

379
NB16
no. 4585

OLYMPIC DANCES BY JOHN HARBISON, A LECTURE RECITAL
TOGETHER WITH THREE RECITALS OF SELECTED WORKS
OF D. HOLSINGER, P. GRAINGER, K. HUSA, B. RANDE,
R. VAUGHAN WILLIAMS, AND OTHERS

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

By

Kenneth Howard Kohlenberg, B.S., B.M., M.M.

Denton, Texas

December, 1997

Kohlenberg, Kenneth Howard, *Olympic Dances* by John Harbison, A Lecture Recital Together with Three Recitals of Selected Works of D. Holsinger, P. Grainger, K. Husa, B. Rands, R. Vaughan Williams, and Others. Doctor of Musical Arts (Conducting), December, 1997, 114 pp., 5 tables, 16 examples, appendix, bibliography, 71 titles.

John Harbison's *Olympic Dances* was composed in 1996 and premiered in February 1997. The work was written as a piano score before it was orchestrated for a wind ensemble of 25 winds and two percussionists.

The first section of the paper focuses on the various influences that have affected Harbison's compositional style. The composer's educational background includes several prominent teachers whose instruction had great impressions. Special emphasis is placed on those characteristics of Harbison's style that are most prominent in the work with which this paper is concerned, *Olympic Dances*.

Olympic Dances was commissioned by the College Band Directors National Association and premiered at the CBDNA Twenty-ninth National Conference in Athens, Georgia, in a collaborative performance of the University of North Texas Wind Symphony and Pilobolus Dance Theatre. The second part of the paper presents an historical overview of CBDNA commissioning projects along with a summary of the genesis of the commissioning of *Olympic Dances*.

The primary focus of the study appears in the third section of the paper. An analysis of the four movements of *Olympic Dances* is presented with attention to the

objective elements of harmonic and melodic structures along with a focus on orchestration and scoring. This section considers the composer's thoughts on aesthetic concerns, suggested through his written program notes, and elucidated by way of an interview with the author. Special performance concerns related to rehearsal and conducting conclude this chapter. The paper also includes a transcription of the author's interview with John Harbison, a bibliography and a select discography of recent recordings of his works that are currently available.

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1997

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This author would like to recognize those who provided invaluable assistance toward this project:

John Harbison
Eugene Corporon
Dennis Fisher
Tom Duffy
Sinclair Community College

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
RECITAL PROGRAMS	vii
LIST OF TABLES	xv
LIST OF EXAMPLES	xvi
Chapter	
1. JOHN HARBISON: THE COMPOSER'S EDUCATION AND HIS STYLE	1
Educational Background of the Composer	
The Composer's Style	
2. A CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS LEADING TO THE COMMISSIONING AND COMPOSING OF <i>OLYMPIC DANCES</i>	8
The College Band Directors National Association Commissioning Projects	
The Commission of <i>Olympic Dances</i>	
3. ANALYSIS OF <i>OLYMPIC DANCES</i>	18
General Aesthetic Concerns	
Scoring and Orchestration Concerns	
Relationships Between Music and Choreographed Movement	
Movement I. Prelude	
Movement II. Epithalamion	
Movement III. Variations	
Movement IV. Finale	
Performance and Conducting Concerns	
APPENDIX Interview With John Harbison	82
BIBLIOGRAPHY	110
Bibliography and Currently Available Recordings	

PROGRAM

Concert Band

Kenneth Kohlenberg, Conductor

- Colossus of Columbia* (1901)..... Russell Alexander
arr. Glenn Cliffe Bainum
- In Memoriam* (1995)..... Bruce Yurko
World Premiere
Jason Worzbyt, Master's Conducting Associate
- English Folk Song Suite* (1924)..... Ralph Vaughan Williams
I. *March — "Seventeen come Sunday"*
II. *Intermezzo — "My Bonnie Boy"*
III. *March — "Folk Songs from Somerset"*
- Pageant* (1953)..... Vincent Persichetti
- Celebration Overture* (1960)..... Paul Creston
- El Capitan March* (1895)..... John Philip Sousa
ed. Frederick Fennell

- Intermission -

Symphonic Band

Dennis W. Fisher, Conductor

- Festive Overture, Opus 96* (1954)..... Dmitri Shostakovich
trans. Donald Hunsberger
- Heroes, Lost and Fallen* (1989)..... David R. Gillingham
- George Washington Bridge* (1951)..... William Schuman
Robert Meunier, Doctoral Conducting Associate
- Four Scottish Dances* (1978)..... Malcolm Arnold
arr. John P. Paynter
I. *Pesante*
II. *Vivace*
III. *Allegretto*
IV. *Con brio*

PROGRAM

Illyrian Dances (1986).....Guy Woolfenden
 Gigue
 Aubade
 Rondeau

Ceremonial (1992)..... Bernard Rands
 Kenneth Kohlenberg, Doctoral Conducting Associate

Variations on "My Young Life Has Ended" (1975)..... Jan Sweelinck
 trans. Ramon Ricker

- short pause -

Lullaby for Kirsten (1985)..... Leslie Bassett
Colors and Contours (1984)..... Leslie Bassett

Edwin C. Powell, Doctoral Conducting Associate

A Movement for Rosa (1992)..... Mark Camphouse

— Honoring Civil Rights Heroine Rosa Parks

PROGRAM

Concert Band

Kenneth Kohlenberg, Doctoral Conducting Associate

- An Outdoor Overture* (1938)..... Aaron Copland
Testament (1988)..... Robert Jager
Incantation and Dance (1963)..... John Barnes Chance
Jason Worzbyt, Masters Conducting Associate
Scenes from "The Louvre" (1966)..... Norman Dello Joio
- I. *The Portals*
 - II. *Children's Gallery*
 - III. *The Kings of France*
 - IV. *The Nativity Paintings*
 - V. *Finale*

- Intermission -

Symphonic Band

Dennis W. Fisher, Conductor

- Canzona* (1951)..... Peter Mennin
Jennifer McAllister, Masters Conducting Associate
Folksongs for Band, Suite No. 1 (1990)..... David Stanhope
Lovely Joan
Folksongs for Band, Set 2 (1991)..... David Stanhope
Rufford Park Poachers
John Cody Birdwell, DMA Candidate
Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts
Old Home Days Suite (1954)..... Charles Ives
arr. Jonathan Elkus
1. *Waltz*
 2. a) *The Opera House (From Memories)*
b) *Old Home Day (chorus)*
 3. *The Collection*
 4. *Slow March*
 5. *London Bridge is Fallen Down!*
- Sempre Fidelis March* (1888)..... John Philip Sousa

Ushers for this evening's performance are members of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia.

PROGRAM

- Divertimento* (1959)..... Karel Husa
 I. *Overture*
 II. *Scherzo*
 III. *Song*
 IV. *Slovak Dance*

Kenneth Kohlenberg, Doctoral Conducting Associate

- Little Symphony* (c. 1816)..... Franz Schubert
 I. *Allegro moderato* arr. Vern Reynolds
 II. *Adagio*
 III. *Nocturne*
 IV. *Allegro giusto*

Jennifer McAllister, Masters Conducting Associate

- Suite in D* (1889)..... Arthur Bird
 I. *Allegro moderato*

- Trevelyan Suite* (1970)..... Malcolm Arnold
 I. *Palindrome*
 II. *Nocturne*
 III. *Apotheosis*

Edwin C. Powell, Doctoral Conducting Associate

- Diversions* (1965)..... Donald H. White
 I. *Prologue*
 II. *Reminiscence*
 III. *Rondel*

Robert Meunier, Doctoral Conducting Associate

PROGRAM

CONCERT BAND

Robert Meunier, Conductor

Suite Provençal (1989) Jan Van der Roost
 Un ange a fa la crido
 Adam e sa Coumpagno
 Lou Fustié
 Lis Escoubo

Morning Alleluias (1989) Ron Nelson
 Jason Worzbyt, Conductor

Epincion (1975) John Paulson

Chorale and Shaker Dance (1972) John Zdechlik

short pause

Edwin Powell, Conductor

Chorale and Toccata (1992) Jack Stamp

Quiet City (1941) Aaron Copland
 arr. Donald Hunsberger
 William Stowman, trumpet • Lauren Baker, English horn

Rhosymedre (1972) Ralph Vaughan Williams
 arr. Walter Beeler

Sea Songs (1924) Ralph Vaughan Williams
 Jennifer McAllister, Conductor

Liturgical Dances (1984) David Holsinger

short pause

SYMPHONIC BAND

Dennis W. Fisher, Conductor

First Suite in E-flat (1909) Gustav Holst
 1. *Chaconne*
 2. *Intermezzo*
 3. *March*

In Praise of Gentle Pioneers (1996) David Holsinger

Children's March (1919) Percy Grainger
 "*Over the Hills and Far Away*"
 Kenneth Kohlenberg, Conductor

Yankee Doodle Fantasie Humoresque (1878) D. W. Reeves
 ed. Keith Brion

PROGRAM

Three Lachian Dances (1885).....Leoš Janáček
Andante arr. Graham Sheen
Moderato
Allegro

Jennifer McAllister, Conductor

Serenade (1953)..... Gordon Jacob
March
Arietta
Gavotte
Toccatina
Epilogue

Edwin C. Powell, Conductor

Czech Suite, Op. 39 (1879)..... Antonin Dvořák
Preludium
Polka
Sousedska
Romance
Finale-Furiant

Robert Meunier, Conductor

Romance, Op. 5 (1868).....Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky

Divertimento for Brass and Percussion (1975)Richard Peaslee
March
Chaconne
Dance

Kenneth Kohlenberg, Conductor

Program

Serenade for Wind Instruments, Op. 40 (1898) Arthur Bird
ed. Gunther Schuller
Allegro moderato
Adagio
Allegro assai
Allegro energico

Intermission

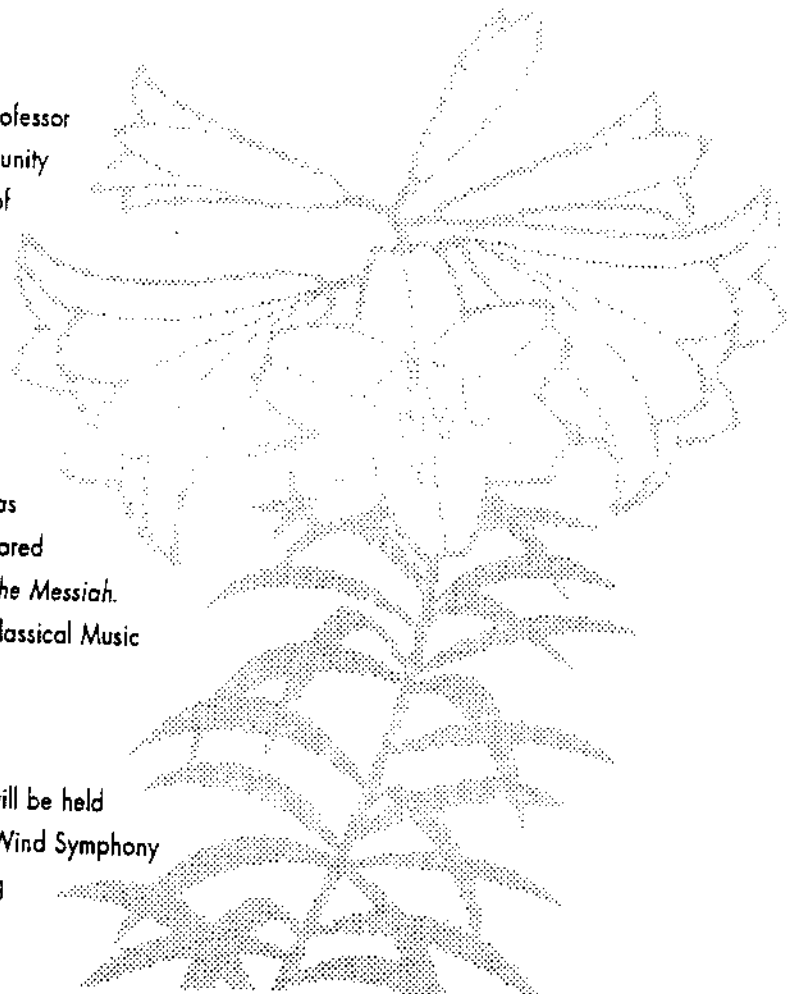
The Easter Symphony David Holsinger
Kings (1995)
The Death Tree (1986)

Daniel B. Greene, Bass-Baritone
with the
College Community Chorus

Daniel B. Greene is Associate Professor of vocal and choral programs at Sinclair Community College. He also serves as the artistic director of the Dayton Boys Choir. Mr. Greene received his Bachelor of Music degree in music education and his Master of Music in vocal performance at Bowling Green State University. He studied under Richard Mathey and Andreas Poulimenos. As a solo performer, Greene has appeared with the Dayton and Toledo Opera Companies. He has worked with Cincinnati Opera Chorus and appeared in Chicago in a performance as bass soloist in *The Messiah*. He was a master class performer for the 1990 Classical Music Festival held in Eisenstadt, Austria.

Upcoming Events

A Wind Symphony/Concert Band performance will be held on May 3 at 7:30 pm in Blair Hall Theatre. The Wind Symphony will also perform at the Fraze Pavilion in Kettering on June 4 at 8:00 pm.



University of North Texas

College of Music

presents

A Graduate Lecture Recital

KENNETH KOHLENBERG, *conductor*

assisted by
UNT Wind Symphony

Tuesday, July 22, 1997

7:30 pm

Recital Hall

OLYMPIC DANCES BY JOHN HARBISON

Olympic Dances (1996) John Harbison
Prelude (b. 1938)
Epithalamion
Variations
Finale

Presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1.	UNT Wind Symphony Program of Februsry 27, 1997	17
2.	Instrumentation of <i>Olympic Dances</i>	27
3.	Outline of Form of Movement I	39
4.	Outline of Form of Movement II	46
5.	Outline of Themes of Movement IV	62

LIST OF EXAMPLES

Example		Page
1.	“Prelude” mm. 1-3. mm. 24-26.	19
2.	“Epithalamion” mm. 1-5. mm. 21-22.	19
3.	“Variations” mm. 1-12.	20
4.	“Finale” mm. 1-8. mm. 30-37. mm. 64-71. mm. 97-101.	21-22
5.	“Epithalamion” mm. 32-33.	28
6.	“Finale” mm. 38-40.	29
7.	“Finale” mm. 64-65.	30
8.	“Prelude” mm. 1-3.	31
9.	“Variations” mm. 73-75.	31
10.	“Prelude” mm. 4-5.	32
11.	“Variations” mm. 1-2.	32
12.	“Prelude” mm. 25-29.	33
13.	“Variations” mm. 61-72.	35
14.	“Epithalamion” mm. 1-5.	77
15.	“Variations” mm. 73-75.	78
16.	“Finale” mm. 186-191.	79

CHAPTER I

JOHN HARBISON: THE COMPOSER'S EDUCATION AND HIS STYLE

Educational Background of the Composer

For a growing number of people, John Harbison has become the composer-in-residence for our lives. The reasons for this are many and they lie both in the music itself, and in the relationships it manifests and renews--relationships to the composer's own inner life, to his public activities and commitments, to the confusing-using, disturbing and inspiring world all of us live in, and to our own individual responses to that same world.

Over three decades of composition, Harbison has created work in most musical genres and within its span it contains informed responses to the whole history of Western art music and a lot of popular music, too. In all of it you hear Harbison's quiet, unobtrusive and unmistakable voice, speaking truth as he sees it. Like all the music that is meaningful to us, it creates and confounds expectation, attracts on first hearing, rewards repeated listening and study; it says things that could find expression in no other way.

Harbison's work embraces the widest contrasts of sound, style and sense. Each new piece, in a sense, is a complement to the one before--as he writes a string quartet, music for winds comes, unbidden, into the margins, something for the next piece, perhaps. Unsolved problems have a way of working themselves out in a later work; the continuum of a life led in music in our time. Harbison's music turns inward and faces outward; above all it is genuine music, born of necessity; it had to be written.¹

John Harbison is one of America's leading composers. He is an award-winning composer who has consistently received praise and acclamation from music critics, reviewers and journalists. The exalting review above pays the highest homage to any

¹ Richard Dyer, booklet notes from John Harbison, *Simple Daylight for Soprano & Orchestra* Boston Symphony Chamber Players, Dawn Upshaw, soprano Elektra/Nonesuch 79189-2.

composer, “it is genuine music, born of necessity; it had to be written.” Harbison has been composer-in-residence with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra (1982-1984) and with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra (1985-1988) and has guest conducted numerous orchestras and ensembles. Along with the 1987 Pulitzer Prize for his cantata, *Flight into Egypt*, he has received the Rockefeller Foundation Award (1970), the Brandeis University Creative Citation Award (1971), the National Institute of Arts and Letters Award (1972), the Koussevitzky Music Foundation Award (1973 and 1976), the American Academy of Arts and Letters Award (1973), the National Endowment for the Arts, Composer-Librettist Fellowship (1974), the 1974 Naumburg Chamber Music Award for *Moments of Vision*, a Guggenheim Fellowship (1977) and the 1980 Kennedy Center-Friedheim Award for his Piano Concerto.

