave, to highlight the final phrase. He once again accompanies the voice with his characteristic rocking motion, also present at letter B, and serves to heighten the sense of tranquility that the final phrase demands. The final word

of both this and the Sandburg poem is “stars,” and the vocal lines are strikingly similar. Irving concludes *Grieg Being Dead* with a falling half-step but uses three half-steps in his progression to end this last song, providing an even stronger sense of finality. (Example 35 & 50) Even though the song slows for nine measures starting at letter E, the final ritardando does not begin until the horn’s entrance. The final phrase is once again left to the horn and as Irving describes it, “here we are left to soar among the stars through the soaring horn part. That’s how I see it.”¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

Example 48. David Irving, *A Clear Midnight*, mm. 34-46

The musical score consists of four systems of staves. The first system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked *poco piu mosso* and the dynamics are *mp - mf*. The lyrics are "thy free flight in - to the word - less". The second system continues the piano accompaniment with a *f* dynamic. The third system shows the vocal line with the lyrics "A - way from books a -" and a *D* chord marking. The dynamics are *mp* and *f*. The fourth system continues the piano accompaniment with a *f* dynamic.

Example 49. David Irving, *A Clear Midnight*, mm. 47-58

The musical score consists of several systems. The first system features a vocal line with lyrics: "why from art the day e - rased the les - son done Thee ful - ly". The piano accompaniment includes a right-hand part with a *cresc. poco a poco* marking and a left-hand part with a *cresc. poco a poco* marking. Dynamics range from *f* to *mp - mf*.

The second system continues the vocal line with lyrics: "forth e - mer - ging si - lent ga - zing pon - der -". Dynamics include *f*, *p*, and *mp*.

The third system shows the piano accompaniment with dynamics *f* and *sublto p*. A key signature change to E major is indicated by a box with the letter 'E'.

The fourth system includes tempo markings: *Molto Rit.*, *A Tempo*, *meno mosso*, and *Andante* with a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 72$. The vocal line has lyrics: "ing the themes thou lov - est best". Dynamics include *mf* and *f*.

The fifth system continues the piano accompaniment with dynamics *mf*, *f*, and *p*. It also features the *Andante* tempo marking with $\text{♩} = 72$ and the instruction *legato*.

Example 50. David Irving, *A Clear Midnight*, mm. 59-70

un poco libre ma non troppo
p ————— *ppp* ————— *ppp*

Night Sleep

un poco libre ma non troppo

meno mosso

Death and the Stars

meno mosso

Rit. ten.

(stars)

p - mp
Rit. ten.

(8th)

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this paper was to study the compositional aspects of the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn and Piano* and the history of the work, which consequently led to biographical information about David Irving. As no significant writing about him was available previously, I concluded that a thorough examination of the composer's musical background and compositional evolution was necessary for understanding his idiomatic style. Through numerous communications and writings, not only was the general history of Mr. Irving relayed but also his extensive experience as a French horn player throughout the globe and his rich background in music theory and composition came to the fore. These experiences have shaped his understanding as a musician and composer, influencing the very language of his own compositional style.

The study of a number of Irving's compositions revealed that his mature style developed out of a calculated effort to incorporate a wide range of compositional practices, both those of the past and those currently being championed during his education. This brings a unique and refreshing quality to his compositions.

The use of these compositional techniques is evident in the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano*, demonstrating a representative example of Irving's mature compositions. Careful analysis revealed an adept use of techniques such as non-traditional phrase lengths, bitonality, traditional harmonic progression, counterpoint,

motivic development, and text painting. The analysis of the *Four Songs* has led to a greater understanding of the relationship of not only the vocal line to the text, but the interplay between all three voices.

As a portion of the research, I learned and performed the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn and Piano*. This has allowed me the opportunity to gain a deeper appreciation and understanding of some of the technical aspects of the work. The piano carries the greatest weight as it plays throughout the entire work and is responsible for all accompanimental and transitional material. The challenges that arise in the piano part are not necessarily mechanical (for the most part) but lie in the use of many accidentals, tempo changes, time signature changes, and dramatic mood changes throughout the work. The challenge for the horn arises from the switching of roles, acting alternately as soloist, duet partner and commentator to the voice. The important role of the voice is to relay the text (which Irving stresses is the establishing element) and convey the melodic line, as the melody is not always present in the accompanimental voices.

Recommendation for Further Study

This is the first academic writing to consider David Irving and his works. His history and experiences have intersected in many ways with famous, respected composers and pedagogues. An in depth study of his life and career would likely fill a book. Mr. Irving enjoys writing and has supplied the author with a number of personal resources including copies of programs and program notes from *Phoenix* concerts and his

composition premiers, names of specific colleagues who premiered or performed his pieces, copies of many scores, as well as writings about his life and influences.

Of his 69 works, only the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn and Piano* have been thoroughly addressed and analyzed in depth. Recommendations for further research include:

- A chronological study of Irving's works outlining his development in compositional techniques and mature style.
- Style comparisons between Irving's instrumental writing and vocal writing.
- A broad scope study of his compositions, linking his style characteristics with the various, unique influences (composers, performers, ensembles, etc.) throughout his career.

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APPENDIX A

COMPLETE SCORE OF FOUR SONGS FOR SOPRANO, HORN, AND PIANO

There are a few typesetting errors in the score that should be corrected before performance:

1. There is a missing $3/4$ time signature at the beginning of *There is a Morn by Men Unseen*.
2. In *Song* there is a missing word in measure 68. The word “false” should coincide with the note B and the word “light” should be added to coincide with the D#.
3. *A Clear Midnight* is missing an accidental in the horn part in measure 7. The final note is indicated as an F and should be an F#.