Harbison was born in Orange, New Jersey, on December 20, 1938. His father was a history professor at Princeton, and that is where Harbison was raised. Music played an important role in his early years. Along with his two siblings, he frequently attended concerts with his father. Harbison states this was “very influential and was one of the best contributions to my music education.”² His father taught him the basics of music. Through him, Harbison became acquainted with important classical composers as well as popular music. Frequently hearing his father improvise, play and compose tunes at the piano had an influence on the younger Harbison.³

² From an interview of John Harbison by Barbara Bonous-Smit quoted in Barbara Bonous-Smit, “John Harbison: His Life and Works with Piano.” (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1996), 17.

³ Ibid.

One of Harbison's earliest teachers was Mathilde McKinney, a pianist and composer. Beginning in elementary school, Harbison studied piano and composition with McKinney, studying the works of J. S. Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Haydn, Mozart and others. While in high school, he received instruction in harmony, counterpoint, composition and piano. Harbison began to compose, and many of his works were performed at McKinney's annual recitals. She was a strong advocate for contemporary music. As a teacher, she gave her student freedom to compose as he wished, not confining him to write in any certain style or mold. She encouraged his style.⁴

Harbison attended Princeton High School between 1952 and 1956. While in high school, he performed jazz at clubs in the area with high school friends. They played Dixieland jazz with Harbison on the piano. Harbison's father occasionally sat in and played the banjo with them. His father also guided him musically, making recommendations about his playing. Harbison also played with the Nassau Jazz Band of Princeton University. He notes that he played with Buck Clayton, Vic Dickenson and other members of the Count Basie Band. This was a huge inspiration. During this period Harbison admired popular composers such as Ellington, Arlen, Rodgers and Kern.⁵

Harbison studied voice and conducting with Thomas Hilbish, the high school's choir conductor. Harbison was made a student conductor and also composed many works

⁴ Ibid., 25.

⁵ Ibid., 22.

for the choir. He also studied tuba with Walter Horner and became “quite a virtuoso on the tuba.” He even played concertos with the band.⁶

During this time Harbison became acquainted with and admired the composers Roger Sessions, Igor Stravinsky, Bela Bartók and Arnold Schoenberg. Stravinsky took the foremost position in his musical life and Harbison showed a strong allegiance towards him from this period onward.⁷

Harbison entered Harvard in 1956. At Harvard, his teachers included Claudio Spies (harmony and counterpoint), Robert Moevs (orchestration) and Walter Piston (analysis and composition). Piston tended to be very traditional in his views as a teacher and composer. He was extremely harsh and stern with Harbison, which may have been why Harbison had difficulty with him.⁸ An important experience for Harbison while attending Harvard was becoming the conductor of the reputable Bach Society in 1958. He also continued to perform jazz during those years, and he played piano with a jazz group called *Royal Garden Six*.

Upon graduating from Harvard in 1960, he won the John Knowles Paine Traveling Fellowship to study composition with Boris Blacher at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin. During the summer of 1961, Harbison studied conducting with Dean Dixon and Herbert von Karajan while attending the Sommer Akademie in Salzburg. He won first prize in conducting at the Sommer Akademie.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.

Harbison returned to the United States and from 1961 to 1963 he studied at Princeton University. He was also Assistant Conductor of the Princeton University Orchestra. He studied composition with Roger Sessions and was very encouraged by his teacher. The goal of Sessions' training was to free his students' creative imagination and talent to write what they want; to free the expression of voice, without forcing style or thinking on them. He instilled confidence and enthusiasm in his students. According to Harbison, Sessions "did not tolerate from the students vagueness in their intentions in a work, but pushed them to get the message out."⁹ Sessions "encouraged young composers to find the personality inherent in each work rather than spend time and energy developing and projecting their own."¹⁰

Harbison graduated from Princeton University with a Masters of Fine Arts in composition in 1963. He continued to compose and conduct in Cambridge through fellowships from Harvard University beginning in 1964. In 1968, he accepted a position as Rockefeller Composer-in-Residence at Reed College, Portland, Oregon. He returned to Cambridge in 1969, accepting a position as Professor of Music at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Upon his return to Cambridge, he became the director of the Cantata Singers. This became an important part of his life. He studied all of the Bach Cantatas, and he believes that "my study of the complete cantatas was very basic to what I did thereafter." Harbison described the experience of conducting works by Bach and Schütz as:

⁹ Ibid., 38.

¹⁰ Judith Graham, ed., *Current Biography Yearbook* (New York: Wilson, 1993), 231.

. . . wonderful. . . The Bach and Schütz that I conducted was a very essential part of what I always wanted to do. I always thought about that music . . . I felt that the Bach cantatas in particular were a fundamental part of my background, extending all the way back from the first ones I did with the Bach Society Orchestra at Harvard College.¹¹

The Composer's Style

John Harbison's upbringing, his diverse education and his training as a composer and a conductor have shaped the aspects of his style. In a review of articles and biographical entries in which Harbison's style is addressed, there are several aspects to which many authors refer that describe his style in general and relate specifically to *Olympic Dances*. The most prominent feature of Harbison's style (and that which is most often identified) is the persistence of a lyrical strain, providing a singing, melodious influence to almost every phrase. He has, indeed, composed a large number of vocal, choral and operatic works. This lyricism is a salient feature of Harbison's music.

His harmonies speak in modern voicings, but his work is not dialectic; he has shown little interest in atonal techniques. Harbison's compositions manifest his innovative approaches to conventional compositional techniques.

Melodic phrases vary from asymmetrical to symmetrical. They are connected through a rhythmic flow that, at times, abounds in changing and irregular meters.

His ensemble works feature constant and frequent timbral variation. Melodies, phrases, and sub-phrases are often scored with contrasting timbral groups. One can tell

¹¹ Bonous-Smit, 52.

that the composer is very aware of the musical possibilities, with an in-depth knowledge, of all instruments for which he writes.

Harbison has a thorough knowledge of contemporary compositional practices along with a deep understanding of tradition. His music is also influenced by his grasp of popular musical styles and music from other cultures. The broad range of influences is blended into a unified whole. Harbison may compose a work that is at once influenced by dissonant harmonies, jazz rhythms, romantic melodies and austere tone colors. This is work that may be called *eclectic* by some, but “he has instead synthesized the diversity of influences into his own language.”¹²

¹² Mark Swed, booklet notes from John Harbison, *Four Songs of Solitude for Solo Violin* Michelle Makarski, violin New World 80391-2.

CHAPTER II

A CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS LEADING TO THE COMMISSIONING AND COMPOSING OF *OLYMPIC DANCES*

The College Band Directors National Association Commissioning Projects

The College Band Directors National Association (CBDNA) began commissioning works for band at the divisional and national levels in the 1960's. The Western and Northwestern Divisions of CBDNA jointly commissioned Ingolf Dahl to compose a work for them in 1961. Dahl responded by composing *Sinfonietta for Concert Band*, which was premiered by the University of Southern California Band with the composer conducting in Los Angeles, California, in January, 1961. In 1964 CBDNA commissioned Aaron Copland's *Emblems*, also premiered by the University of Southern California Band, with William Schaefer conducting, at the Thirteenth National CBDNA Conference in Tempe, Arizona, on December 18, 1964. These two works have become part of the quality repertoire for wind band.¹

In 1993 Jay Gilbert completed a study that evaluated compositions for winds according to specific criteria of serious artistic merit. A list of works was sent to twenty eminent American college band conductors. In Gilbert's tabulation of the results from

¹ Frank Battisti, *Twentieth Century American Wind Band/Ensemble* (Ft. Lauderdale, FL: Meredith Music, 1995), 72.

survey, the conductors' evaluation of each work is shown in sets of percentages. One percentage score represents the number of points a work was awarded based on "specific criteria of serious artistic merit." The other set of percentages represents the number of evaluators who were familiar with the composition. Many works commissioned by CBDNA are listed in Gilbert's survey and received a substantial number of evaluators' points.²

Ingolf Dahl's *Sinfonietta* was familiar to all evaluators and received 99.0% of the maximum number of evaluators' points. Aaron Copland's *Emblems* is listed in the same category as Ingolf Dahl's composition with a 95.0% rating in the Gilbert study.³ These two examples, and those cited below, clearly indicate the important impact CBDNA commissions have had on the repertoire of bands and wind ensembles.

At the Fiftieth Anniversary Conference of CBDNA, the Twenty-sixth National Conference, in Kansas City, Missouri, in February, 1991, Robert Halseth presented a paper, "Repertoire Retrospective," in which he listed and described many of the following compositions that have been commissioned by the CBDNA.⁴

In 1964, the Southern Division and the Ostwald Foundation joined to commission Jan Meyerowitz's *Three Comments on War*. This was premiered at the Thirteenth

² Jay W. Gilbert, "An Evaluation of Compositions for Wind Band According to Specific Criteria of Serious Artistic Merit" (D of M diss., Northwestern University, 1993).

³ Jay W. Gilbert, 151.

⁴ Robert Halseth, "Repertoire Retrospective" Paper presented at the 26th National Conference of the College Band Directors National Association, Kansas City, MO, 20-23 February 1991.

National CBDNA Conference in Tempe by the University of New Mexico Concert Band, conducted by William Rhoads.

Wind Sculptures, composed by Daniel Kessner, was commissioned by the Western Division in 1973, and premiered by the University of the Pacific Wind Ensemble, conducted by the composer. The performance was at the combined conference of the Western and Northwestern Divisions, in Los Altos Hills, California, on February 15, 1974. Also in 1973, the national CBDNA commissioned Henk Badings' *Transitions*. The University of Illinois Band, conducted by Harry Begian, premiered the work in Champaign, Illinois, at the Seventeenth National Conference on January 13, 1973. *Transitions* is also listed in Gilbert's study and received a 58.7% rating from 75% of the respondents.

The national CBDNA commission of Howard Hanson in 1975 resulted in *Laude*. It was premiered in Berkeley, California, on February 7, 1975, at the Eighteenth National Conference, by the California State University Long Beach Band, conducted by Larry Curtis. This significant work was recognized by all respondents in the Gilbert study, and received a 71% rating.

In 1976, the Western Division commissioned *Scorpio*, by composer David Ward-Steinman. The San Diego State University Wind Ensemble, conducted by Charles Yates, premiered the work in Tucson, Arizona, on April 10, 1976, at the Western Division Conference.

Ernst Krenek was commissioned by the national CBDNA and composed *Dream Sequence* in 1977. The work was premiered in College Park, Maryland, by the Baylor Wind Ensemble, conducted by the composer on March 11, 1977, at the Nineteenth National Conference. In the Gilbert study, this work was recognized by all respondents and received a 76% rating.

In 1981, Mario Davidovsky was commissioned by the national CBDNA and composed *Consorts*. This work was premiered in Ann Arbor, Michigan, on February 12, 1981, at the Twenty-first National Conference, by the University of Northern Colorado Wind Ensemble, conducted by Eugene Corporon. This work received a rating of 58.6% by fourteen respondents in Gilbert's study.

Three CBDNA national commissions were premiered at the Twenty-second National Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. David Snow's *Sinfonia Concertante* was performed by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Wind Ensemble, conducted by Thomas Dvorak, on March 17, 1983. The following day, Larry Curtis conducted the California State University Long Beach Band in *Good Night to the Old Gods*, composed by J. S. Balentine. Also premiered on March 18 was *Cobadinaas*, composed by Ivar Lunde, Jr. This work was premiered by the Western Michigan University Band, conducted by Richard Suddendorf.

In 1985, the CBDNA national commission project resulted in the premiere of *Colors and Contours* by Leslie Bassett at the Twenty-third National Conference. The McNeese State University Band, conducted by David Waybright, premiered the work on

March 2, 1985. Just prior to the premiere performance, the composer discussed the piece, and complimentary scores were provided to conference participants by the publisher, C.F. Peters. This particular commission was especially intended for bands of modest size. A specific instrumentation was specified, requirements CBDNA does not usually place on composers.

At the Twenty-sixth National Conference, there were two works commissioned by the national CBDNA and premiered. *Music for Winds and Percussion*, a three movement work by Rodney Rogers, was performed by the Indiana University Symphonic Band, conducted by Ray Cramer, on February 21, 1991. Stephen Dodgson's *The Flowers of London Town* was performed by the University of Kansas Symphonic Band, conducted by Robert E. Foster on February 22, 1991.

At the 1991 conference the membership decided to adopt a consortium commissioning plan instead of continuing the practice of commissioning a composer exclusively through the organization. Through this program CBDNA assists colleges and universities in commissioning works. Consortia must consist of at least five colleges and/or universities and provide 66% of the total cost of the commission, with the remaining 34% coming from CBDNA. According to Frank Battisti, the benefits of this plan are: (1) colleges and universities participate directly in the commissioning process, (2) the money realized by the contributions of the schools and CBDNA create a larger commissioning fee budget, which improves the possibilities of attracting important and famous composers who command high commissioning fees, and (3) ensure multiple

premiere performances, which is often an important factor in getting a composer to accept a commission.⁵

Compositions that have resulted from consortium projects include the posthumous publication of Gordon Jacob's *Symphony AD 78*, published by R. S. Smith; Ken Amos arranged *Songfest* by Leonard Bernstein; David Maslanka was commissioned to compose *Tears*; Sidney Hodkinson has been commissioned to compose *Cantatis Brevis*; Joseph Schwantner was commissioned and composed *In Evening's Stillness*. Other composers to receive commissions include Roberto Sierra, Bernard Heiden, Paul Reller, and Daniel Kessner. *The Palace Rhapsody* was composed by Aulis Sallinen through a consortium of CBDNA and the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, England.

The Commission of *Olympic Dances*

In May, 1997, the author conducted a phone interview with Tom Duffy, Director of Bands at Yale University. The following account of the genesis of *Olympic Dances* was related.

In 1991 the members of the CBDNA National Commissioning Committee (Tom Duffy-Chair, Frank Battisti, Bill Johnson, Allan McMurray, Tim Salzman, Larry Sutherland, Jack Williamson) distributed a list to survey the membership of CBDNA. The list included 140 composer's names. After tabulating the results, the list was reduced to three names, John Adams, Steven Sondheim and John Williams. The National

⁵ Frank Battisti, *Twentieth Century American Wind Band/Ensemble* (Ft. Lauderdale, FL: Meredith Music, 1995), 72.

Commissioning Committee approached Steven Sondheim and received a negative response. His name was replaced by John Harbison. Harbison's name was popular with members of the committee because of the relatively recent release of his two works for winds, *Music for Eighteen Winds* and *Three City Blocks*. Battisti asked Duffy to contact Harbison. Duffy called and spoke to Harbison from the phone in the Chicago Hilton Hotel during the Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic on December 19, 1994. Harbison responded affirmatively and the project proceeded.

The commissioning committee wanted to pursue new works that went beyond pieces purely for winds. Ideas of the committee members included a work for opera or vocalists; an authentic re-edition, or posthumous edition; and a work for ballet or dance. Harbison was approached to write a work that would lend itself to choreography. No specific size of the ensemble was given, but the committee wanted a work that would still remain viable as a concert piece as well as a work for choreographed dancers. Harbison responded happily and said that he would compose with no set scenario in mind.

A consortium of schools was formed after the 1995 CBDNA National Conference in Boulder, Colorado. Fourteen schools participated in the project, Appalachian State University, Butler University, Duke University, Florida State University, Indiana University, Miami University, New England Conservatory of Music, University of Colorado, University of Connecticut, University of Georgia-Athens, University of Illinois, University of Miami, University of North Texas, University of Northern Arizona.

The work was to be performed at the Twenty-ninth CBDNA National Conference in Athens, Georgia, February 26 - March 1, 1997. James Croft, the CBDNA President, and Tom Duffy contacted the Atlanta Ballet regarding a performance to be held during the convention. The Atlanta Ballet agreed to premiere the work at their regular performance venue with the members of the Atlanta Symphony performing the work. The prospect of a major dance company in conjunction with a professional symphony orchestra performing the work on a professional subscription series (in a union hall, too) that would be viewed and reviewed by music and dance critics greatly excited the CBDNA Executive Board and Commissioning Committee. The Atlanta Ballet, according to Tom Duffy, “insinuated that the professional company would cover the expenses” involved with the choreography and performance.⁶ In the summer of 1996, they backed out of the project--apparently feeling that their expenses were going to be too great for them to easily afford.⁷ Duffy then contacted Michael Tracy, of the Pilobolus Dance Theatre, explaining the project and the concept of having the work performed by professionals--a work “at the highest level of the artistic food chain.”⁸ The dance theatre expressed great interest in such a venture and decided to split their charge of \$50,000 so that CBDNA was charged \$20,000, and Pilobolus agreed to pay \$30,000.

Eugene Corporon, Director of Wind Studies at the University of North Texas, had been planning to perform the work at its completion with the University of North Texas

⁶ Tom Duffy, phone interview by author, May 25, 1997.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

Wind Symphony in collaboration with a Dallas-Ft. Worth area dance company. The University of North Texas ensemble had been accepted to perform at the CBDNA conference in Athens when Croft asked Corporon to premiere *Olympic Dances* with Pilobolus Dance Theatre.

The total cost of the project included \$25,000 paid to Harbison as a commissioning fee. The publisher, Associated Music Publishers, required \$5,500 for copying fees. Fees for Pilobolus were \$50,000 but the dance company paid \$30,000. The University of North Texas contributed \$10,000 and the other thirteen schools listed above each contributed \$3,000. CBDNA contributed the \$1,500 difference.

Olympic Dances was premiered at the Twenty-ninth National Conference of CBDNA, in Hugh Hodgson Concert Hall, Athens, Georgia, on February 27, 1997, in a collaborative performance by the University of North Texas Wind Symphony and Pilobolus Dance Theatre, with Eugene Corporon conducting. The work was choreographed by Michael Tracy of the Pilobolus Dance Theatre. This author was in attendance and can report that the performance received a standing ovation from the large crowd of college band directors and guests. Table 1 lists the complete Wind Symphony program from February 27. *Olympic Dances* was performed again on February 28 and March 1 with the Wind Symphony and Pilobolus at the Robert Ferst Center for the Arts, Atlanta, Georgia, in sold-out concerts presented by the Pilobolus Dance Theatre.

Table 1. University of North Texas Wind Symphony Program of February 27, 1997

WIND DANCES
A Concert of Commissioned Works

University of North Texas Wind Symphony
Eugene Corporon, Conductor

Program

Circus Ring (1995)	Dennis Fisher, Guest Conductor	Paul Hart
Soundings (1995)		Cindy McTee
Fanfare		
Gizmo		
Waves		
Transmission		
In Evening's Stillness (1996)	In evening's stillness . . . a gentle breeze, distant thunder encircles the silence =J.S.	Joseph Schwantner
Olympic Dances (1996)	*World Premiere*	John Harbison
Prelude		
Epithalamion		
Variations		
Finale		
	PILOBOLUS Dance Theatre Guest Artists	
Dance Movements (1996)		Philip Sparke
Ritmico		
Molto Vivo (for the Woodwinds)		
Lento (for the Brass)		
Molto Ritmico		

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF *OLYMPIC DANCES*

General Aesthetic Concerns

Olympic Dances is a work in four movements for winds and percussion. It was conceived as a work that could be easily adapted for a choreographed performance by a ballet or dance company with wind ensemble. The first movement, "Prelude", has two contrasting themes, each stated twice in an alternating pattern (see Example 1). There is a short development of the first idea in the middle of the movement. It is a closed form, rounded with the return of the first melodic idea at the conclusion of the movement. The second movement, "Epithalamion", also uses two contrasting melodic ideas (see Example 2). As in the first movement, each thematic area appears twice, alternating one after the other. In the second movement, too, there is closure as the initial melody returns in the Coda. The third movement is a theme followed by a set of six variations. The twelve-measure theme is shown in Example 3. Each variation retains the basic phrase and harmonic structures of the theme. The fourth movement, "Finale", is more rhapsodic in character. After four separate themes are stated, there follows a development section that manipulates motives from the fourth theme. The third theme is based on the second melodic idea of "Prelude". The fourth movement's second theme partially returns at the

Ex. 1. *Top*, "Prelude" mm. 1-3. Theme A. *Bottom*, "Prelude" mm. 24-26. Theme B.

Ex. 2. *Top*, "Epithalamion" mm. 1-5. "Chorale" Melody.
Bottom, "Epithalamion" mm. 21-22. "Cascading" Melody.

The image displays three systems of handwritten musical notation for piano. The first system begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and the instruction "SONORO". The second system starts with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and includes a measure number "5" in a box. The third system starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes a measure number "9" in a box. The notation is written in a grand staff with treble and bass clefs.

Ex. 3. "Variations" mm. 1-12. Theme.

movement's conclusion. The first phrase of each of the four themes is shown in Example

4. Harbison comments on the forms:

... this last movement is a very different assumption in that the other movements, the other forms in the piece are really closed forms, to some degree rounded forms. This [last movement] is open ended with singular exception. That's a way I sometimes work, with this "associational" kind of thing, that is to say, I've occasionally written pieces in which there is no recurrent function. It didn't seem appropriate here [in the fourth movement], particularly with what's happened in the other movements.¹

¹ John Harbison, interview by author, June 2, 1997, Cambridge, MA.

a)

Sempre marcato simile

Musical score for section a) in 12/8 time. The score consists of two staves (treble and bass clef). The tempo/mood is marked "Sempre marcato simile". The piece begins with a piano (p) dynamic, followed by a fortissimo (ff) dynamic. The score includes various rhythmic patterns and articulations.

5

Musical score for section a) starting at measure 5. The score consists of two staves (treble and bass clef). The dynamics range from mezzo-forte (mf) to fortissimo (f) and sforzando (sf). The tempo/mood is marked "loco". The score includes various rhythmic patterns and articulations.

b)

Musical score for section b) in 12/8 time. The score consists of two staves (treble and bass clef). The dynamics range from mezzo-forte (mf) to fortissimo (f) and sforzando (sf). The score includes various rhythmic patterns and articulations.

33

Musical score for section b) starting at measure 33. The score consists of two staves (treble and bass clef). The dynamics range from mezzo-forte (mf) to fortissimo (f) and sforzando (sf). The score includes various rhythmic patterns and articulations.

Ex. 4. "Finale" Themes: a) mm. 1-8. Theme a-1. b) mm. 30-37. Theme b-1.

c)

68

d)

Ex. 4. "Finale" Themes: c) mm. 64-71. Theme c-1. d) mm. 97-101. Theme d-1.

The harmony of *Olympic Dances* is tonal, although through an analysis of the harmony, one sees that tonality is often obscured. It is not unusual to see relationships of split thirds (simultaneous appearance of major and minor thirds above the root) or juxtaposed parallel or relative major and minor keys in the work. Harbison uses the sound of a split third and believes, "... in general, I think that the major and the minor

are the closest, they're interchangeable in terms of most of the tones."² The composer's use of harmonic structures with split thirds, absent thirds and/or fifths, along with non-triadic construction, sustained pedal points, non-harmonic tones, and tones used as an "inflection" of neighboring tones³, all contribute to the disguising of tonality. Harbison explains his harmonic practice:

Sometimes [chords] are outlines of triads without thirds and with fourths instead of thirds. I think of them as replacements of the third with the fourth some of the time. Sometimes the whole triad is there but not as a rule. And, . . . much of the harmonic idea is too hard to clarify where you are in a phrase. Some of the harmonies towards the cadences are more grounded than the harmonies in the middle.⁴

When the upper tones of a chord do not clearly define the tonality, it may be determined simply by considering the lowest note as the root of the chord. The composer offers the advice:

Particularly at cadence points, that's quite often correct. On the way to a cadence, it's likely to function the way that tonal harmony does with inversions of the chords [being] more likely in the middle of a phrase. The equivalent of a first inversion . . . is more likely to be in the middle and the root position is more likely to occur . . . at the end of the phrase.

. . . that the root position, that the bass notes as tonics are most likely to occur at cadences. I think that's true all the way through the piece. I don't think you'll go far wrong with that assumption in general. And usually they define sometimes in retrospect, a key area that's been operational in a phrase. It may not feel it in a phrase that specifically but then when you go back you usually can tell where it's wound up. A lot of it wouldn't make any sense to do a detailed [harmonic analysis]. Usually you need to scope out the goal points and see what they contain.⁵

² Ibid.

³ The use of notes as "inflections" is explained in the analysis of the second movement below.

⁴ John Harbison, interview by author, June 2, 1997, Cambridge, MA.

⁵ Ibid.

Before *Olympic Dances* was set for wind ensemble, Harbison wrote the work as a piano piece. The composer knew that any dance companies wishing to choreograph and perform the work would need a piano version for rehearsals. The piano score certainly facilitates the study of *Olympic Dances*. There are only a few differences between the piano score and the full score. Some differences concern rhythm and pitches, and others concern interpretation of performance. Both issues are addressed in this chapter below. The general effect of a piano performance versus a performance by a wind ensemble is quite different. In Harbison's scoring for winds, the individual timbres expose notes, lines and phrases that are more fused in the homogenous sonority of the piano. The different qualities of the performances seem to delight the composer. When questioned about the differences, he responded:

It's a very different effect, indeed. And of course, that's one of the things about the pedal on the piano. It creates harmonic situations which are completely different from, really the antithesis, of what winds do. I was hoping that the piece would sound very different in the two versions, and I think it does. I was thinking of it as a real virtue.⁶

That *Olympic Dances* was conceived as a musical work for choreographed dancers contributes greatly to aesthetic concerns. Harbison provided the following program note for the initial performances in February, 1997:

When the College Band Directors asked me to do a piece for dancers and winds, it immediately suggested something classical, not our musical eighteenth century, but an imaginative vision of ancient worlds. The clear, un-upholstered timbres of the winds--not colored by the throbbing emotive vibratos of our modern string players--playing in small, unconventional chamber subgroups, constituted my first musical images. Along with these, I thought of an imagined harmony

⁶ Ibid.

between dance, sport, and sound that we can intuit from serene oranges and blacks on Greek vases, the celebration of bodies in motion that we see in the matchless sculpture of ancient times, and perhaps most important to this piece, the celebration of the ideal tableau, the moment frozen in time, that is present still in the friezes that adorn the temples, and in the architecture of the temples themselves. Apollo rules over such images, but in the realm of the dance, always present, his nemesis and alter ego, Dionysius.⁷

From inception to completion during the composition process, the composer responded to thoughts of physical movement but never composed with ideas or designs for a specific scenario. Harbison says that he “enjoyed” working with an absence of a plot. Although no specific physical movements of dancers were planned, the ancient Greek scenes offered inspiration. One could imagine a *static* tableau of the friezes “frozen in time” with no motion, no movement, no suggestions of dance. Harbison explains what the images suggested to him:

I was imagining what the motions were. The fact that the motion was stopped [in sculptures and images] is not what interested me. It was the fact that they all depicted actions which suggest movement. I didn't think that the dancers would reproduce a freeze-frame. I thought of perhaps somebody looking at one of the vases and imagining the kind of movement. Some of those vases are people chasing, or people playing a game, you know. There are all kinds of things, but it is clearly just a moment from what's clearly something that began at some prior point.⁸

Only one of the four movements' titles suggests a program. The first theme of the second movement, “Epithalamion”, has the character of a chorale or a song. Modern

⁷ Written by John Harbison and printed in the program notes of the concert tour program of the University of North Texas Wind Symphony, February, 1997.

⁸ John Harbison, interview by author, June 2, 1997, Cambridge, MA.

American dictionaries relate the meaning to a song or ode to honor a bride and bridegroom.⁹ Harbison clarifies the title's meaning:

It seemed to be good for the character and it's a Greek word meaning "song of praise or homage." At least somebody who didn't know what this was about--to some degree that it was about the image of an ancient world--they would notice if they knew [the meaning of the title.] Its use in at least the lyric poetic tradition is broader than that [relationship to a bride and groom.] It's often, let's say, "in honor of a beautiful woman" or something like that. No [there is no specific subject in this case], but I know Greek poets would write Epithalamions on ceremonial occasions.¹⁰

Scoring and Orchestration Concerns

The instrumentation is an orchestral wind section with a slight expansion. Saxophones are included in the scoring, and a number of the woodwinds double on two instruments. Although the percussion parts can be performed by two players, a third player on timpani facilitates a less hectic performance. Table 2 shows the complete instrumentation of *Olympic Dances*.

One of the more striking sounds in hearing the work is the many different combinations of instruments used in the scoring. Harbison's use of the phrase, "small, unconventional chamber subgroups," is accurately descriptive. Examples 5, 6 and 7 show three instances of such scoring. Much of the scoring is carried out in textures of trios. Most of *Olympic Dances* is in a homophonic texture. The majority of the vertical structures in that texture are written as six-note chords. In the woodwinds, the chord

⁹ Don Randel, ed., *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University 1986) s.v. Epithalamion.

¹⁰ John Harbison, interview by author, June 2, 1997, Cambridge, MA.

Table 2. Instrumentation of *Olympic Dances*

3 Flutes (3 doubles Piccolo)
 3 Oboes (3 doubles English Horn)
 3 Clarinets in Bb (2 doubles Clarinet in Eb, 3 doubles Bass Clarinet)
 Soprano Saxophone in Bb
 Tenor Saxophone in Bb (doubles Alto Saxophone in Eb)
 3 Bassoons (3 doubles Contrabassoon)

4 Horns
 3 Trumpets in C
 3 Trombones
 Tuba

Percussion 1

Vibraphone
 2 Suspended Cymbals (high, low)
 Sizzle Cymbal
 Crotales (d'')
 Marimba (not shared with Percussion 2)
 Snare Drum
 Tambourine

Percussion 2

3 Tamtams (high, medium, low)
 Timpani
 Marimba (not shared with Percussion 1)
 Triangle
 Glockenspiel

tones are often orchestrated so that three upper notes are played by one trio of like instruments, and another trio of like instruments is assigned to the lower three tones.

When the woodwinds are scored, Harbison often doubles or triples the number of players on each chord tone. Example 8 illustrates the doubling of the six chord tones in the very first measure. Another scoring method that is sometimes used when notes are doubled or tripled, is to assign an entire trio of like instruments to each chord tone (see Example 9).

A tempo, rubato

A tempo, rubato

Ex. 5. "Epithalamion" mm. 32-33. Scoring for 2 flutes, bassoon, 2 horns and tuba.

During the sections where the brass are scored alone, Harbison often orchestrates chords so that the tones are not doubled, but the three upper notes are played by one trio of like instruments, and another trio of like instruments is assigned to the lower three tones. The opening brass statement in "Prelude" is shown in Example 10.

In several instances, single or paired brass instruments are used in conjunction with the woodwind trio sonorities. Example 11 shows the beginning of "Variations" and illustrates how three woodwinds are assigned to each upper tone while two trumpets

The image displays a musical score for measures 38-40 of a piece titled "Finale". The score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes staves for Bass Clarinet (Bs. Cl.), Soprano Saxophone (Sop.), and Tenor Saxophone (Ten.). The second system includes staves for Horns in F (Hn. in F), Trumpets in C (Tpt. in C), and a Bassoon (Bn.). A tempo marking below the first system reads "♩ = 72-80 (L'istesso tempo)". The music is written in 4/4 time and features a melodic line primarily in the saxophones and bass clarinet, with a supporting harmonic line in the trumpets. Dynamics include *f* and *f cont.*

Ex.6. "Finale" mm. 38-40. Scoring for bass clarinet, saxophones and trumpet.

each play a lower tone. Sometimes this scoring can emphasize a certain chord tone or provide a certain harmonic effect. In the first movement of *Olympic Dances*, the three flutes and three clarinets play a half-dozen chords between phrases of the saxophones' presentation of Theme B. In each instance, one chord tone is scored for the trumpet (see Example 12). Certainly, a more homogenous sound would have been achieved if the

The image shows a musical score for the 'Finale' section, measures 64-65. The score is arranged in a system with multiple staves. The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- 1 Bb Cl.**: First B-flat Clarinet part, mostly rests.
- 2 Eb Cl.**: Second E-flat Clarinet part, mostly rests.
- Bs. Cl.**: Bass Clarinet part, playing a melodic line with a *p* dynamic marking.
- Sop.**: Soprano Saxophone part, playing a melodic line with a *p* dynamic marking.
- Ten.**: Tenor Saxophone part, mostly rests.
- Bn. 1, 2**: Bassoon parts, playing a melodic line with a *p* dynamic marking.
- Cbn.**: Contrabassoon part, mostly rests.
- Hn. in F**: Horn in F part, playing a melodic line with a *p* dynamic marking. The instruction *aperto* is written below the staff.

Below the woodwind parts, the tempo is marked **Poco meno mosso** with a metronome marking of $\text{♩} = 66-72$.

Ex. 7. "Finale" mm. 64-65. Scoring for bass clarinet, soprano saxophone, bassoon and horn.

trumpet note was scored for the oboe. Harbison explains his reasoning for scoring the chords for woodwind trios and trumpet:

[The trumpet's note] is an important note because it is the melody tone that is being held through. So if it were slightly sorted out from the texture, I would be happy. Because of the structure [with] the sustaining melody [tone], I wanted it to be somewhat different.¹¹

¹¹ Ibid.