For Soprano or Mezzo-Soprano
Horn and Piano

Four Songs

For Sally Munro, Francis Orval, and Walter Hilse

I. Grieg Being Dead

Carl Sandburg

David Irving

Andante

Soprano or Mezzo-Soprano

Horn in F

Piano

p

Andante *accel.*

sempre cresc. poco a poco

Vivace

Rit.

"Grieg Being Dead" from Smoke and Steel by Carl Sandburg, copyright 1920 by Harcourt, Inc. and renewed 1948 by Carl Sandburg, reprinted by permission of the publisher.

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A Lento $\text{♩} = 60$
In a recitative style

f Grieg be - ing dead *mp* we may speak of him

A Lento $\text{♩} = 60$
In a recitative style

f *p*

Vivace *poco cresc.*

and his art

Vivace *poco cresc.*

Rit. *dim*

(art)

Rit. *dim*

dim

Ancora Lento *mf* **Rit. poco a poco**

Grieg be - ing dead we can talk a - bout

Ancora Lento *mf* **Rit. poco a poco** *p* *mf* *f* *8va - - loco*

Lento *f* **B** 3

who - ther he was a - ny good or not. Grieg be - ing with

Lento *mf* *pp* *f* **B** *8va - - loco*

subito mp

ib - son Bjørn - son. Leif E - ric - son and the rest

subito mp *8va - - loco*

C Allegro $\text{♩} = 92$

f

Grieg be - ing dead does not care a hell's hoot — what — we —

f

C Allegro $\text{♩} = 92$

f

ped. simile

Rit. poco a poco

say —

Rit. poco a poco

dim poco a poco

D Moderato $\text{♩} = 80$

D Moderato $\text{♩} = 80$

mp

Sub. loco

Musical score for piano and voice. The score is in E major and 3/4 time. It consists of three systems of music.

System 1: The piano part begins with a dynamic marking of *mf-f*. The tempo is marked *Lento* with a quarter note equal to 66 (♩ = 66). The lyrics "Mor - ning" are written under the vocal line.

System 2: The piano part has a dynamic marking of *p* and a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking. The tempo remains *Lento* (♩ = 66). The lyrics "Spring A - ni tra's dance" are written under the vocal line.

System 3: The piano part has a dynamic marking of *f*. The tempo is marked *piu mosso*. The lyrics "Spring A - ni tra's dance" are written under the vocal line.

The score includes various musical notations such as treble and bass clefs, key signatures, time signatures, dynamic markings (*mf-f*, *p*, *f*, *cresc.*), and tempo markings (*Lento*, *piu mosso*). There are also performance instructions like "loco" and "8va" (8th octave) indicated by dashed lines.

$\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ F Allegro $\text{♩} = 120$

$\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ F Allegro $\text{♩} = 120$

p *f*

S.P. **Subito Lento** $\text{♩} = 66 - 72$

8va loco **Subito Lento** $\text{♩} = 66 - 72$

p

ped. * *ped.* * *ped. simile*

Rit.

Musical score for the first system, featuring vocal staves and piano accompaniment. The piano part includes a 'Rit.' marking and a 'G' chord box.

G Lento $\text{♩} = 60$

mf *mp* un poco rit.
He dreams them at the door of

Musical score for the second system, including vocal staves and piano accompaniment.

G Lento $\text{♩} = 60$

un poco rit.

Musical score for the third system, including vocal staves and piano accompaniment.

poco piu mosso

p

mf

new

stars

Musical score for the fourth system, including vocal staves and piano accompaniment.

poco piu mosso

p

mf

Musical score for the fifth system, including vocal staves and piano accompaniment.

ped. simile

Rit.

bouché

Rit.

II. There is a morn by men unseen
Emily Dickinson

Andante $\text{♩} = 88$

Andante $\text{♩} = 88$
legato *p*

A

There is a

A

morn by men un - seen
 (8^{va}) loco
 mp

whose maids - up - on - re - mo - ter green
 p - mp mp - mf
 8^{va} loco
 mp

keep their Ser - a - phic May and
 p mf p
 8^{va} loco
 p mf

f all day— long with dance and game and gam - bol I may ne - ver name

mp - f

f

f *loco*

em

f *loco*

play their ho - li - day— Here

p

f *loco* *p*

B

to light mea - sure move the feet

(Suo) -----

p - mp

which walk - no more - the vil - lage

mp

(Suo) ----- loco

p - mp

mp - mf *p* *mf*

street nor by the wood are found

mp *mf*

(Suo) ----- loco

mp - mf *mf*

Here are the birds that sought the sun when
 last year's di-staff i-dio hung
 and summer's brows were bound—

Dynamics: *f*, *mp - f*, *p*, *f*, *f*, *mp - f*, *f*, *f*, *mp*

Performance markings: *loco*

The score is written for voice and piano. The voice part consists of a single melodic line. The piano accompaniment is written in two staves (treble and bass clef). The music is in 2/4 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are placed below the vocal line. The piano part includes various chords and rhythmic patterns, with some sections marked as *loco*.

Musical score for a vocal and piano piece. The score is in 2/4 time and features a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "N'er saw I such a won-drous scene n'er such a ring on such a". The score includes dynamic markings like *p* and *mp*, and performance instructions like **C**, *8va*, and *loco*.

mp - mf *mf*

green nor so so - rene ar - rzy

mp (8va) *loco* 8va *loco* *mf*

f *mp - f*

as if the stars some sun - mor night should

p *f* *mp - mf* *loco*

f

swing their cups of Cary - so - lite

f *loco*

and re - vel till the day—

loco

mp

D *mf - f*

Like thee to dance like thee to

mp

(8va)----- loco

D *mf - f*

sing—

Peo - ple up - on the mys - tic

mp

(8va)----- loco

mp

mp - mf *mf*

green I ask each new May Morn.

mp *mf*

mp - mf *mf*

mp - mf *mf*

8va ----- loco

f *mp - mf*

I wait thy far fan - tas - tic bells an -

p *f*

p *f*

mp - mf

8va ----- loco

f

nounc - ing me in o - ther deils

f

f

8va ----- loco

un - to the dif - fer - ent down

mp

broaden
un poco rit.

ten.

broaden
un poco rit.

ten.

III. Song
Edith Sitwell

Lento $\text{♩} = 60-66$ *pp*

We are the dark-ness in the heat of the

Lento $\text{♩} = 60-66$ *pp* *legato*

day The root-less flo-wers in the

pp *mp* *pp*

pp *p* *pp* *mp* *pp*

p *Rit.* *mp-mf* **A Tempo**

air the cool-ness: we are the wa-ter

p *mp-mf* *Rit.* **A Tempo** *pp* *mp*

B *mf* un poco rit.

Ly - ing up - on the leaves before Death our Sun

mf **B** sempre legato un poco rit. *mp*

C *f* and its vast heat has drun - ken us

f **C** *f*

Rit. *mf-f* *mp* **A Tempo**

Beau - ty's daugh - ter The heart of the

Rit. *mf-f* *mp* **A Tempo**

loco

Rose and we are one

mp *p*

mp *p*

D *p* *cresc.*

We are the summer's children the

mf *loco* *loco* **D** *p - mp* *poco cresc.*

cresc.

mf

breath of evening

mf *p* *mp* *loco*

pp - p mf

the days when all may be hoped for

pp - p mf

pp - p mf *subito p*

E *mf - f* f

we see the un - re - tur - ning smile of the

mf - f f

E *mf - f*

Rit. *p* **A Tempo**

lost one seen through the sun - mer leaves — That sun

Rit. loco **A Tempo**

mp *mp*

Rit.

and its false scoring ten.

Rit. ten.

mp

IV. A Clear Midnight
Walt Whitman

Allegro Moderato
♩ = 108

Allegro Moderato
♩ = 108

p *mp*

A

mf **A** *mp*

The image shows a page of musical notation for piano and voice. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system includes two vocal staves (treble clef) and a grand staff (bass clef). The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with a dynamic of *mf* and a *cresc. poco a poco* instruction. The second system includes two vocal staves and a grand staff. The piano part continues with the same rhythmic pattern, marked *mf* and *cresc. poco a poco*. A section labeled **B** begins with a tempo marking *J. = J*. The piano part in this section starts with a dynamic of *f*, then changes to *subito p*, and finally *cresc. poco a poco ma non troppo*. The word *loco* is written below the piano part in the **B** section.

mf *cresc. poco a poco*

mf *cresc. poco a poco*

B *J. = J*

f *subito p* *cresc. poco a poco ma non troppo*

loco

Musical score for piano and voice. The score is written in 5/4 time and consists of three systems.

System 1: The piano accompaniment begins with a *poco accel.* marking. The tempo is marked *A Tempo* with a common time signature (C) and a dynamic marking of *f*. The vocal line is silent.

System 2: The piano accompaniment features a *dim poco a poco* marking. The tempo remains *A Tempo* with a common time signature (C) and a dynamic marking of *f*. The vocal line begins with the word "This".

System 3: The vocal line continues with the lyrics "is thy hour O soul". The piano accompaniment includes a *mp* marking. The system concludes with a double bar line.

mp - mf *poco piu mosso*

thy free flight in - to the word - less

poco piu mosso

D *mp*

A - way from books a -

mp *cresc.* *f* *mp*

mp *cresc.* *f*

D

cresc. poco a poco *f* *mp - mf*

why from art the day e - rased the les - son done Thee ful - ly

cresc. poco a poco *f* *mp - mf*

cresc. poco a poco *f* *mp - mf*

f *p* *mp*

forth e - mer - ging si - lent ga - zing pon - der -

f *subtlo p* *mp*

Molto Rit. **A Tempo** *mf* *f* **meno mosso** **E** **Andante** ♩ = 72

ing the themes thou lov - est best

Molto Rit. **A Tempo** *mf* *f* **meno mosso** **E** **Andante** ♩ = 72 *legato*

mf *f* *p*

un poco libre ma non troppo
p *ppp* *ppp*

Night Sleep

un poco libre ma non troppo

(8^{va})

meno mosso

Death and the Stars

meno mosso

(8^{va})

Rit. ten.

(stars)

p - mp

Rit. ten.

(8^{va})

APPENDIX B

LIST OF WORKS AND COMPOSITION DATES COMPILED BY DAVID IRVING

Orchestral

- The Nights of Big Sur* (Short orchestral work) (1977)
Five Movements for Orchestra (1986)
Dance Suite for Orchestra (Movement from Five Movements for Orchestra) (1986)
Hymnposium, Variation and Fantasy on a Hymn Tune (October 8, 1987)
The Starry Nights of Copernicus (Chamber Orchestra) (Jan. 30, 1989)
Concerto for Horn and Orchestra (1999)
 Arrangement of Concerto for Horn for Horn and Two Pianos (1999)
Dance Suite for Orchestra (1999) Each movements suitable for individual performance
 - Auld Reel and Waltz (1999)
 - Country Dance (1999)
 - Grand Processional March (1999)
 - Carnival for Orchestra (1999)
East/West for Viola and Orchestra (2001)
Baroque Reflections – Ceremonial Air and Fugue (in progress)

Dramatic

- The Witch* – One Act Opera in 7 scenes (August 19, 1986)
Once in the Time of Trolls, incidental music, play by Sandra Fenichel Archer, (electronic score) (1994)