1
2
3/ Flute
Piccolo
1
2
3/ Oboe
English Horn
1
2
3/ Clarinet
in Bb
Bass Clarinet
Soprano
in Bb
Saxophones
Eb Alto/
Bb Tenor
1
2
3/ Bassoon
Contrabassoon

f *ff* *f* \rightarrow *mf*

f *ff* *f* \rightarrow *mf*

f *ff* *f* \rightarrow *mf*

f *ff* *f* \rightarrow *mf*

f *ff* *f* \rightarrow *mf*

f *ff* *f* \rightarrow *mf*

f *ff* *f* \rightarrow *mf*

f *ff* *f* \rightarrow *mf*

f *ff* *f* \rightarrow *mf*

f *ff* *f* \rightarrow *mf*

f *ff* *f* \rightarrow *mf*

f *ff* *f* \rightarrow *mf*

Ex. 8. "Prelude" mm. 1-3. Scoring of six chord tones for twelve woodwinds.

1
2
3/ Flute
1
2
3/ Oboe

p

p

p

p

Ex. 9. "Variations" mm. 73-75. Two pitches scored for trios of flutes and oboes.

Musical score for brass instruments in Example 10. The score is arranged in six staves, grouped into three pairs. The top pair is labeled "Horn in F" (staves 1 and 2), the middle pair is "Trumpet in C" (staves 3 and 4), and the bottom pair is "Trombone" (staves 5 and 6). The Tuba part is indicated by a "3" on the bottom staff. The music is in 4/4 time and features six distinct pitches, each assigned to a different instrument. Dynamics markings include *mf* and *f*. A "3." marking is present above the first staff in the second measure.

Ex. 10. "Prelude" mm. 4-5. Six pitches scored for six brass.

Musical score for woodwinds and trumpets in Example 11. The score is arranged in eight staves. The top staff is Piccolo (Picc.). The next two staves are Flute (Fl.) 1 and 2. The next two staves are Oboe (Ob.) 1 and 2. The next two staves are Clarinet in Bb (Cl. in Bb) 1 and 2. The bottom two staves are Trumpet in C (Tpt. in C) 1 and 2. The music is in 4/4 time and features two distinct pitches, each assigned to a different instrument. Dynamics markings include *p*. A "con sord." marking is present above the first staff in the second measure. A "a2" marking is present above the first staff in the second measure.

Ex. 11. "Variations" mm. 1-2. Scoring of two pitches in six woodwinds and two pitches in two trumpets.

At many locations in the composition, especially in the third and fourth movements, there are frequent changes in orchestration--sometimes within a phrase. With continual changes in instrumental color, many of these areas are scored for “unconventional” pairings and doublings. The frequency of the timbral changes has a relationship to movement and dance. That relationship is discussed below. Sometimes a sudden change in instrumentation has a practical reason; for example, instrumentation may change when the moving melodic line progresses out of the range of the instrument to which the melody has been currently assigned. Changes in orchestration may also be made simply for the color, the sound. The single-line melody of the fifth variation in the third movement provides an illustration of these effects (see Example 13). The nine different voicings for which Harbison writes in these twelve measures introduce a *Klangfarbenmelodie* technique.¹² Harbison explains the third movement:

It's sometimes practical and it's sometimes really just for the sound of the phrase and where we are in the phrase. In fact, at one point [a conductor] asked me about taking out some of the doublers, because it obviously makes it harder to execute, but I think the number of players is important. It changes the character. So, then, there are moments in that variation when there are really quite a few people playing the theme, and I wanted it to be quite a different effect than the places where there are just one or two people playing the line.¹³

An interesting aspect of the instrumentation is the scoring for four horns. The other wind instruments are used in trios, and many of the voicings of chords use instruments in three's. The fourth horn is not utilized very often. It is not until

¹² Harbison used this term during the interview to describe the change of tone colors within the single-line melody. This author describes the technique as *durchbrochen Arbeit*.

¹³ John Harbison, interview by author, June 2, 1997, Cambridge, MA.

61 Var. 5
Bsn1, 2, Tbn1, 2 BCl, Tbn3
p *sostenuto, rubato* Cbn, Tba mf
M.S. f

65 Bsn1, Tbn1, 2 Hrn1-4
f → mp mf p f

69 +Tbn1, 2 Hrn1-2, Tbn1, ASx rit. BCl, ASx, Bsn1 BCl, Bsn1
mf dim. Cbn, Tba

Ex. 13. "Variations" mm. 61-72. Nine different voicings for the twelve-measure single-line melody.

measure 67 of the third movement that all four horns play simultaneously, and even then, they are in unison. It is not until measure 165 in the last movement that there are four distinct lines for four horns. Harbison offers the following explanation:

... the way I thought through the piece ... I didn't have a use for the fourth horn some of the time or too often. Three horns I really needed because I'm into trio textures all the time. But three horns is a very odd orchestral designation. You almost never see a piece with three horns. So I thought, well,

I'll keep the fourth horn and try to think about uses, particularly low playing where I could really benefit from having four horns there. It's not really until the last movement that I get into situations that I need all four horns. I really anticipated, scanning as I always do, that the necessity of the fourth horn really doesn't come up in a strong way until the last movement.¹⁴

Relationships Between Music and Choreographed Movement

What makes the music of *Olympic Dances* so easily adaptable to choreographed movement rests in all of the musical elements of the entire composition. The composer's concepts of rhythm, melody, harmony, tone color and form are all contributing factors. The continuous rhythmic flow throughout the work suggests continuous physical movement. Even the areas with successive whole notes (measures 6-10 at the beginning of the first movement and the corresponding area in measures 84-89) are not static as the chords are played alternately by the brass and woodwinds. The many changing meters; the phrases with syncopated rhythms; a preponderance of eighth-note and sixteenth-note patterns; sections that imply multi-meters, or sesquialtera; places where the meter is displaced by dynamic accents all strongly suggest and influence movement and dance.

Throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, composers have been using various compositional techniques to obscure tonality. Harbison's voicings of chords and use of other harmonic techniques effectively camouflage tonal key centers of *Olympic Dances*; yet his use of pedal points and composing within a tonal framework certainly assist in creating a cohesiveness to the piece, "a kind of understructure with very,

¹⁴ Ibid.

very sharp contrasts on the surface.”¹⁵ The avoidance of restful consonance within a tonal framework may be a sound that has been used in Western art music for over one hundred years, but it remains a sound that still, at the end of the twentieth century, suggests a level of high energy that is conducive to staged movement and dance.

There is a strong association between form and melody in *Olympic Dances*. The delineation between movements and between sections within movements is quite clear. The melodies contrast in style and texture, and there are even musical contrasts between phrases within melodies. Of the third movement, “Variations,” the composer says, “. . . I thought the variations would be an appropriate idea for the medium, because variations has in its nature the filling-up of a certain space with different kinds of movement.”¹⁶ Harbison refers to the fourth movement as “the purest form of any because it really is like a suite in which one dance is led into from another.”¹⁷

Perhaps the most influential element in relating the music to movement is tone color. The immense number of changes in orchestration create a vast array of different sonorities in the work. This fluid style of scoring results in an extensive movement of tones and colors. This is highly significant to *Olympic Dances*, for it is the foundation of the overall aesthetic effect. The work, having been planned for a wind ensemble, appealed to Harbison. “I like the idea of winds and dancers partly because I think that it’s something about the attack of wind instruments and the possibilities for clarity that seem

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

to go very well with the visual impression that certain kinds of dancers can make.”¹⁸

Harbison relates his thoughts on music and movement:

... there is a way in which I'd hope the dancers would make a number of subdivisions in the last movement, responding to the separate ideas. When I wrote a full evening's ballet a number of years ago, I observed about dance pieces in general, that they tended to cohere in shorter sections, in shorter-breathed sections, than symphonic pieces because partly due to the way dancers function, because physical activity ... change of movement is natural to them, and that's most evident in this last movement. It's there also in the second movement in the sense that the very stately kind of chorale theme and the triplet idea have a very different sort of kinetic sense.

[I was] absolutely ... thinking of movement which needs to be replaced periodically by something else which is another kind of movement, which is definite enough. And I noticed that the Pilobolus folks did respond in the first movement, in fact, most exactly to a sectional relationship to the piece. ... I think that it's very characteristic of dance music and not of symphonic music. There's almost no symphonic development in this piece. It's actually why I thought the variations would be an appropriate idea for this medium ... I've also noted that a lot of choreographers have chosen variation kinds of pieces for choreography, which makes much sense.¹⁹

Movement I. Prelude

The opening movement to *Olympic Dances*, “Prelude”, has two main themes.

Statements of the two ideas alternate through the movement. There is a short development of the first idea, one of only two development sections in the entire composition. Even with a development section and two contrasting themes, the movement is not in *sonata form*. Harbison describes the form with, “I thought of it just as

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

two ideas which alternate, more like, I guess, a song form with two ideas and a sort of decoration and a response.”²⁰ Table 3 shows an outline of the form of his movement.

Table 3. Outline of Form of Movement I

Theme A	Theme B	Develop Theme A	A	B	A	Chords
measures 1-23	measures 24-44	measures 45-59	measures 61-63	measures 64-80	measures 81-83	measures 83-89

The first theme (Theme A) is stated homophonically by twelve woodwinds beginning in the first measure. Each of the six tones is doubled. The flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons are all scored in threes, with the third clarinet playing bass clarinet at this point. The cadence to this first statement, in measure 3, is C major with an absent 5th, a 4th and a minor 7th. The harmonies in the first two measures are triadic. These vertical structures are not always in root position and are sometimes missing the 3rd or 5th.

In measures 4-6, Theme A is restated. Here, the six tones are not doubled and are voiced in trios of horns and trombones. Once again, the cadence in measure 6 is C Major, now with a full triad plus a 4th and a minor 7th. The chord of measure 6 is repeated in

²⁰ Ibid.

measures 8 and 10. In measures 7 and 9, the four trios of woodwinds present a chord in each measure. An A Major chord with a 4th and a minor 7th is in measure 7. This chord introduces the C# -- a pitch that will become important at the end of this movement. In measure 9 is a structure in which there is both an A Minor sound and a C Major sonority with a 4th and a minor 7th.

The section from measure 11 through measure 20 is highly chromatic and uses the first three notes of Theme A motivically. The four trios of woodwinds present a statement that is similar to the first four notes of Theme A in measures 11 and 12. The three-note motive is sequenced down two times through measures 13 and 14. This idea is extended in measures 15 and 16 using the third and fourth notes of the Theme A motive. Three trios of brass enter at the end of measure 16. The horns, trumpets and trombones continue with the Theme A motive. Harbison uses the technique of *planing* with the parallel movement of three chords in measure 17 and two chords in measure 18. The horns sustain for the first three beats of measure 17 "to clarify the momentary location of the harmony there which is around Eb."²¹ As the tuba enters in measure 18, the brass cadence in measure 20 with a G Major chord in first inversion with a 4th and a minor 7th.

The two brass trios of horns and trombones that stated Theme A in measures 4 - 6 restate Theme A in rhythmic augmentation in measures 21-24. Juxtaposed against the G Major sound in measure 20, this section begins in measure 21 with a G minor chord in first inversion, with an absent 5th, a 4th and a minor 7th. This same chord structure ended the

²¹ Ibid.

first statement of Theme A in measure 3. This section ends with a strong pedal E in measure 23, above which are a diminished 5th and a minor 9th. With the entrance of the tuba and timpani in measure 23, six of the eight voices sustain E's.

The second theme (Theme B) begins in measure 24. A duet of soprano and tenor saxophones, playing in unison octaves, presents a highly rhythmic, monophonic melody. Theme B has four sections or phrases. The duet of saxophones sustains the final notes of each phrase while other instruments interject Theme A-style chords. Throughout these interjections, the sustained notes are also scored in other voices.

The first phrase of Theme B begins in measure 24 and ends with the sustained C in measures 26-27. Trios of flutes and clarinets interject six chords in measures 26-28. The sustained pitches of Theme B are held by the second clarinet and first trumpet. The addition of the brass instrument to the woodwind sonority at this point highlights the importance of the sustained melody note. Concerning balance in performance, the composer believes, "If it were slightly sorted out from the texture, I would be happy. Because of the structure of the sustaining of the melody, I wanted it to be somewhat different."²² Further discussion of balance appears in this chapter below.

The saxophone duo present the second phrase of Theme B in measures 29-30. Six more chords are interjected over a sustained B in measures 30-32. The second clarinet and second trumpet are paired to sustain the melody note in these measures.

²² Ibid.

The third phrase of Theme B begins at the end of measure 32 and ends on a sustained C# in measure 35. For a third time, the same woodwind voices play a series of Theme A-style chords. During these seven chords, the second clarinet and third trumpet sustain the C#.

The fourth and final phrase of the Theme B melody begins in the saxophones in measure 37 and concludes on a sustained C in measure 39.

There is a five-measure transition that acts as a conclusion to the Theme B section in measures 40-44. The flute and clarinet trios enter with Theme A-style chords over the saxophones' sustained C. These chords in measures 39-40 are more closely related to the shape of Theme A than those in the three previous interjections. Another change at this point is the absence of the trumpet voice during these measures. In measure 41, the saxophones repeat the last three notes of the fourth phrase. The three pitches are transposed down a whole step and an Ab is sustained. The three flutes with the second clarinet and bass clarinet play the last seven chords of this transition in measures 41-43. The two saxophones enter at the end of measure 43 with a concluding remark that ends on Ab in measure 45.

A fifteen-measure development section begins in measure 45. Throughout this entire section, the vibraphone and marimba perform in continuous eighth notes. Theme A motives appear as the first eighth note of the duplets, and as the first and third notes of the triplets. As these notes of the theme move in parallel motion at an interval of two octaves between the two mallet instruments, the intervening notes move in contrary motion. The

mallet percussion line is also scored for two oboes, English horn and fourth horn. The melody pitches are in the first oboe and fourth horn. Rather than duplicating the exact rhythm of the percussion (which would have to be performed in an extremely difficult type of *hocket* style), the composer has written the line for the winds in staggered quarter note values. The texture that is introduced in this development section is one that Harbison refers to as “organum, with the tune on the outside of the texture . . . with the sort of harmonies in the middle.”²³

A full statement of Theme A begins in measure 45 and ends with the first note of measure 47. Whereas the original melody begins on G in measure 1, this statement begins on Ab in measure 45. The end of the theme is sequenced in measures 47-48. The first three notes are in measure 49. Measures 50-52 have all eight theme notes, now starting on a D. Theme A appears in measures 54-56, starting on Ab again. The theme is started in measure 57 on Gb but pauses on an F in measures 58-59.

After a *Generalpause* in measure 60, Theme A returns in the same rhythm as in the opening statement. There are several differences between this return and the initial statement. It is scored for three trumpets and the third trombone rather than woodwind trios. There are only four simultaneous tones instead of six, and they are not triadic structures as in the beginning. The texture here continues the idea introduced in the preceding development section; the first trumpet and third trombone are outer voices

²³ Ibid.

playing the melody while the other two trumpets are providing harmony. As in measure 3, the root to the harmonic structure in measure 63 is C.

Theme B is stated in a return that begins in the Eb clarinet and bass clarinet in measure 64. This statement starts a half step higher than the Theme B statement of measure 24. After the first five notes, the theme is varied greatly. A Db is sustained in measure 66 while the two oboes, English horn and three bassoons present seven Theme A-style chords in measures 66-68. What would be the second phrase of Theme B begins in measure 69 with a C sustained in measure 70. The six double reeds execute the interjection through measures 70-73. The clarinet duo presents the third varied phrase of Theme B in measures 74-75, sustaining an E at the end of measure 75. The interjection chords that begin in measure 76 are scored, now, for three flutes, two oboes, English horn and first clarinet in Bb. The Eb clarinet and bass clarinet state the final phrase of this version of Theme B in measures 78-80, ending on D.

The final statement of Theme A begins in measure 81, scored for a trio of flutes and a trio of bassoons. Unlike the statement by the brass in measures 61-63, this presentation of Theme A is triadic, similar to the beginning. A C# is introduced in the harmonies in measure 82 and becomes the root sound of the chord in measure 84. The chord is C# Major with two D's voiced inside the chord. The tuba is added to the six woodwinds to add support to the root. This same chord is then also played in measures 86 and 88. The three chords played in measures 85, 87, and 89 are voiced in the three oboes, first and second Bb clarinets, and soprano and tenor saxophones. The upper five

voices play sonorities with a D (G Major, D Major, and Bb Major). The saxophones repeat a structure on Eb.