Chamber Music

- Piece for Percussion* (1977)
Woodwind Quintet (1978)
Music for String Quartet No. 1 (one movement) (1979)
Mixed Ensemble Piece for Percussion, Violin, Clarinet, Bass Trombone and Tuba (1981)
Trio for Horns (1982)
Piece for Violin and Piano (2 movements) (1985)
Music for String Quartet No. 2 (two movements) (1985)
Three Dances, for Violin, Cello, Bass Clarinet & Marimba (1985)
In Memoriam Willem Valkenier for Horn Sextet (1986)
Starry Nights of Copernicus for Violin Quartet (1986)
A Warm Summer Afternoon, Variations for 2 Flutes & Bass Clarinet/String Bass (1987)
Spectra 2, for Horn and Piano (1987)
Quartet for Horns No. 1 (1988)
I Have Thee, for two violins (1988)
Street Song, Pasacalle for Guitar (1988)
Duo for Horn and Bass Flute (1992)
The Road-Winter (Currier & Ives), diatonic Trio for Horns (1999)

Quartet for Horns No. 2 (2001)
Piece for Piano and Oboe Solo (arrangement of *Endless Song*) (After 2001)
Piece for Baritone and Piano (arrangement of *Endless Song*) (After 2001)
Trio for Viola, Clarinet, and Piano (2002)
Quintet for Double Reeds with Heckelphone Solo (2002)

- Arrangement of Quintet with English horn Solo (2008)
- Arrangement of Quintet with Tenor Sax Solo (2008)
- Arrangement of Quintet for Brass Quartet and Heckelphone Solo (2008)
- Arrangement of Quintet for Brass Quartet and English Horn Solo (2008)
- Arrangement of Quintet for Saxophone Quartet and Tenor Saxophone Solo (2008)
- Arrangement of Quintet for Saxophone Trio and Alto Saxophone Solo (2008)

Largo for Unaccompanied Violin (date unknown)

Piano Music

Piece for Piano (1978)
Elegy for Shelly Scheps (1983)
Circus Variations (1983)
Spectra (1984)
Theme and Variations for Piano, Arrangement of Five Movements for Orchestra (1984)
Clouds (1985)
Nights of Big Sur, arrangement of short orchestral piece for 2 pianos (date unknown)
Lullabye (1989)
Etude (date unknown)
The Piper (2002)

Vocal with Piano

Shall I Compare Thee To A Summer's Day—Shakespeare, for soprano and piano (1977)
Madrigal of Roses (Irving) for soprano and piano (Feb. 21, 1984)
Homeless People – the Hag (Irving), for soprano or mezzo-soprano (Oct. 31, 1984)
Where'er You Walk (Congreve), for soprano and piano (1986)
Ave Maria, for soprano or mezzo-soprano (April 23, 1989)

- *Ave Maria* for soprano or mezzo-soprano with horn obbligato (date unknown)

The Ostrich is a Silly Bird (Mary E. Wilkins Freeman), for soprano and piano (1989)
Three Emily Dickinson Songs, for soprano or mezzo-soprano

- *Morning* (Feb. 20, 1989)
- *A little madness in the spring* (July 30, 1989)
- *I dwell in possibility* (July 29, 1989)

The Thrustle (Tennyson), for soprano and piano (July 29, 1989)
Five Songs for Baritone (1991)

- *The Piper* (Seumas O'Sullivan)
- *The Players Ask for a Blessing on the Psalteries and on Themselves* (William Butler Yeats)
- *Mozart, 1935* (Wallace Stevens)
- *The Music Makers* (Arthur William Edgar O'Shaughnessy)

- O Silver Trumpets (William Butler Yeats)
- Four Songs from Shakespeare* (1992)
 - Not Marble Nor the Gilded Monuments, for baritone and mezzo or-soprano
 - Since Brass Nor Stone Nor Earth Nor Boundless, Sea for baritone
 - Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day, for mezzo soprano
 - What is Your Substance, Whereof Are You Made, for baritone and mezzo-soprano
- Endless Song*, for soprano or mezzo-soprano and piano (Dec. 26, 2001)
- Arrangement of *Song* (Sitwell) for baritone and piano (date unknown).
- Arrangement of *Song* (Sitwell) for soprano or mezzo-soprano and piano (date unknown)

Vocal with Instruments

- purple finch*, (e.e. cummings) for soprano, clarinet & piano (1985)
- i carry your heart with me* (e.e. cummings), for soprano or mezzo-soprano and string quartet (1987)
- The Ostrich is a Silly Bird* (Mary E. Wilkins Freeman), for soprano and piano with violin obligato (1989) (violin part presently missing)
- Nuptial Song* (Lord de Tabley) for soprano, mezzo-soprano, cello and harpsichord or piano (1990)
- Four Songs for Soprano or Mezzo-soprano, Horn and Piano* (1990)
 - Grieg being dead (Carl Sandburg)
 - There is a morn by men unseen (Emily Dickinson)
 - Song (Edith Sitwell)
 - A Clear Midnight (Walt Whitman)
- As if that God made Creatures for Mans' Meat* (Margaret Cavendish), for mezzo-soprano, viola, and piano (2011)

Chorus

- Ecce Quo Modus Moritur Justus*, for a cappella chorus (in the style of Palestrina) (1976)
- Kyrie*, for chorus, piccolo, bells, contra bassoon, and basses (1984)
- Spring Song*, for children's chorus, soprano recorder, recorder and snare drum (1987)
- The Lord is my Shepherd*, for a cappella chorus (1989)
- Voices in the Mist* (Tennyson), for a cappella chorus - a Christmas Carol (1990)
- Voices in the Mist*, arranged for women's chorus (2008)
- Prayer* (Alexander Solzhenitsyn), for vocal quartet (or chorus) and piano (1992)
- Flowers of Paradise* for chorus and strings (2008)

Concert Band

- Circus Variations* (1984)

Music for the Animals

- Goldie Boy*, for piano (2008)
- Goldie Boy*, for piano with violin solo (2008)
- The Feral Cat* (2008)
- Crowd Song*, for unison voices in opposition to the AETA (Animal Enterprise Terrorism

Act) - (unfinished)

See also *As if that God made Creatures for Mans' Meat*, listed under Vocal with Instruments.

Arrangements of Other Composers' works—(circa 1976-1978)

Arrangement for orchestra of *Novelette I* for piano by Francis Poulenc

Arrangement for string orchestra of *Mikrokosmos 66*, Melody Divided for piano by Bela Bartok

Arrangement for String Quartet of *Poetic Tone Picture II* for piano by Edvard Grieg

Arrangement for woodwind quintet of *Kleine Stücke I & II*, Op.19 for piano
by Arnold Schoenberg

Study Works – (circa 1976-1978)

Fugue Composition

Fugue on a Theme of Walter Hilse

APPENDIX C

PERMISSION LETTER TO THE AUTHOR

dgirving@earthlink.com | 3 Hanni Avenue, Sidney, NY

July 7, 2017

Ms. Hayward
170 Silverthorne Court
Winston-Salem, NC 27103

Dear Ms. Hayward:

I am writing to give my consent for the following materials to be included in your dissertation:

- *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano (1990)* – excerpts and complete copy
- Written portions of personal interview material
- Excerpts from any of my self-published compositions

Sincerely,



David Gerow Irving

APPENDIX D

WRITTEN INTERVIEW WITH DAVID IRVING – 10/31/2016

1. **When is your birth date?**

I was born on May 23, 1935 along with my twin brother, Darrel, in Kankakee, Illinois. The family moved to Streator, Illinois, age 1. We then moved to Connersville, Indiana, age 2, where my father became an assistant manager for J.C. Penny. We moved to Bluffton, Indiana, age 8, when he was appointed the manager there. Bluffton was a small town of just over 5,000 people.

2. **What years were you in various places? (ie overseas, in college/grad school)**

I'll try to highlight some of the events that occurred during different periods of my life.

Both of my parents were very musical and insisted that my brother and I take up an instrument when we were in the 8th grade. So they got us a trumpet which we shared between us and which we both hated. We finally refused to play the instrument after we were put in a horrible sounding band after just a few lessons with a lot of other kids who sounded like they also had just taken only a lesson or two. But my parents would not give up so easily. Either learn an instrument or no athletics, they said. Fortunately, a new high school band teacher had just been hired at the start of our Freshman year. This was J. Robert Schlatter who happened also to be a very fine French hornist who besides his position as the band director took up the job of principal horn with the Ft. Wayne Philharmonic. Ft. Wayne was located just 25 miles north of Bluffton. My parents got in touch with Schlatter, and he brought two French horns out to the house. He told Darrel and me how to form an embouchure and had us blow a note or two on the horns. I was sold from the very first moment. I loved everything about the instrument, the way it looked, the way it sounded, the way it felt when you played it.

Darrel and I seemed to take to the horn naturally and progressed rapidly. In my second year I was learning the Mozart 3rd horn concerto and a year later the Richard Strauss 1st Concerto. I played these pieces in several places around Indiana in competitions or for other occasions.

We didn't have much classical music around Bluffton, and at a time when television was just being introduced to the nation—only a few families in the town owned a TV set—classical music was not a high priority. I learned the names of the classical composers from my excerpt books or from band arrangements of pieces like Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony*, Rossini's *Overture to the Barber of Seville*, and Bach's Cantata *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring*. These led me to sometimes take out 78 RPM records from the library and play them on an old wind-up Victrola we kept in the attic. This was how, for example, I first heard the *Nocturne* (horn solo) in Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Sometimes I would pretend to be sick so that I could stay home from church to listen to the Boston Symphony broadcasts on Sunday mornings. On those occasions I would tune in and try to play along with whatever was being played from my excerpt books. Little did I know that I would one day study with the horn player with whom I tried to join in with in playing the horn call (short version) in Richard Wagner's *Siegfried's Rhine Journey*. This was Willem Valkenier who was the principal horn of the Boston Symphony at the time.

By my senior year it had already long been my dream to become a professional horn player. I had got my first taste of orchestral playing when my horn teacher invited me to play in a concert with the Ft. Wayne Philharmonic. Igor Buketoff was the conductor. I also attended Indiana University summer music camps for high school students and played in the orchestra there. We played the Tchaikovsky *6th Symphony* which I have loved ever since. In pursuit of my goal of a symphonic career, I played an audition for Ball State University which offered me a scholarship. I also received scholarship offers from schools I had never heard of before, Indiana State University, for example. Even so, college was still way beyond my financial means.

Because of the Korean war there was a two year military draft which all young men aged 18 to 26 were subject to. Since I didn't have the money for college I had my name moved ahead in the draft so that I could complete my military service and then get the GI Bill in order to attend college.

In the army, I was stationed at Ft. Knox, Kentucky for basic training in tanks and was then shipped to Göppingen, Germany. In Göppingen I was assigned to the 9th Division Band. There I learned that an army symphony orchestra existed in Stuttgart Germany. This was the 7th Army Symphony which I auditioned for and managed to become a member of a few months later. Kenneth Schermerhorn, for whom the

Schermerhorn Symphony Center in Nashville has been named today, was the conductor and a great inspiration.

The 7th Army Symphony was a fascinating organization. It was formed to help improve relations between postwar Germany and the United States. For this purpose we played concerts all over West Germany which was later expanded to include other European countries, France, Italy, England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland.

Though I was just out of high school, I was suddenly in the company of some really great musicians many who had already graduated from some of the best music schools—Curtis, Juilliard, New England Conservatory, the University of Illinois, Yale—and some who had already been out playing in professional orchestras. Many would go on to occupy some of the best orchestra positions in the country, the St. Louis Symphony, the New York Philharmonic, the National Symphony in Washington, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the orchestras in Denver, San Francisco, and many other places.