The appearance of the note, D, has great significance at the end of this first movement. It provides a relationship between the end of the first movement and the beginning of the second movement. Harbison explains:

. . . in the case of this first movement with the feeling of the C at the beginning and then the C# cadence point at the end of the movement, the C# [has] the D against it, and the beginning of the second [movement] has the D. So the D which is the non-harmonic tone at the end of the first movement becomes the root point at the beginning of the second movement. I think that if you hear across from the cadence at the end of the first movement to the beginning of the second movement that that relationship is very clear.²⁴

Movement II. Epithalamion

The second movement, “Epithalamion”, contrasts two melodies; each melody is alternately stated twice. The movement is rounded with a short coda that is based on the first melody combined with the figuration of the second melody. Both presentations of the initial melody are stated in the style of a homophonic chorale. The contrasting melody is much more polyphonic in texture, and features a sixteenth-note sextuplet figure that is designated as a “cascading” melody. Table 4 shows an outline of the form of this movement.

²⁴ Ibid.

Table 4. Outline of Form of Movement II

“Chorale” Melody	“Cascading” Melody	“Chorale” Melody	“Cascading” Melody	Coda Chorale Motive
measures 1-21	measures 21-38	measures 39-63	measures 64-74	measures 75-82

The chorale melody is in three phrases. Because of changes that occur in scoring, the second and third phrase are each in two parts. The initial phrase of the chorale melody is scored for first horn, first trumpet, first trombone and tuba in measures 1-5. Even though the trumpet plays the top pitches of the line, it is the horn line that is the melody. The key is D Major. The opening and closing chords of the phrase have a D in the bass and top voices, with a 5th (A) and a 4th (G) instead of the third (F#). The second melody note, however, is an F# and this helps to confirm the D Major tonality. The trombone’s F-natural in measures 2 and 4 create the sound of a split third, a sound Harbison freely uses. The melody of this initial phrase is centered on G, the subdominant of D Major. The composer uses a split third of the subdominant in measure 4, with a Bb in the horn melody and the B-natural in the tuba.

The second phrase (Phrase 2-a) begins in the third horn, third trumpet, and second and third trombones at the end of measure 5. This quartet of brasses is joined by a quartet of woodwinds for the last two chords of Phrase 2-a. The third flute, first and second

clarinets, and bass clarinet double the brass pitches. [The first clarinet should have a written C# in measure 8. The full score shows a written B.] The composer stated that chords at phrase endings reflect that “the phrases tend to move to different degree of the scale” whose roots may be an “inflection” of diatonic pitches.²⁵ Phrase 2-a ends in measure 8 with an F-natural in the bass (third trombone and bass clarinet), that is in this structure, once again, the flatted third of D Major.

Phrase 2-b begins at the end of measure 8 with the same initial chord as Phrase 2-a. The scoring of the quartet of brass instruments returns to the original players. The quartet of woodwinds that doubles the last two chords of Phrase 2-b is now scored for soprano and tenor saxophones and first and second bassoons. This quartet of woodwinds with the fourth horn plays the five pitches of the chord in measure 12. This F# Minor chord with a minor 9th acts as an inflection of the G-natural that leads to the third phrase.

Phrase 3-a begins in measure 13 with the same four chords as in measure 1. The scoring has changed; it is now for second horn, second trumpet, and second and third trombones. Phrase 3-a first differs from Phrase 1 with the chord in measure 14. The structure in measure 2 is D Minor with a 9th, and in measure 14, the F# Minor with a minor 9th from measure 12 is repeated. The woodwind quartet that ended Phrase 2-b joins the brass in measure 14. The four-note texture returns at the end of measure 14, as does the woodwind quartet from Phrase 2-a, in a movement of parallel fifths that lands on a tritone in measure 15 (B/F-natural). With the abundance of voicings in fifths in the

²⁵ Ibid.

predominantly four-note texture of the chorale it is interesting that this is the only occurrence of parallel movement.

Phrase 3-b, commencing at the end of measure 16, is scored with a much fuller sound that ends this initial chorale section. The first and third horns, first and third trumpets, first trombone, tuba, and first and second bassoons double the four-note voicing of Phrase 3-b. This passage concludes on a chord whose root is E. This functions as an inflection of the succeeding section, which is in D Major.

The cascading melody of sixteenth-note sextuplets is stated very diatonically. It is initially presented in the first flute in D Major in measures 21 and 22. The second flute, first and second clarinets and vibraphone are also scored in this section. The chord that precedes the beginning of the cascading sixteenth-notes is D in second inversion. The A in the bass is then sustained as a pedal through measure 24. The composer has omitted the 3rd from this chord and has added the 4th (G). The fourth voice, the E, is now a non-harmonic tone that was heard as a root in the preceding chord. After the first flute presents the cascading melody in measures 21-22, the first clarinet is assigned the cascading figures in measures 23-24. The melody remains in D Major above the dominant pedal.

The first oboe presents the cascading melody in measures 25-26. The vibraphone continues to provide the pedal, which is now Bb. The three other wind voices are the second oboe and first and second bassoons. With the change in the pedal, the harmony begins to produce some chromatic motion. The melody in the first oboe in measure 26 is

in D Minor. The Bb also acts as an inflection of the dominant, the A. The Bb then becomes the dominant of Eb.

Following some transitional chromatic motion in measure 27, the cascading melody is in Eb Major, scored in the first clarinet in measure 28. The second clarinet, bass clarinet, second bassoon, contrabassoon and timpani complete the voicing. The Bb pedal continues in this measure. The key of Eb at this point acts as a Neapolitan to the key of D Major. The Eb also serves as a neighboring tone to D which becomes the dominant in measure 29. The pedal is now the D in measures 29-31, and the melody in the first clarinet is in G Major. One might expect this section in measures 27-31 to finally cadence in G Major in measure 32. Harbison explains:

The effect of this passage is that it's actually going to go to G. But it doesn't. It appears that it's going to go to G, but instead, it drops down. The bass note, instead of going up to G, drops down to a C#. So this is really a deceptive cadence at measure 32. So there's a set-up that goes on there over the D pedal point pointing towards G which doesn't go to its destination but which instead goes into this little episode which is the transition back to the restatement of the [Chorale] tune--an elaborate transition set-up of the restatement.²⁶

The rather elaborate transition in measures 32-38 that sets up the return of the Chorale returns to triple meter. The scoring is for first and second flutes (in unison) with first and second horns and tuba and first bassoon. The flutes present the cascading melody in A Major above the C# pedal in measures 32-33. The key moves to C Major and the cascading melody shifts to the first and second clarinets while the line in the horn duo moves to the first and second trombones in measures 34-35. A cascading motive is played

²⁶ Ibid.

twice by the first and second oboes from the end of measure 35 into measure 37. The first and second trombones and first bassoon and contrabassoon accompany the first motive. The trombones are replaced with the soprano and tenor saxophones for the second statement. This voicing is used to lead to a Bb chord in measure 38 with an omitted 3rd, and with a 4th and minor 7th. The Bb acts as a neighbor to A--the dominant of D Minor which is where the tonality arrives in measure 39.

The Chorale melody returns in measure 39. The presentation of phrases 1, 2-a and 2-b is very similar to the original statement of these phrases in measures 1-12. The differences include a subtle alteration in scoring. The four-voice Chorale begins in the second horn, second trumpet, and second and third trombones. This is the voicing used for the original statement of Phrase 3-a in measures 13-16. A rather significant alteration is in the harmony and relationship of the bass line. The first chord in measure 39 is a first inversion of D Minor with an omitted 3rd and an added 4th. These are the same notes used in the first chord in measure 1. With the A in the lowest voice and the horn's melody beginning on a D, it is easy to assume that this return of Phrase 1 is in the dominant, A. Two items that confirm D Minor are the G-natural in the first chord of measure 39 and the D Minor triad with the added 4th at the end of Phrase 1 in measure 43.

Phrase 2-a begins at the end of measure 43 in the first horn, 3rd trumpet, first trombone and tuba. The four brass are joined by four woodwinds (soprano and tenor saxophones and first and second bassoons) and the fourth horn at the end of measure 45 and cadence on a structure that introduces C# as a pedal.

The four pitches of Phrase 2-b are voiced in the third horn, first trumpet and second and third trombone beginning at the end of measure 46. Those same five voices attached to the end of Phrase 2-a are again combined at the end of Phrase 2-b. Whereas the chord played in measure 12 was voiced in the four instruments that were added in measure 10, the corresponding chord in measure 50 is scored for four trios of woodwinds: flutes, oboes (English horn), clarinets (bass clarinet) and bassoons. The point of attack is reinforced by the first horn and three trumpets.

Replacing an expected reappearance of Phrases 3-a and 3-b is a small development section that begins in measure 51. The motive in this section is based on Phrase 1. Using repetition and sequence in measures 51-56, a climactic point in the movement is reached in measure 57. A transition section in measures 58-63 leads to the return of the cascading melody in measure 64. This transition is voiced with highest pitches in the first oboe, and the other moving lines in the second flute and first bassoon. The second and fourth horn alternate sustaining a C# pedal. The section concludes on a Db chord with an absent 3rd and an added 4th, which is similar to the structure on D that started this section of the movement at measure 39. The four pitches are voiced in the first and second trumpet and first and second trombones.

The return of the cascading melody, with some alterations, is scored for the first flute, second oboe and first clarinet. The third horn sustains an Ab pedal over which the flute has the sixteenth-note figures in Db. [The flute should have a written Eb and Db on

beats two and three in measure 65.] The pairs of trumpets and trombones repeat the chord of measure 63 in measure 66 to close this statement.

The piccolo is assigned the cascading figures in measure 67 and is joined by the first flute and English horn with the Ab pedal in the bass clarinet. The Eb clarinet begins the next run of cascading sixteenth-notes in measure 68. The root, or pedal, is G and is in the bass clarinet and first horn. The English horn presents the sixteenth-note figures in measure 69. The cascading melody begins to “stutter” and “wind down” in measures 70-74 as this section closes. The top line of sixteenth notes begins in the first oboe in measure 71. The harmony is provided by the second oboe and first and second bassoons. There is a downward chromatic movement through this section that arrives back to D Major at the coda, in measure 75.

The coda begins with a full statement of the Chorale Phrase 1. It is scored for the first, second and third horns on the melody. The other three voices are each doubled by the first and second trumpets, first and second trombones, and third trombone with tuba. The contrabassoon and first bassoon reinforce the bass line; the timpani also plays the D root. The cadence chord on D Major in measure 79 is the same as the chord in measure 5. The chord in measure 76 is quite different from what appeared in measure 2. Rather than the D Minor sound from measure 2, there is now an F# Major triad in measure 76. The Major modality was ambiguous at the beginning of the movement with the use of several split thirds (F-naturals). Perhaps this F# chord is used to confirm or reinforce that the movement has been in D *Major*. For the final concluding thoughts of the movement,

Harbison combines a Phrase 1 motive with a cascading figure. The sixteenth-notes are in the first clarinet at the end of measure 79. Simultaneously appearing with this penultimate cascading figure, the soprano and alto saxophones play the dotted-eighth/sixteenth-note figure from Phrase 1. The first bassoon, contrabassoon, tuba and timpani provide harmony. The rhythm of this bass line is noteworthy. The initial appearance of the cascading melody in measure 21 introduces a bass line rhythm that emphasizes the second half of the measure's first beat. This syncopated idea is especially evident in measure 31 and retains its significance at the end of the movement. The cascading figure is then stated by the piccolo, and the Phrase 1 motive by the first flute and first and second oboe. The tonic is reinforced in the final two full measures with the D in the crotales.

Movement III. Variations

The third movement of *Olympic Dances* is a theme and six variations. The twelve measures of the theme are divided into four phrases with each phrase ending on a whole-note chord. The phrases are of unequal length. Phrase 1 is two measures, Phrases 2 and 3 are each three measures, and Phrase 4 is stated over four measures. Each of the six variations is twelve measures and the four-phrase structure is also maintained. The composer has used more of *formal-outline variation* technique rather than *fantasy* or *developmental variation* technique. Harbison explains:

... harmonically, [the variations are] going to [have], quite highly, allegiance to the original harmonic structures. So it's really a question of spacing, and a kind of movement or motion, that's the most varied quotient. But harmonically, I think that there are goal points that stay fairly true to the original.

. . . harmonic structure and phrase structure are going to be the constants, and the figuration is going to be the changeable thing. In that sense, it's rather like old variations before the developing variation idea.

. . . figural variation interests me a lot and actually harmonic variation, which is something that composers in the twentieth century have not done so much. Mostly our variations consist of what are called *developing variation* that is much freer with the harmonic structure. But that's not the idea here at all.²⁷

The movement is in the key of F. Measure 2 (the end of Phrase 1) and measure 12 (the end of Phrase 4) have the same chord, an F in the root with an omitted 3rd, a major 7th and a 5th. The end of the first movement and the beginning of the second movement are connected by a sounding D as was explained above. There is a similar relationship between the end of the second movement and the beginning of this third movement.

It's that most of the notes that sound, that are in the chord of the new movement, are different from the chord [at the end of the second movement] except rather crucially, for the melody note, the D. So that once again, the linkage is through the D. But in this case the D is sort of the lone holdover to the next movement. And, there's a kind of very fresh harmonic color on the downbeat. . . . and of course the actual harmonic location of the next movement is declared by the second measure's chord. Measure 2 declares the new key of the movement.²⁸

The writing of the theme is in two layers. The top layer has the upper melody notes with a mostly homorhythmic lower harmony line. The melody notes are tripled by the first and second flutes and Eb clarinet. The lower notes are tripled by the first and second oboe and first clarinet. The bottom layer of the texture is written mostly as longer notes for harmony. The two notes of this lower line are scored for the first and second trumpets. Harbison refers to the harmony as "whole tone chords". The trumpets in the bottom layer play, for the most part, in whole steps. The two lines of the upper

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

woodwind layer are, for the most part, in major ninths. As has been observed in the previous movements, there is often the sound of a split third with both the Ab and A-natural used in the key of F.

The opening of Phrase 1 is a march-like pronouncement of one measure before resting on the F chord in measure 2. Phrase 2 extends the pronouncement and cadences in measure 5 on an A Major chord with a 3rd (written as a diminished 4th), a diminished 5th, and a minor 9th. The extra voice in measure 5 is scored in the soprano saxophone, which continues to provide the extra notes in Phrase 3. [The soprano saxophone has been mistransposed. It should double the first trumpet in measure 7.] Phrase 3 continues the march-like idea and cadences in measure 8. Phrase 4 begins with the sound of Phrase 2, and continues with the martial material until the cadence on F in measure 12.

The first variation begins in measure 13 and is scored for a trio of clarinets. The Eb clarinet plays the top line, above the first clarinet; the bass clarinet provides the bottom line. The style of this variation is a smooth flow of duple eighth-notes. The two upper clarinets move mostly in thirds with some seconds and ninths as was heard in the theme. The F chord of the Phrase 1 cadence is found at the downbeat of measure 14. The A chord of Phrase 2 is found in measure 17. Notes from the Phrase 3 cadential structure are found in measure 20. Measures 21-24 correspond to Phrase 4, and the F cadence begins in the first sonority of measure 24.

The style of the second variation is somewhat similar to that of the first variation, however, the tempo is now a bit faster, and the eighth-notes are now in triplets. Once

again there are two layers in the texture, but the two lines follow each other in parallel fifths. Harmonies are sustained in the piano version through the use of pedaling. As the eighth-notes are moving in pairs of instruments in this setting, the composer is able to sustain harmonies by writing longer note values in different voices. This technique helps to create the pedaling effect. The harmonies that correspond to the cadence points of each phrase are found in the appropriate measures that conform to the structure of the theme. The first two pitches in each voice in measure 26 outline an F Major triad, corresponding to the end of Phrase 1. Phrase 2 ends in this variation with an A in the lowest voice beginning in measure 29, which is then followed by Eb's, Bb's, and Db's. What corresponds to the end of Phrase 3 is in measure 32. The lower voice begins the measure with a Gb and Bb; the upper voice ends the measure with an E and a C. Measure 36 concludes the second variation with a sustained F, G, and C.

Changes in scoring throughout the second variation reflect the movement of the melody through different ranges. Phrase 1 is scored for the pair of first and second bassoons. The second, third and fourth horns provide harmonic support. Phrase 2 is also in the bassoons, with the contrabassoon joining the horns in measures 28-29. The first and second flute begin Phrase 3 in measure 29, but as the melody ascends, the piccolo joins in and the second flute is omitted. Harmony is provided by the first, second and third horns in measures 29-30. The first and second flutes complete Phrase 3 in measures 31-32, and that is where the oboes take the harmony line from the horns. The first and second oboes are then assigned the melody of Phrase 4 in measures 33-34 and the piccolo, flutes and

first horn provide the harmony. For the end of the phrase, and the variation, the pair of bassoons with the second and fourth horn begin in measure 35. The first and second oboes, followed by the first and second flutes are brought into the texture in measure 36 to complete the rising melody line.