For me it was an amazing experience. With this orchestra I first heard the Beethoven's *3rd Symphony* by playing it. The same for the Brahms' *3rd Symphony*, the Brahms and Beethoven violin concertos, and a host of other works like Mozart *Symphony No. 40 in G minor* or the Hector Berlioz *Overture to Benvenuto Cellini*. Now I was also introduced to 20th Century music for the first time through pieces like Aaron Copland's *El Salón México*, Hindemith's *Symphonic Metamorphosis*, the Béla Bartók *3rd Piano Concerto*, and pieces by Samuel Barber, Vincent Persichetti, Paul Creston, and Arthur Honegger. The Bartók instantly became one of my favorites and has remained so ever since.

To play in this orchestra seemed like the fulfillment of my dreams all through high school. Not only were we playing some of the great classics from the symphonic repertoire, we were traveling around to great places, London, Edinburgh, Florence, Pisa, Strasburg, Bordeaux, and Glasgow come to mind. In London we played in the Royal Albert Hall.

The world of music was opening up and I was taking it all in. In Edinburgh, I heard the great horn virtuoso Dennis Brain perform both the Mozart and Richard Strauss 2nd concertos on the same program with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. I had never imagined such virtuosity on the horn was possible, and he became my instant hero.

He would become the supreme ideal for horn playing for virtually the entire horn-playing world from the time of his untimely death in 1957 until even today for many horn players.

As I mentioned, In this orchestra I was becoming acquainted with some of the great masterpieces of the classical literature like the Mozart *Sinfonia Concertante for Violin and Viola Solo* and orchestra or the Bach *Piano Concerto in D minor*. The Bach happened when Harriet Cohen, the great British pianist and promoter of contemporary music for whom composers like Béla Bartók, Earnest Bloch, and Sir Arnold Bax wrote compositions, played this piece with the orchestra in Kassel, Germany. One of the orchestra members remembers that the auditorium was so cold she had to wear gloves. (I presume the fingers of the gloves must have been cut off.) Later, in London, she held a reception for members of the orchestra which I was privileged to attend. It was fascinating to meet this great artist and to observe her as she held court, as it were, in her very refined London home.

After my time with the 7th Army Symphony I returned to the US. I enrolled in the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston and studied horn with Willem Valkenier (1887-1986) from 1955 to 1957 until he retired. Another horn student, James Senigo and I, were his last official students to register at the Conservatory. As a student I performed the Beethoven *Sonata for Horn and Piano* and Hugo Kauder's *Trio for Horn, Violin, and Piano*. Linda Dunlop was on piano for both pieces and Hiroshi Hatoyama on violin for the Kauder. Hiroshi was a little older and one of my roommates. He was also reputedly the No. 1 violinist in Japan having won the All Japan Music Competition for violin before the war when he was just 13. He had come to Boston on some kind of visiting grant and was the concertmaster for the student orchestra.

The Kauder Trio was dedicated to Valkenier. Raised in Rotterdam , Holland, Valkenier was a teacher who loved to establish a close relationship with his students and to converse with them about philosophical and ethical subjects. I remained in touch with him over many years and last visited with him at his Cape Cod home in Dennisport, Mass. just about a year before his death.

From 1957 to 1959 I studied horn with Gottfried von Freiberg in Vienna. Freiberg was the principal horn of the Vienna Opera and Philharmonic and a gentle and quiet man. He once confided to me with a sadness in his voice and eyes which he could

not quite conceal that during the Nazi era he had been demoted to 3rd horn because he was part Jewish. Even so, his reputation as a hornist was so great that they could not stop his invitation to perform the world premiere of the Richard Strauss *Horn Concerto No. 2* which he did in Salzburg in 1943.

During the 1958 season I auditioned for and became a member of the Graz Opera Orchestra and Philharmonic. In Austria, the Graz Opera was second only to the Vienna State Opera and the orchestra was very good. While there we recorded the Leopold Mozart *Sinfonia di Caccia* for four horns and orchestra for Radio Austria. I had the opportunity to remain in Graz, but this did not seem like the right decision to make so I returned to Vienna and then back to the states in the summer of 1959.

From 1959 to 1974 I lived in Boston, New York, and San Francisco. It was during this time that I toured with the Goldovsky Opera Theater performing *Don Giovanni*. My brother Darrel, who had his own career on the horn, also played on this tour. Members of the cast included Sherrill Milnes, Ron Holgate, Spiro Malas, and Jeanette Scovotti. In San Francisco, I became a member of the Oakland Symphony, Gerhard Samuels conducting. Under his direction the orchestra acquired a national reputation because of his creative and innovative programming of contemporary works. I also had occasion to play with the San Francisco Ballet, the San Francisco Opera, the Western Opera Theater (subsidiary of San Francisco Opera), the Harkness Ballet, the Cabrillo Music Festival orchestra and other orchestras. During this period I freelanced with several regional orchestras like the Hartford Symphony (Conn.), Springfield Symphony (Mass.), Marin Symphony (California), the Richmond Symphony (California), and many others. I also played much chamber music including the Rossini *Quartets for Flute, Clarinet, Bassoon and Horn* and the Brahms *Horn Trio* with Eric Smith (aka Cassell) on violin and Meryl Ettelson on piano. Meryl is presently the pianist with the White Oak Trio in Houston, Texas). My very last professional job was in 1973 when I was called in for a rehearsal with the Caramoor Festival orchestra in New York City with Julius Rudel, director of the New York City Opera, conducting Cherubini's opera *Medea*.

I was also often employed as a temporary office worker during this time period.

3. **Who was your greatest musical influence?**

This could only be J. Robert Schlatter, my horn teacher in high school. Though I didn't have regular lessons with him, whenever I needed to study some piece, like the Strauss *Concerto No. 1*, we would go over it together. He gave me the necessary confidence to believe that I could play this instrument. The horn player I admire above all others is Dennis Brain (1921-1957) who I mentioned earlier. I learned he had been killed in an automobile accident when I walked past a record store in Vienna which had one solitary recording draped in black on display in the window. It was one of Denis Brain's recordings.

When it comes to music composition, my greatest influence was my teacher at Columbia University, Mark Zuckerman, who really showed me how to put a piece together. The composers who have made the greatest impact on me insofar as establishing a musical ideal have been Sergei Prokofiev and Igor Stravinsky.

4. **Do you have a favorite composer?**

There have been hundreds of great composers from the middle ages to the present whose work I greatly admire like William Byrd, Couperin, Handel, Rossini, Berlioz, Schumann, Tchaikovsky, Berg, Hindemith... The list goes on and on. Yet, for me a few stand above them all. These are Mozart, Beethoven, Bach, Schubert, and Haydn, in that order, but with the addition of Chopin. He stands by himself because he wrote almost exclusively for piano.

If so, why?

Well, take Mozart. His musical expression comes as close to perfection as is humanly possible. It is especially compelling in some of his slow movements in works like the *Serenade for 13 Winds*, the *Clarinet Concerto*, the *Piano Concertos Nos. 21 and 23*, or his *Symphony No. 36*. His music seems to be almost like—how did Salieri put it in the movie *Amadeus*? Here was "the very voice of God" himself.

In my estimation nearly the same might be said for the others. With Beethoven—and I think many will agree—it's as though he reaches the depths of the human heart

more fully than any other composer. And he expanded the art of musical development of thematic material in undreamed of ways.

With Bach, on the other hand, it's the construction of these magnificent edifices intricately woven together in a display of unimaginable intelligence yet imbued, at times, with great passion and feeling. His music seems to show— as a religious person like Bach might say—what God is capable of when he puts his mind to it. Or as Bach put it, "At a reverent performance of music, God is always at hand with his gracious presence."

But not far removed in terms of pure talent, along comes Schubert who just can't be outdone for the absolute purity of his musical expression in all its dimensions, melody, technique, form, harmony, counterpoint—it's all there, the complete package and also always so very near perfection.

Finally, among these symphonic giants we should not forget poor old Papa Haydn dead and gone with his memory lingering on. But far from it. Here is a composer of great intellectual genius practically inventing single handedly the constructs of a new music that would serve to unify music of the heart and mind for centuries. And it would pave the way for his younger colleague Mozart to do his thing. Without Haydn, Beethoven also could not have done his, even though the two composers apparently did not appreciate each other much.

When we get to Chopin—here we find another composer in a league of his own set apart especially because he wrote most of his compositions for piano. But he too dwelled among the stars and that is the journey where his compositions take us when we allow.

5. What prompted you to go back to school and complete your degree and subsequently continue study in composition?

I had two years of credit from the New England Conservatory, but when I studied in Vienna I took only horn and chamber music classes. So to get a degree I needed almost two full year's of credit. I completed these at Columbia University.

The seeds for becoming a composer were planted, I think, in the 7th Army Symphony in conversations with Ken Schermerhorn and other members of the orchestra.

At the New England Conservatory I dabbled just a bit when I wrote a short piano piece. I'd say there was some merit to the piece though I had not a clue of what I was doing. Then when I played with the Oakland Symphony, I suddenly found myself in a situation where the conductor, Gerhard Samuels, was intensely involved in programming pieces of contemporary music. Several members of the orchestra were also very much involved in modern music, and I would sometimes join with them for improvisation sessions where we kind of just experimented around.

Bob Hughes, the Assistant Conductor at Oakland, who besides being an excellent bassoonist and a very fine composer, was a big influence. Through him I also spent an evening and dinner, along with my wife at the time, Tysonia Read, with composer Lou Harrison. Lou was a great story teller and Bob was also a great cook. It was a fascinating evening which stoked the fires a little more, though Lou and I had a friendly go around because he didn't care for the horn much. Not care for the horn? How is that possible? But for Lou, it was.

At this time I also got interested in Jazz and formed a duo with pianist Richard White. Woody, a guitarist, would sometimes join with us. We never really got off the ground, though we did join with artist Bob Branaman—who added some percussion instruments—for a small performance at Big Sur on one occasion. Richard was very much into the music of Eric Satie and Arnold Schoenberg and we often used a theme from Satie for our improvisations.

The final doors to music composition really opened rather serendipitously when I was back living in New York City. One evening I went out for a walk and headed past the fountain on the plaza at Lincoln Center which was loaded with people. The fountain is located in front of the Metropolitan Opera. Suddenly a woman came running toward me who I knew only casually. She had an extra ticket for a performance of Prokofiev's ballet *Romeo and Juliet* which was being performed that very evening at the Metropolitan Opera. In fact, the audience was even then filing into the auditorium. Did I want to go? Indeed, I did. And there I heard for the first time this great masterpiece of 20th century music.

I was so impressed by Prokofiev's score that I bought a ticket for another performance and went back soon thereafter. It was then in the darkness of the Metropolitan Opera with the music of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* swirling around me

and the spectacle of the dance before my eyes, that I was filled with inspiration and an overwhelming sense that my future destiny was to write music, perhaps even to put a ballet on that same stage one day. That, of course, has yet to happen.