Variation 3 closely retains the melody of the theme. The two layers of texture are similar to the first variation, but the lower layer plays a more rhythmically active role in the third variation. The soprano saxophone has the melody line throughout the third variation. The alto saxophone is paired with the soprano saxophone in the upper layer of texture throughout these twelve measures. The line in the lower layer passes from the tuba to the first trombone and to the first horn and then back again as the line ascends and descends.

Phrase 1 ends in measure 38 with a C and E in the saxophones. The tuba has an F with the upper and lower neighboring tones as it descends from B to Eb. The end of Phrase 2 (at measure 41) corresponds to measure 5. With an A in the tuba, the third trumpet is added with the Eb and the first horn starts a line with a Bb. Phrase 3 cadences in measure 44 with what was the lower third (Gb-Bb) now in the upper voices, the saxophones. The E and C are now in the lower layer, in the first trombone and third trumpet. Phrase 4 concludes in measure 48 with a low F in the tuba and third trumpet. The E and C are voiced in the saxophones. The first and second trombones have a Bb Minor triad, obscuring the modality.

The fourth variation is the most rhythmically active variation. There are four distinct phrases of continuous sixteenth-notes. The two layers of texture of Variation 4 are similar to those of the second variation, but the layers are often in intervals of sevenths, seconds and ninths--used here with the whole tone idea of the theme. The fourth variation is written as a marimba duet, with the upper line scored for marimba 1 and the lower line for marimba 2. Some of the woodwind instruments are used to reinforce harmonic ideas and cadential points. The sixteenth-notes are performed in a fashion of arpeggiated and broken chords. Many of the melody notes of the theme appear as the upper notes of these sixteenth-note patterns.

Phrase 1 begins in measure 49 with the first and second flutes and first and second oboes presenting the whole tone harmony notes from measure 1. The melody notes, D and G, are the upper pitches of the marimba 1 line. The F chord that ends Phrase 1 is played at the beginning and end of measure 50. The first and second bassoons and contrabassoon double the marimbas at the phrase ending. Measures 51-53 contain Phrase 2. It is scored the same as Phrase 1, but in measure 52, the first bassoon replaces the second flute. The A major sonority of the cadence to Phrase 2 is found in the three bassoons and two marimbas at the end of measure 53. Phrase 3 begins in measure 54 with the two flutes and two bassoons providing harmonic support. In measure 55, the second bassoon is omitted and the first bassoon joins the pair of flutes in an upper range. This woodwind trio reinforces the marimbas' cadence of the phrase in measure 56, although the cadence pitches from measure 8 appear at the beginning of the measure. The fourth

phrase, once again (as it has in the previous variations), commences very much like Phrase 2. Pairs of flutes, oboes and bassoons accompany the marimba duo in measure 59. Only the first and second flutes join the marimbas at the final cadence in measure 60.

The fifth variation is a very sustained, single-line, flowing melody in a low register and colored by high and low tam-tams. Whereas changes in scoring in earlier variations seemed to be aligned with changes in registers, the nine different voicings in these twelve measures also introduces a *durschbrochen Arbeit* technique. The composer explains some of the combinations:

. . . some of the doublers . . . obviously make it harder to execute, but I think the number of players is important; it changes the character.

. . . there are moments in [this] variation when there are really quite a few people playing the theme, and I wanted it to be quite a different effect than the places where there are just one or two playing the line.²⁹

The first and second bassoons and second trombone begin Phrase 1 in measure 61 by sustaining a D, the first thematic note. The trio's final two notes are C and F with the F on the downbeat of measure 62. The third note of the Phrase 1 cadence sonority is the E that is played here, in measure 62, by the contrabassoon and tuba. This bass duo plays Phrase 2 into measure 64, where the bass clarinet and third trombone then take the phrase to its cadence point in measure 65, landing on a sustained A. Phrase 3 begins in measure 66 with the first bassoon and first and second trombones. The four horns play simultaneously for the first time in the work beginning at the end of measure 66. They are in unison as they complete the phrase in measure 68 on a sustained F# (enharmonic to the

²⁹ Ibid.

Gb in measure 8). Harbison remarked of the significance of the scoring of the four horns at this point, “That color seems to me to be an important contrast point in this piece.”³⁰

The fourth phrase begins with the addition of the first and second trombones to the unison horns in measure 69. The first and second horn and first trombone are joined by the alto saxophone in measure 70. The alto saxophone continues in measure 71 in unison with the bass clarinet and first bassoon. The cadence in measure 72 is reached by the contrabassoon and tuba, closing the variation on a sustained F.

In contrast to the fifth variation, the sixth and final variation has no changes in scoring throughout its twelve measures. In a syncopated rhythm, most of the original melody notes are in the first trumpet, which is in the middle of the strict homophonic texture of three flutes, three oboes, first clarinet, Eb clarinet, and second trumpet. Each of the upper two pitches of the four-note texture are quadrupled. The top pitches are scored for the three flutes and Eb clarinet; the “alto” pitches are scored for the three oboes and first clarinet. Once again, the phrase structure is maintained and the cadence points retain similar sonorities to the theme. The first sonority of the second measure of the variation, measure 74, is F Major with a major 7th. The end of Phrase 2 is in measure 77. The trumpets have an A and C#, and the woodwinds have a Bb and F at the beginning of the measure. The downbeat of measure 80 corresponds to the end of Phrase 3. The trumpets have a Bb and C. The woodwinds have an E and B. [The piano score has an F# as a fifth pitch in this structure which may correspond to the Gb of measure 8, but it is not scored

³⁰ Ibid.

for the winds.] In measure 84, following a predominant B and vertical C's and E's, the final pitches of the phrase, and of the movement, are F and A.

It was observed above that there is a relationship between the end of the "Prelude" and the beginning of "Epithalamion". The end of "Epithalamion" and the beginning of "Variations" also have a harmonic relationship. Concerning the relationship between the end of the third movement and the beginning of the "Finale", Harbison states:

. . . this ending on this sort of Lydian kind of F chord . . . that's the end of [the third] movement and [the chord at the beginning of the fourth movement have] the most close harmonic connection. They're really the same notes, respaced.

. . . though here of course, the establishment of the tonality at the beginning of the movement is much less emphatic . . . so that the sound which is carried from the previous movement is by no means tonic in its effect.³¹

Movement IV. Finale

The fourth movement of *Olympic Dances* has four different thematic areas. Each thematic area is divided into four phrases, and each phrase is divided into two sub-phrases. The third thematic section is actually Theme B from the "Prelude", creating a cyclic effect in *Olympic Dances*. The fourth thematic statement is followed by an extensive development section, after which the second thematic material returns to round out the form of this movement. Table 5 shows an outline of this movement.

³¹ Ibid.

Table 5. Outline of Themes in Movement IV

measures 1-29	1-8 9-16 17-22 23-29	Theme a	Theme a-1 Theme a-2 Theme a-3 Theme a-4
measures 30-63	30-37 38-43 44-51 51-58 58-63	Theme b	Theme b-1 Theme b-2 Theme b-3 Theme b-4 Codetta
measures 64-97	64-72 73-79 80-87 88-97	Theme c (Theme B)	Theme c-1 Theme c-2 Theme c-3 Theme c-4
measures 98-118	98-101 101-104 105-112 112-118	Theme d	Theme d-1 Theme d-2 Theme d-3 Theme d-4
measures 119-155		Develop Theme d	
measures 156-180	156-159 160-165 165-166 167-168 169-173 174-180	Theme b	Theme b-1 Theme b-1 Theme b-2 Theme b-2 tag Theme b-1
measures 181-191		Final Cadence	

There may be a few “momentary references” to material from previous movements, but nothing other than the original Theme B is brought back. Harbison explains:

There are a few momentary references, but nothing really central. I don't think that's important. Though, as I mentioned, there is a much more general thing which is carried forward in this movement which is the idea of textures in which the melody is in the outer most voices, the bass and the treble, and all the harmony occurs in between. That idea, which was very important to the first movement reappears in the last movement.³²

To explain his presentation of four different themes, the most of any movement, and their relationships, Harbison says:

. . . the whole [movement] really is a sequence of dances of different characters which sort of evolve out of each other. In other words, one is suggested by another. It was deliberate that the only recurrent element was the theme you called the “b”. That everything else is sort of cycling out, that is, moving so one thing is suggesting another. And in fact, the whole opening series of phrases does not recur--nor does that sort of series of melodies which you call the “c”. They're all pretty much there and nowhere else. So then, it's, in a way, the purest dance form of any because it really is like a suite in which one dance is led into from another.

. . . it really is like a bunch of doors that keep opening, one into another, each leading to music which you aren't going to hear again and that sonority you won't hear again and the motion of the piece, it seems to me, they do suggest each other. That series of “c” ideas becomes more and more placid, more and more tranquil, until that thing you call the “d”, that little sparkly thing, wakes the piece back up. Then there's a series of things that also suggest themselves getting more and more active.³³

Harbison explains why, with a sequence of four dance sections, he decided to bring back the “b” material at the end of the movement:

It was deliberate that the only recurrent element was the theme you called the “b”. Why that happens is just an instinct that some recurrent element felt

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

necessary to actually close the piece off. That is, if I kept adding dance upon dance, I had a sense that the last movement would seem too discursive and too open ended. I needed to formalize at some level in order to conclude the piece satisfactorily. So that was a fairly conscious notion at that point--that I had created, in a sense, a formal issue that I needed to approach very firmly in order to make sure the form of the piece concluded appropriately.

. . . that we got more and more tranquil and then we got more and more active formally didn't seem enough to me without the actual revival of some, literally, of some material which we've heard before, which is why the "b" theme came back. And "b" is the last thing we hear; "b" is the thing that's functioning all the way through to the end of the piece.³⁴

Theme "a" is a brusque, *alla breve* march written in a 12/8 compound meter. The opening rhythm permeates these opening twenty nine measures in a mostly homophonic texture. The four phrases and their sub-phrases are almost all equal in length. Theme a-phrase 1 is stated in measures 1-8. The four upper voices are scored for the first and second oboes, English horn and muted first horn. This upper layer is written with a very tertial harmonic sonority, with several diminished triads. The bass line is played in three octaves by the first and second bassoons and the contrabassoon. The first sub-phrase of Theme a-phrase 1 ends in measure 4 on A Major with a minor 7th and minor 9th. The major 3rd is sounded in the bass line after the downbeat. The second sub-phrase continues with the more sustained sound in the upper voices while the bass line continues to pound the march rhythm until the downbeat of measure 9. In measures 7-8, the duplets in the upper voices create an effect of sesquialtera as the bass line maintains the motive in compound meter. The voicing of the chord in measure 9 is a whole step lower than the first chord in measure 1. It is now an Eb "sort of Lydian" chord.

³⁴ Ibid.

Theme a-phrase 2 starts in measure 9, beginning similarly to phrase 1, but now a whole step lower. The upper three notes scored in the oboes and English horn are now doubled in the first, second and third clarinets. The open third horn now plays the fourth note of the upper line. The three bassoons continue with the march rhythm in the bass line. The first sub-phrase of phrase 2 is a sequence with parallel movement of diminished triads over a rising chromatic bass line. Measure 10 has a B \flat diminished chord over an E \flat that is followed by a C diminished chord over a G in measure 11. An E diminished chord over a D begins measure 12 and a D \sharp diminished chord over a B \flat begins measure 13. The second sub-phrase of phrase 2 breaks the sequence pattern, sustaining a G \sharp diminished chord over a D \sharp in measure 15, and ends in measure 17 with an A Major chord with a minor 9th.

A fuller sound is scored as the third phrase of Theme a begins in measure 17 with the upper three tones tripled. The groupings are: first flute, oboe and clarinet; second flute, oboe and clarinet; third flute, English horn and third clarinet. The fourth tone of the upper line is scored in the first trumpet, and the three bassoons continue the bass line. The first sub-phrase ends in measure 20 with the familiar harmonic structure of C \sharp diminished triad over an F \sharp in the bass. The second sub-phrase of phrase 3 is stated in measures 21 through the downbeat of measure 23. The tones of the upper layer are syncopated over the continuing march motive in the bass line. The bass line descends chromatically and ends on C \sharp with a diminished sound above in measure 23.

Theme a-phrase 4 receives, hitherto, the fullest scoring. Beginning in measure 23, the top note is quintupled by the first and second flutes and first and second oboes and first clarinet. The next pitch down is quadrupled by the third flute, English horn, and second and third clarinets. The first and second trumpets are assigned the lower two notes of the upper layer. The tuba joins the three bassoons on the bass line. The first part of the fourth phrase continues the homophonic march rhythm in measures 23-25. The second part of the fourth phrase reaches a musical climax in range and dynamics as the brusque march rhythm is now played in sustained notes. As the upper voices ascend, the bass line moves in contrary motion, descending chromatically in measures 28-29 until the climax of this section is reached. Theme a closes with a low Bb in the bassoons, tuba and timpani in measure 30.

The smooth and lyrical Theme “b” is stated primarily in the brass. The first phrase is homophonic with full sounds of six-note chords. The six pitches are scored for the pair of first and third horns, the pair of second and fourth horns, the first trombone, the second trombone, the third trombone, and the tuba, in descending order. Contrary motion moves to an E Major chord with a 4th and a minor 7th in measure 31. The tenor saxophone, first and second bassoons and timpani join the brass at the end of the first sub-phrase in measure 33 on a B Minor chord with a raised 6th. The second sub-phrase is extended with a sequence of the third measure and concludes on an E Major chord with a 4th and minor 7th in measure 37. [The second trombone should have a G#, not a G-natural according to the piano score.]

The second phrase of Theme b receives a change in meter, orchestration and texture. A *cantabile* line begins in measure 38, scored in the first trumpet with a contrapuntal accompaniment in the soprano and tenor saxophones and bass clarinet. The first sub-phrase concludes in measure 40 on an inverted G Major triad over an F pedal. Theme b-phrase 2 concludes in measure 43 with a Db Major chord with a minor 7th.

Phrase 3 of this section begins in measure 44 as the second trumpet acquires the melodic line. The second bassoon joins the texture as a fourth accompaniment voice is added in measure 45. An F Minor chord with a raised 6th, a 4th, and an omitted 5th in measure 47 concludes the first sub-phrase. In measure 48, the third trumpet replaces the second trumpet, and the tuba is assigned the lowest line of the five voices. As the dynamics build, the end of phrase 3 elides with the beginning of phrase 4 in measure 51 on a D Major chord with a 9th and 11th.

The scoring for Theme b returns to the brass in phrase 4 with three trumpets, first trombone and tuba playing the five-note homophonic texture. The first sub-phrase ends with the first chord in measure 55, an E Major chord with a major 9th and 11th. The final section of Theme b and phrase 4 becomes much more rhythmic and contrapuntal in measure 55 with a major change in scoring. The upper notes are sustained and staggered in pairs of upper woodwinds: first flute and Eb clarinet; third flute and first clarinet; second flute and first oboe; second and third oboes. The four horns are paired to play the two notes of the bass line.

An energetic climax is reached at measure 58, the start of the Codetta of the Theme b section. A strong sesquialtera between triplets in the flutes, oboes, and glockenspiel and even quarter-notes in the vibraphone, first trumpet and horns occurs in measures 58-59. The sustaining in the first clarinet, Eb clarinet and horns is a technique that composer has used to emulate the sound of a piano sustaining pedal. A *diminuendo* accompanies a return of an even rhythm in measure 60 as this Codetta concludes. The flutes, oboes and glockenspiel return to a duple feel with quarter-notes as the first clarinet, Eb clarinet and three muted trumpets have half-notes. The bass clarinet and first and second horns sustain in measures 60-61; the tenor saxophone and third and fourth horns sustain in measures 62-63.

Theme "c" begins with the entrance of the soprano saxophone and first bassoon at the end of measure 63. The monophonic melody is a return of the Theme B material from the first movement of *Olympic Dances*. Here it is scored at a two-octave interval. A countermelody line in parallel major and minor thirteenthths (which is not from the first movement) is interlocked below the saxophone and bassoon lines. What is the middle voice is played by the first horn; the bottom voice is played by the bass clarinet. As in the original appearance of this melody, it is again centered around the key of C.

Theme c-phrase 2 begins in measure 73. This texture is what Harbison describes as "a sort of bracketing of the melodies."³⁵ The melody is in the top voice, played by the

³⁵ Ibid.

first oboe, and in the bottom voice, played by the tenor saxophone. The inner three voices of harmony are provided by the three trumpets.

Phrase 3 begins in measure 80 and concludes in measure 87. The key of C is still implied through the use of an E and G and the notes that surround C--C#, D, Bb.

Beginning in measure 88, the scoring changes for phrase 4, and the texture returns to interlocked voices as found in phrase 1. The smooth melodic line is found in the first flute, vibraphone and first trombone. A syncopated, rather stagnant accompaniment line in parallel major and minor ninths is played by the first clarinet and bass clarinet. The Theme c section concludes with a ritardando and diminuendo that effectively decrease the dynamics, the rhythmic motion and the harmonic motion. As noted above, Harbison calls the effect, "more and more placid, more and more tranquil." The section ends with a sustained C# in measures 96-97.

"A little sparkly thing" begins at the end of measure 97. Theme "d" material is stated in four phrases through measure 118. The material is then developed through measures 119-155. The style is that of a rather sprightly march in a mostly homophonic texture of chords with five or six notes. There is frequent change in orchestration. The antecedent sub-phrase is scored with the first and second trumpet on the top melody pitches with the third horn and second and third trombone providing the rest of the harmony. The sixth pitch, added in measure 99, is assigned to the tenor saxophone. The chord in measure 99 is A Major with a split 3rd and a minor 7th and a 9th. The consequent sub-phrase is scored with the first and second flutes on the top melody pitches

with the third oboe, first clarinet and bass clarinet providing the rest of the harmony. The soprano saxophone provides the sixth voice for the chord in measure 101--G Major with a minor 7th, a 9th and an 11th.

The second phrase begins in measure 101 with the melody in the Eb clarinet, above the first and second oboes and first and second bassoons. The style is now a more continuous line set with syncopated eighth-notes. The first sub-phrase finishes with a G Major chord in measure 102 that is similar to the chord in measure 101. The consequent sub-phrase is scored with the melody inside the texture, in the tenor saxophone. The first and second oboes provide harmony above, while the lower harmony is provided by the first and second horns. The second phrase is completed in measure 104 with a D Major chord with an added 4th and 6th.

Phrase 3 is placed in the three flutes and three oboes. A feeling of bitonal harmonic conflict enters as the upper flute line sustains a G major triad in measure 105 and an F# Major triad in measure 107. At the same points, the oboes sustain an A Minor triad in measure 105 and an E Major triad in measure 107. The second sub-phrase ends in measure 110 with a B Major triad in the upper flute line and a C# Major triad in the lower oboe line. The bitonality continues in measures 111-112, a short tag that restates the motives of the third phrase. B Major and A Major triads are arrived at in measure 111. Simultaneous E Minor and F Major triads start measure 112. With the entrance of the soprano saxophone, tenor saxophone and bass clarinet, E Minor and C# Major triads end measure 112.

Theme d-phrase 4 begins in measure 113 in the three oboes, soprano and tenor saxophones and bass clarinet. A Minor and D Major triads begin measure 113. B Minor and A Minor triads begin measure 115. Three chords in measures 117-118 act as a conclusion to the Theme d section--G# Minor with an added 4th, 6th, and 7th; F Major with a raised 4th, a 7th and a 9th; and C# Minor with an added 4th, a minor 7th and a 9th.

A development section begins with the return of the Theme d-phrase 1 melody at the end of measure 118. It appears in the three flutes and first and second bassoons. The consequent phrase is scored for the vibraphone (playing the upper three notes) supported by the first clarinet and bass clarinet. This statement ends in measure 122 with B Major triad above an E# and a C#.

The development of Theme d continues from the end of measure 122 through measure 139 using the second, third and fourth beats of the first phrase as a motive. These correspond to beats one, two and three of measure 98--staccato eighth-notes. The meter is thrown askew as the composer has placed a *forte* marking on beat four of measures 122-124, and measures 126-128, with a *piano* marking on all other beats. The rhythmic pattern in measures 122-126 is repeated measures 126-130. It is scored for all the woodwinds except the flutes, with three trumpets, two trombones and timpani joining the accented notes. The chords in this section have from five to seven notes. With seventeen instruments playing, pitches are scored in multiples and in octaves. The pattern begins a third time at the end of measure 130. The two bassoons and contrabassoon continue the *staccato* eighth-notes, while the three flutes, Eb clarinet and three trumpets

follow the line with connected quarter-notes. An eight-beat rhythmic pattern is presented two times, with the second and third trombone joining the bassoon line in a glissando from beats seven to eight. The pattern is presented one more time starting at the end of measure 134 with the entrance of the first clarinet. The bassoons now play quarter notes (with a clear articulation marked) and the glissandi are in measures 136 and 137. This section concludes with eight beats of a syncopated flourish in measures 138-139. The three flutes, two clarinets and three trumpets play a contrasting rhythm against the four horns, three trombones and tuba.

A new treatment to the opening motive of Theme d begins in measure 140. Beginning here, the composer develops the rhythmic pattern of the first full measure of the theme--three quarter-notes and two eighth-notes. The four horns, three trombones and tuba play the motive in measure 140 while the three oboes and bass clarinet sustain harmony. They are answered by the three flutes, first clarinet, Eb clarinet and three trumpets playing the motive in measure 141 while the soprano and tenor saxophones, two bassoons and contrabassoon sustain harmony. Measures 140-141 are repeated, freely sequenced up a whole step in measures 142-143. The pattern is, again, freely repeated and raised a whole step in measures 144-145. In measure 145, an extra quarter-note before the eighth-notes is added to the pattern. After the eighth-notes are reached in measure 146, the three flutes, Eb clarinet, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba present five beats of syncopation similar to measures 138-139. [The second trumpet should have written D's instead of written C's in measures 146-147.]

During the end of this development section, from measure 147 through measure 155, the three quarter-notes followed by two eighth-notes motive is developed further. The number of quarter-notes is sometimes reduced and the motive is sometimes syncopated. (This area of the work may remind one of the end of the development section in the fifth symphony of Ludwig van Beethoven. Beethoven manipulates his four-note motive and reduces it to three notes, then two notes, and then one note.) The four horns, three trombones and tuba present three quarters and two eighths in measures 147-148. Three flutes, two clarinets and three trumpets present one quarter and two eighths in measure 148. The third and fourth horns, second and third trumpets, second and third trombones and tuba present two quarters and two eighths in measure 149. The three flutes, Eb clarinet, first and second horns, first trumpet and first trombone enter at the end of measure 149 with two quarters and two eighths. The low brass voices then play three quarters and two eighths beginning in measure 150. In measure 151, the upper woodwinds and high brass respond with four quarters and two eighths. At the end of measure 152, the oboes, clarinets, saxophones and bassoons play one quarter and two eighths. These woodwinds are joined by the eleven brass in a syncopated version of one quarter and two eighths in the middle of measure 153. This syncopated spot may deceive some because it is written as three eighth-notes and one quarter-note. The woodwinds have four quarters and two eighths beginning in measure 154. In measure 155, the brass join the woodwinds in an elision of their last statement with a syncopated one quarter and

two eighths. The last eighth-note sound is held as a half-note on a Bb Major chord with a minor 7th.

Theme "b" from measure 30 returns to conclude the movement, beginning in measure 156. It is scored for the entire ensemble of piccolo, two flutes, three oboes, Bb, Eb and bass clarinets, soprano and tenor saxophones, two bassoons and contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba. The return of Theme b is generally a whole step lower than its initial statement. The chord in measure 157 is D Major with a 4th and a minor 7th. The chord concluding the first sub-phrase in measure 159 is A minor with a 4th and raised 6th. The second sub-phrase begins in measure 160 similarly to the corresponding phrase in measure 34, again a whole step lower and with further modifications. Measure 161 is extended with a free repetition in measure 162. The end of the phrase is raised a whole step and concludes in measure 164 on an F# Minor chord with an added 4th and 6th.

A sound that is quite new to the piece is heard in measure 165. The four horns are voiced in four parts for the first time. With the first and third trombones and tuba, they present two statements of a variant of Theme b-phrase 2 in measures 165-168. The three oboes and two bassoons join the brass in measures 169-173 in a short transition, ending on a G chord with a split 3rd and an added minor 7th.

Measures 174-180 are a loose repetition of measures 160-165, ending on an F# root again, but now with only a 4th and a 7th. The final approach to the cadence beginning in measure 181 uses the motive from the end of phrase 1. From the end of

measure 180, the oboes and first and second horns play the motive and are joined by the two saxophones and two bassoons in measure 182 on an E chord with an omitted third, added 4th and minor 9th. From the end of measure 182, the oboes, clarinets and second and fourth horns play the motive and are joined by the saxophones and bassoons on a C# root with the E sonority on top. This is really moving to the C-natural pedal under an E Major chord with a 7th in measures 185-186. The saxophones are replaced by the second and third trumpets and tuba in measure 185. With the three oboes, two saxophones, three bassoons, four horns, second and third trumpets, and third trombone and tuba, the penultimate sonority is reached in measure 187—an E Major chord with a minor 7th over the C pedal. With the addition of the piccolo, two flutes, Bb, Eb and bass clarinets, first trumpet, first and second trombones and timpani, the final bitonal structure of E Major over C Major with the D is sounded in measures 189-191. Harbison explains that “the end expresses a kind of unresolved polarity between the C and E which has been present in the latter part of the piece.”³⁶

Performance and Conducting Concerns

There are certain interpretive issues that have been raised during the analysis of *Olympic Dances*. The composer has clarified many of these concerns. The dynamics printed in the score and parts are general dynamics, that is, the markings are the same for all instruments simultaneously playing. Balancing the voices may prove to be a challenge.

³⁶ Ibid.

With the preponderance of homophonic texture, it remains imperative that the conductor distinguish between sections when all voices do have equal presence, and sections when a single voice has a more important role and should predominate from within the texture. There are composers who use separate dynamics or other signs and markings to distinguish between lines and to emphasize a certain voice. Harbison does not use any such system; he leaves it up to the performers to “work it out.” He believes the “other approach sometimes gets too much focus on the principal voice to the detriment of the whole.”³⁷ The opening of the second movement of *Olympic Dances* illustrates an area where the first horn must be coaxed to play slightly above the other brass instruments. Even though the trumpet is higher in range, it is the horn that has the chorale melody (see Example 14).

It is important in those areas that have the brass scored with the woodwinds, that the brass do not always dominate the sonority, even when the brass notes hold certain significance. Harbison knows that “any single player on trombone or trumpet can sit there and, with a will, absolutely eliminate the rest of the orchestra . . . quite amazing.”³⁸ An example of this hazard is in the first movement. The first trumpet has the sustained melody note that must be heard during the woodwinds’ chords in measures 26-29. The player may not necessarily have to play louder than the woodwinds; the timbral differences may provide enough contrast (see Example 12 above).

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

The image shows a musical score for the opening of the 'Chorale' melody in the horn and brass sections of 'Epithalamion'. The score is written for five parts: Horn in F (Hn. in F), Trumpet in C (Tpt. in C), Trombone (Tbn.), Tuba, and Percussion (Perc.). The Horn in F part is marked with a first ending (1.) and a first ending bracket. The Trumpet in C part is marked with a first ending (1.) and a first ending bracket. The Trombone part is marked with a first ending (1.) and a first ending bracket. The Tuba part is marked with a first ending (1.) and a first ending bracket. The Percussion part is marked with a first ending (1.) and a first ending bracket. The score includes dynamic markings (p, mp, p) and articulation markings (legato). The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 4/4.

Ex. 14. "Epithalamion" mm. 1-5. Opening "Chorale" melody scored in the horn and brass.

In the initial statement of the theme in the third movement, the melody is scored in the six woodwinds and the "whole-tone chords" are in the two trumpets (see Example 11 above). In the sixth variation, the theme is in the trumpets and the whole tone harmony is in the upper woodwinds (see Example 15). This is the reverse of the original statement of the theme. Again, the conductor must weigh carefully the timbral qualities and the acoustics of the environment in order to balance the voices.

The image shows a musical score for measures 73-75. The score is for a woodwind and trumpet section. It includes parts for Flute (1, 2, 3), Oboe (1, 2, 3), Clarinet in Bb (1, 2), Bass Clarinet, and Trumpet in C (1, 2, 3). The music is in 2/4 time and features a melody in the trumpets and whole-tone chords in the woodwinds. The key signature has one flat (Bb). The score is marked with 'p' (piano) and 'senza sord.' (without mutes).

Ex. 15. “Variations” mm. 73-75. Melody notes scored in trumpets and “whole-tone chords” in woodwinds.

An important concern of balance is the final chord of the work. There is a bitonal sound with C Major and E Major. Example 16 shows the final measures. With the G# scored in the second flute, third oboe and third horn, it could become buried by the G-natural that is scored in the first trumpet and first and second trombones. With the D that is in the structure, and without a strong G#, the final chord would sound as C Major with an added 7th and 9th. The “unresolved polarity of C and E” would be completely lost.

186

Fl. 1
2

Picc.

Ob. 1
2
3

Cl. 1
Bb

2
Eb

Bs. Cl.

Sop.

Saxes

Ten.

Hn. 1
2

3
4

Tpt. in C 1
2
3

Tbn. 1
2
3

(Tuba)

Tuba

ff

sfz

a2

(2.)

(1.)

Ex. 16. "Finale" mm. 186-191. Scoring of C Major, E Major and added D.

There is some thematic connection between the movements, the idea of the second theme of the third movement returns in the fourth movement. More significant to any melodic association is the harmonic link between the movements. This link means that a performance would benefit from as little break as possible between movements. The composer “feels the necessity for a rather quick continuation.”³⁹ The first movement begins in the key of C, and concludes with a C# cadence with a D as a non-harmonic tone. The second movement begins in the key of D--the non-harmonic tone now becoming the root. The final chord of the second movement is D. The third movement begins with what Harbison calls a “kind of very fresh harmonic color” on the downbeat with a D in the upper melodic voice. The D at the end of the second movement acts as what Harbison terms: “sort of the lone holdover to the next movement.” The closest harmonic connection is between the end of the third movement and the beginning of the fourth movement. The chords are the same notes with some respacing--what the composer calls a “Lydian kind of F chord.” At the end of the third movement, the piano score has a *fermata* over the double bar. In the full score, the composer has indicated the instruction *attacca* so that after the final *ritardando* of the sixth variation, the march-like melody of the last movement begins. The third oboe is scored in unison with the first and second oboes in this final variation. In performance, the third oboe can *tacit* the line in order to play the English horn at the beginning of the final movement.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

“Connection” is also an issue between the variations of the third movement. The piano score indicates a short pause between variations by way of the placement of a breath mark over each double bar. The full score has a double bar at the end of each variation, there is no other sign. Because the theme is so short, only twelve measures, it is best for the performance of the work if the movement is not broken into sections by the use of pauses. There is a “little letting back of the tempo at the end of each variation, but I don’t think that too much more is needed than that.”⁴⁰

Igor Stravinsky’s *Symphonies of Wind Instruments*, which is comparable to *Olympic Dances* in many ways, is marked with a plethora of signs and indications that specify dynamics, articulations and tempo. John Harbison’s *Olympic Dances* has general indications for dynamics, very few articulation markings (except for some slurs and accents), and uses Italian words to imply subjective tempo changes. Although Harbison believes that at times, “twentieth-century composers are expected to be more efficient,” he adds:

I really prefer as much as possible to go with [non-specific markings] and expect that the people who will take the time to absorb it will get it righter [*sic*] than I could if I would become more detailed about those things. I think it almost always pays off if people give enough time to it. And then there are those cases where you pay a certain price for that, but I’m willing to pay it. Both as a performer and as a composer, I take the idea that I’m welcoming the energies of the performers rather than having a graven image of what it should be. . . . I think it’s part of the interesting thing about being a composer. You hear pieces played in which by encouraging volunteerism, you get better results than if you had tried to pin something down.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

APPENDIX

INTERVIEW WITH JOHN HARBISON

INTERVIEW WITH JOHN HARBISON

Location: The composer's office, 14-222, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Date: Monday, June 2, 1997 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

K: One thing I've found fascinating in looking at the scoring of the piece, and as I first read your program notes, using your words, "small, unconventional chamber subgroups" which really describes so well some of the combinations you have.

H: Yea, yea, I think that's right. The basic scoring, the basic instrumentation is just an orchestral wind section with a slight expansion with the saxophones. So the actual compliment is very straight forward. But, some of the combinations are very unusual. And I wrote it out first as a piano piece because I knew that they needed a piano version for it to be rehearsed as a dance.

K: That's why you wrote it as a piano piece?

H: That's why I had the idea initially of having the version that would be a possible piano version as well because I knew that dance pieces require a piano version of some kind before it's actually played by instruments.

K: Right.

H: That's why all of the dance pieces that are around, like Stravinsky's pieces that are sometimes played in the piano versions. And a bunch of Copland's dance pieces are about to come out in their piano versions which have been around ever since their first rehearsal periods but some of them have not been published.

K: They're just now being published?

H: For the centennial of Copland.

(Small talk ensues about offices with windows as the interviewer moves closer to the subject to share his score and notes.)

K: For the first movement, Prelude, I've called the beginning "Theme a". Then this saxophone section as "Theme b" with what I've called "interruptions with a-style chords". Did you think of that saxophone melody as a like a continuous melody with interruptions or are these chords an actual part of the melody?

H: Well, they're part to a degree because the tone where the melody pauses is always sustained through.

K: *Like here at m.27 (pointing to the saxophone line.)*

H: Yea, but it's also somewhere in the chords that are played in between.