It's funny how things work out sometimes. During this period I was working for temporary office organizations and the work was drying up and it was becoming harder and harder to pay the rent. I decided to apply for a job at Columbia University for a little additional security. The personnel officer sent me to the Economics department to interview for a vacancy there. The Administrative Assistant who did the hiring for the department, Nadine Seltzer, happened to be a singer who sang with the Barnard Gilbert & Sullivan Society. (At the time Barnard was the women's division of Columbia University.) When she learned of my music background she hired me immediately.

It didn't take long for me to learn that suddenly I had access to 7 credits of free tuition for each school semester including summer school for a total of 21 free credits per year. Leafing through the Columbia catalog, I also discovered that the School of Music offered all the music studies I felt I needed to become a composer. And here they were now available to me. So combining the free tuition with academic scholarships, I worked my way through Columbia for the BA, graduating Magna Cum Laude Phi Beta Kappa in 1980, and three years later I completed my MA in music composition.

This describes how I became a composer. In 1985 I formed the new music presenting organization Phoenix, praised by the New York Times. For several years we programmed many new, innovative works often played by some of the top musicians in New York City.

5b. Who was your greatest influence for your compositional style?

I wanted to be independent in terms of style right from the beginning and so tried to avoid being influenced by other composers, especially those I admired the most. My compositional objective, also right from the start, was to try to develop an unrestricted chromatic technique where I could move freely in compositional space according to the direction suggested by the music materials I was using. This was true even for the few 12 tone pieces I wrote when I first began my studies at Columbia. They just don't sound like one might expect a 12 tone piece to sound which told me that I was moving toward the independent style I hoped to achieve.

6. Which is your favorite of your own compositions?

I have written somewhere close to 70 pieces. Most of them, however, have never been performed. Unfortunately, I lack real confidence in a piece until I have heard it live. Even so, I think some of these pieces should be quite good. This includes my a capella choir setting of the *23rd Psalm*. Also, I think my *Theme and Variations for Orchestra* is very promising and my *Concerto for Horn and Orchestra*.

Of the pieces which have been performed, I consider the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano* to be one of the best. I also like *Clouds* for piano very much which I believe is a very unique piece. I am also fond of the *Theme and Variations for Piano and Spectra*. They are both up on youtube, though the dissonance in these pieces might make them less appealing for some listeners. Kirsten Sorteberg, the pianist, thought I had achieved something special in the 3rd variation of the piano variations. I orchestrated these variations which presented some real challenges, so I hope to hear them one day which will reveal whether or not I need to make any revisions.

I also like the Emily Dickinson settings for soprano and piano quite well. The New York Times referred to them as "innovative" and called them "evocatively dramatized." Of all my songs for solo voice, however, the one I like best is *The Music Makers* for baritone voice and piano based on Arthur William Edgar O'Shaughnessy's great and famous poem *The Music Makers*. Someday I would like to see if this song can also work for mezzo-soprano.

Last but not least, I should mention my little opera *The Witch*. I would like to rework this into a full-length opera, and I hope I can get to that project in the not too distant future. In this respect, I have also considered the possibility of orchestrating the *Four Songs for Soprano, Horn, and Piano*.

7. What was the inspiration for writing the 4 Songs for Piano, Horn and Soprano?

Until recent times, musicians have had to rely almost totally on the Schubert setting of *Auf Dem Strom* for this ensemble combination. As a horn player, I was, of course, aware of the near void in the repertoire and so wanted to write a piece for this combination practically from the first days I began composing. But what to write, for

whom, and when, these were factors that had to somehow come together. They finally did as follows.

I have had the great privilege to work with some really outstanding musicians on a continuing basis. This is one of the most productive ways I know of to work. This was the case, for example, with mezzo-soprano Sally Munro, for whom I wrote several songs including the Four Songs. She has a superb voice, has concertized widely, and is presently a member of the chorus of the San Francisco Opera where she has also sung several roles.

I was extremely fortunate to work in the same way with the internationally renowned Belgian horn soloist and recording artist, Francis Orval. Francis is one of the truly great horn players of recent decades who has recorded many of the most important pieces in the horn literature, including the 4 Mozart *Concerti*, the Schumann *Konzertstück for 4 horns*, the Brahms *Horn Trio*, Saint-Saëns' *Morceau de Concert*, Weber's *Concertino*, and the Haydn *Concerto for 2 horns*. For natural horn—that is the horn without valves—on which he is also a virtuoso, he has recorded the septets by Franz Berwald and Beethoven.

I met Francis in Weil Concert Hall in New York City in April of 1987 where my composition *Stars* (for violin quartet) was being performed. He was present because his wife, Ruby (who was, incidentally, an excellent horn player in her own right) had a flutist friend, Camilla Hoitenga, playing a piece on the program. The program notes indicated my background on the horn, and after the concert Francis introduced himself to me. We got in touch with each other soon thereafter and Francis asked me to write a piece for his American debut in Merkin Hall in New York City. The result was *Spectra 2*. The second movement is posted on youtube. This was the beginning of a long friendship in which I wrote other pieces for Francis like the *Duet for Horn and Bass Flute*, and he performed pieces of mine, such as my woodwind *Quintet*.

With this kind of familiarity with the work of Sally Munro and Francis Orval, the time seemed ripe for finally trying my hand at writing a piece for soprano, horn, and piano. I chose four as the number of songs to set modeled on Richard Strauss' *Four Last Songs*, a work which I greatly admire. I also modeled my decision to choose more contemplative poems to set after Strauss. But first, I had to find the texts and I spent

several days in this pursuit. Finally, I found four poems based on themes which contemplate life beyond the present, each in a different and unique way.

I don't remember exactly how long it took to compose the piece, but I think probably two or three weeks. We first presented the *Four Songs* in a Phoenix concert in New York City at St. Michael's Church. Francis later presented it at the University of Delaware in Newark, where he was on the faculty as the head of the horn workshop. Melanie DeMent was the soprano and Julie Nishimura was on piano. They also served on the faculty.