K: *When I first heard it, it sounds like this is "a" material coming back. Is there a relationship?*

H: Yea, yes to some degree, sure. But the C . . .

K: *That is in the trumpet.*

H: I think of this voice, in the second clarinet as a melody tone that continues from the tenor sax.

K: *I see. So that tone is held all the way through.*

H: Right. So you see rests of the soloists, but the held tone is still going.

K: *Right. The trumpet note here in m. 28, when looking at the piano score, should that be a C#?*

H: No, I think it's a C natural.

[Unfortunately, the piano score was not consulted, but does have a C# in the trumpet's line.]

K: *The movement continues with this Theme b and Theme a returning at m 39.*

H: Yea, but just a very veiled reference because the actual return of the theme is not until here, where there is a development.

K: *At m 45.*

H: Right.

K: *It's just the first six pitches.*

H: Right

K: At some point I'd like you to address the harmony. Throughout, I guess, I see an avoidance of traditional harmony where a lot of the structures are missing thirds.

H: Yea, sometimes they're outlines of triads without thirds and with fourths instead of thirds.

K: With fourths instead of thirds. Yea, because that's what I've been calling "eleventh chords" in the work, but you're thinking of them as fourths.

H: I think of them as replacements of the third with the fourth some of the time. Sometimes the whole triad is there, but not as a rule. And, the harmonic, much of the harmonic idea is too hard to clarify where you are in the phrase. Some of the harmonies towards the cadences are more grounded than the harmonies in the middle.

K: Yea, as you read through I see. As far as form, I didn't know what to call the form, whether it is a rondo with the return of "a" but, this at m 40 a more of a development?

H: Well at m 40 is still the b theme with the interjections, it's the ending of the b theme.

K: It's at m 45 that it returns.

H: It's m 45 where there's the beginning of the actual development of the first idea.

K: Is this a kind of a sonata form?

H: Well I thought of it just as two ideas which alternate, more like, I guess, a song form with two ideas and a sort of a decoration and a response. And the development introduces a texture that I use quite a bit in the hard part of the piece in which the outer voices are both playing the theme. What you think of as an organum with the tune on the outside of the texture, which goes on a great deal in the last movement, too.

K: I see, here at m 45.

H: The theme voice in the oboe and in the horn with the sort of harmonies in the middle.

K: Right, and we'll see it in the last movement, too. I called this at m 49 a kind of a "false entry" because it really begins again in the next measure.

H: Well, yea, another way to look at it is that in this section the theme is not stated complete but more in terms of motives. The first three notes of the theme are separated out as a motive quite a bit, with four statements of it as a motive.

K: *Four statements?*

H: Well, if you think of this as picking up on the latter part of this statement.

K: *Oh, I saw that as a 3-stage sequence at m 47.*

H: Yea, that's also possible, but in any case, the theme is really treated motivically. It's the only real developmental passage in the whole movement.

K: *And then after the Grand Pause you have the pretty much the restatement of Theme a with the rhythms, even, that are like the beginning.*

H: Right, but the harmonies are quite different.

K: *At the beginning, the key that you're thinking of would be . . .*

H: It would be C with the cadence including a flat 7 and a 4th. But the thing is those structures are mostly triadic here [at the beginning] and at this place that you just mentioned after the development, those sounds are not triadic.

K: *At m 61?*

H: Yea. In fact the motivation of that passage is partly in that it continues the idea of the previous passage in that the outer voices are both playing the melody, which is not true at the beginning.

K: *Then, Theme b section comes back here once again played by two solo instruments with the same kind of a-like chords. It's a little varied at first, up a half-step.*

H: Well after the first few measures it's a completely different version of the melody.

K: *How about these last chords? I hear them as having a lot of quartal sounds.*

H: Well, the genesis of that last passage is from the first time with theme stopping with the held notes. There's a pedal point that enters the texture with a C#.

K: *At m 83.*

H: Right, and simply continues as a factor all the way through these final chords. The low chords at that point, the grounding of the passage is really on the C#. The C# then becomes the bass note.

K: Is that a way to look at these vertical structures, as the lowest note being the bass note?

H: Yea, sometimes. Particularly at cadence points, that's quite often correct. On the way to a cadence, it's likely to function the way that tonal harmony does with inversions of the chords are more likely in the middle of the phrase. The equivalent of a first inversion of that. The equivalent is more likely to be in the middle and the root position is more likely to occur here, at the end of the phrase. That's certainly true of the first phrase because you get a lot of sounds in the bass which is not the bass, but at the end of the phrase it definitely is.

K: So at m 6, the C at the bottom is clearly the root.

H: And that's true at the end of this phrase here, too.

K: At m 23.

H: The E, although the bass notes along the way here are not necessarily roots, they're actually most likely to be first inversion-ish, but at this point it's the root. So I think you're right, that the root position, that the bass notes as tonics are most likely to occur at cadences. I think that's true all the way through the piece.

K: It's what I kept in mind as I looked through the piece.

H: I don't think you'll go far wrong with that assumption in general, too, and usually they define sometimes in retrospect a key area that's been operational in a phrase. It may not feel it in a phrase that specifically, but then when you go back you can usually tell . . .

K: If you look at that last chord, and what's on the bottom, . . .

H: Where it's wound up.

K: . . . then you can tell what key area you're in and then look back to see how you worked in it.

H: Like the place where we just mentioned with the C#, the C# comes into the texture along the way, as a sort of pre-pedal point, and where the bass is moving and finally the whole harmony stops on the C#.

K: At the end of the first movement. Wow, that's great information to know. I couldn't begin to make a complete harmonic analysis of this.

H: Sure, a lot of it wouldn't make any sense to do a detailed . . . usually you need to scope out the goal points and see what they contain. In that sense you will find that the pattern does have some architecture to it.

K: Is there a relationship in the keys used? It seems that in one movement I found what seems to be a relationship or movement in thirds.

H: There will be relationships, yea, definitely. And in the case of this first movement with the feeling of the C at the beginning and then the C# cadence point at the end of the movement. The C# with the D against it, and the beginning of the second has the D. So the D which is the non-harmonic tone at the end of the first movement becomes the root point at the beginning of the second movement. I think that if you hear across from the cadence at the end of the first movement to the beginning of the second movement that that relationship is very clear.

K: Would that make it important to play the movements without a break?

H: Yea, I think it does. The tape that I got from North Texas is mixed pretty tight, and that's good. Actually all four movements benefit from that.

K: I have a question about that when it comes to one of the later movements. Here I have a few questions about scoring in the first movement. At m17 I was wondering why the horns sustain here. In the piano, there was no sustained tone.

H: Yea, right. It's to clarify the momentary location of the harmony there which is around Eb for the moment.

K: At m 26--some of these questions I came up with were obviously just as I was getting into the piece--in wondering about scoring, it would seem that if you were to have a more homogenous sound, I would think that you would have the first oboe play here. Is this a typical instance of where putting another tone color in . . .

H: Well, I think so, but also that is an important note because it is the melody tone that is being held through. So if it were slightly sorted out from the texture, I would be happy. Because of the structure of the sustaining of the melody, I wanted it to be somewhat different.

K: I can see that now that we've been talking about it. A question that I've had all along is why four horns? Let me ask this, perhaps what were your thoughts in scoring?

H: Well that's an interesting question because the way that I thought through the piece, three horns, I didn't have a use for the fourth horn some of the time or too often. Three horns I really needed because I'm in trio textures all the time. But three horns is a very odd orchestral designation, you almost never see a piece with three horns. So I thought, well, I'll keep the fourth horn and try to think about uses, particularly low playing where I really could benefit from having four horns there. It's really not until the last movement that I get into situations that I need all four horns.

K: *Beginning at m 165.*

H: Right. And I really anticipated, scanning as I always do, I anticipated that the necessity of the fourth horn really doesn't come up in a strong way until the last movement.

K: *So it was a matter of range, because I saw the fourth horn usually plays only in the low range. Is that something that composers still pay attention to?*

H: Oh, very much. In the orchestral world, low and high players are very different people. You pay very heavily if you write something exposed for a high player low or a low player high in the orchestral world. It tends to be a very, very smart thing not to do that.

K: *I think for most wind ensemble pieces, the range of not only the horn players but of all the instruments has been expanded so that all players are expected to play both high and low.*

H: That may be true, but certainly in the orchestral repertoire, particularly because of the performing of the oldest horn parts where the difference between the high and low parts are so extreme. You really do get specialists, just as you get incredible specialization in the first and second oboes in the orchestral world. Most of the second oboe players sound awful in a normal symphonic range solo, but they can play the bottom fifth of the register brilliantly, which is a very specialized skill. I'm sure that thinking comes right out of my experience with orchestras, and really never wanting to . . . you sometimes write a part with the whole horn section in unison that may go pretty high, but you really, in the orchestral world, never give, let's say a pedal point of a low F to the principal horn. It wouldn't get played the way you want to hear it.

K: *Perhaps not a third horn player either.*

H: Probably not.

K: *It's what I kept wondering about as I looked through the piece until I got to the fourth movement.*

H: And I knew that going into the piece. That's why you really have to scan before writing. It's interesting that you hit on that because I was reluctant, worried, that much of the music was not conceived for four horns, but I thought I'll live with that because I know at the end I can't really do without it.

K: *They still play enough.*

H: Sure, they still do. It's just not . . .

K: . . . *not always highly challenging. Can I ask you about "Epithalamion"--why the title?*

H: Well, it seemed to be good for the character and it's a Greek work meaning song of praise or homage. At least somebody who didn't know what this was about, to some degree that it was about the image of ancient world they would notice it if they knew . . .

(The phone rings, the tape is turned off and then started again.)

K: *The choice of the word does seem to relate to the mood of the movement, a kind of ode or song, but the dictionary is specific in saying an ode "in honor of a bride and bridegroom."*

H: Yes, I know that, but its use in at least the lyric poetic tradition is broader than that. It's often let's say "in honor of a beautiful woman" or something like that.

K: *So there's nothing specific here.*

H: No, except that I know Greek poets would write Epithalamions on ceremonial occasions.

K: *This is a really beautiful movement. Is it the horn that has the melody at the beginning with its moving line?*

H: Yea, yes it is.

K: *It's most important to bring that line, voice, out.*

H: The other instruments, it's important that they respond to the horn line, but they are definitely secondary in nature.

K: You've been using what I call, "general dynamics", where everyone is marked the same. There are some composers who specify different dynamics for different voices within the texture.

H: No, actually I go with the former, I then leave it up to the performers so that they work it out.

K: Well some might think because the trumpet is on top, or because the trombone moves, too, that there might be imbalance.

H: Sure, I think initially, but I would not fret that they would make an adjustment. I prefer that to the other view because I think that the other approach sometimes gets too much focus on the principal voice to the detriment of the whole. This will eventually get to resolve to be what I think I want.

K: Now, for the style, it sounds like, as we talk about other wind works of this kind, I'm thinking of the Stravinsky Symphonies of Wind Instruments, I hope you don't mind me comparing your work to others . . .

H: No, I don't mind.

K: The chorale in that piece has a similar sound.

H: Sure, the scoring in this is the same scoring as that piece with the exception of the saxophones, so it's not coincidental at all, I know that sound very well. And in general, the sound of Stravinsky's orchestra I tend to (unintelligible) *Symphonies of Winds*, there are a lot more solos in that piece than in this, but some of this first texture is a little like that chorale--a little thinner. And this is that sound that you referred to before as the "clearly root position of the chord but with a fourth rather than a third".

K: Here at the beginning.

H: Which all the way through this movement stands for a kind of tonic sonority.

K: The key looks like either G or D . . .

H: It's definitely D, the first phrase. And in fact you could assume that the second melody note, the F#, confirms the impression that we're dealing with D, even the other voices move at that point, and it resolves there, with a fourth rather than the third.

K: There's also an F natural used here.

H: Well, there are a lot of F natural in the terms of the goal points of the phrases, the phrases tend to move to different degrees of the scale that are not necessarily, well for instance at the end of this phrase with the F natural in the bass. [m 8]

K: *Are you trying to create a sound of a split third?*

H: Yea, absolutely. I think that's right. And in general, I think that the minor and the major are the closest, they're interchangeable in terms of most of the tones.

K: *Great. I'm getting some satisfaction in being able to figure out these things. I've called the first five measures as Phrase 1, then mm 5-8 as Phrase 2, and mm 8-11 as Phrase 2b, mm 13-16 as Phrase 3a, and mm 16-20 as Phrase 3b.*

H: Right. Yea.

K: *So we have like three phrases, and I've split each into two parts.*

H: Yea. I think that's sounds about right, yea.

K: *I'm calling this melody here [m 21] beginning in the second section as a "cascading" melody. That's what it sounds like. Is that a word that I can use?*

H: Sure, that's fine, yea.

K: *Now this, the melody itself is very diatonic, and for the most part the root fits with the melody, too.*

H: Well, yea, though the bass, the pedal tone . . .

K: *The A.*

H: . . . the A, and I don't think it's heard as I there but as a V.

K: *Right, but the melody is still D.*

H: Right. And this melody is still in D over the pedal point of A. So there really hasn't been any modulation or key change even though the pedal has changed.

K: *Right, but you do change to an accompaniment with a Bb at m 25 . . .*

H: Right.

K: *. . . and the melody is still in D.*

H: Yes, though the harmony at that point has begun to produce some motion just by the force of the different pedal point.

K: *Then are we moving to d minor here at m 26?*

H: Well, in a sense, though the Bb here at this point has been an inflection of the dominant, of the A dominant, with a kind of diminished chord effect. It becomes, here, the V of Eb.

K: *At m 28. Right, I've put that as Eb.*

H: Right, sort of the Neapolitan of D. But, it then serves as a neighbor tone to the D which is now a V. The effect of this passage is that it's actually going to go to G.

K: *And I have it in G at m 29.*

H: But it doesn't. It appears that it's going to go to G but instead it drops down, the bass note instead of going up to G, it drops down to a C# here. So this is really a deceptive cadence at m 32.

K: *With the pedal C#.*

H: Right. So there's a set up that goes on there over the D pedal point pointing towards G which doesn't go to its destination but which instead goes into this little episode which is the transition back to the restatement of the tune--an elaborate transition set up of the restatement.

K: *A transition--I've looked at it as an extension, but with these changes, the movement, it is more of a transition.*

H: Yea, I think that's right.

K: *And then the Chorale melody that comes back at m 39 in the key of D.*

H: Well, no, it's in the Dominant. Wait a minute, I'm quite wrong. It's in D with a different bass line relationship. The key is definitely in D.

K: *I figured the key by looking at the melody, and seeing it as starting on IV . . .*

H: This is D, but a V. The key of the whole phrase, once again you read backwards from the cadence point . . .

K: *From m 43.*

H: . . . which is d minor, and you then infer backwards that the phrase has been in the key of D beginning on a kind of V. It's arrived at by the movement of the half-step in the bass. This is just a variant of the original chorale but with the key center in the key of D.

K: *Beginning at 50 we have the chorale melody with the first phrase varied a little bit with sequence to the climactic point at m 57. Then I've called this a transition based on the eighth-note pattern that you've started here at m 58.*

H: Uh-huh, good. And over the pedal point this time, over the C#.

K: *C#? It must be written as Db somewhere, that's what I've put down.*

H: Well, yea, because at this point, this chord, which is actually the same as the first chord of the piece, but the reference seems to be to Db. And that's definitely true also of this, the notation is definitely seems to be Db.

K: *At m 64. And this is the cascading melody again.*

H: Right.

K: *The same melody with some alterations?*

H: Very close, very close.

K: *It's a real lovely ending. There's a question I have about interpretation that makes a big difference to me. I hear that as being the two melodies combined [mm 79-80], the chorale (sings) and the cascade (sings).*

H: Yes, yes, absolutely.

K: *Now on the piano score, the last note of the bass is on beat 2, but in the winds' score, the note is on the "&" of beat 1. Why is that? Is it the ritard?*

H: The reason for the change was thinking into the people who are playing down here and wanting to reflect this rhythm again.

K: *Well I thought that because of this ritardando here two measures from the end that it could be played as if it was sounding on beat 2 (sings).*

H: Yea, but I hate to say that, the only way, I do reconstruct feeling like I wanted, since this is being played not by one player, but by people playing voices, I really want the

voice, the individual voice rhythm of this, like that. I think that's about the best I could come up with for that theory.

K: So then at the end it sound have the sound of the "&" of the first beat? So it shouldn't slow down too much (sings).

H: Right, it shouldn't slow down too much, it's not a gigantic . . . It's a little less conclusive an ending than the piano version, which I kind of like in this situation because I also feel again here the necessity of a rather quick continuation.

K: Is there a direct relationship here between the end of the second movement and the beginning of the third movement like you pointed out exists between the end of the first movement and the beginning of the second movement?

H: Yes, a different kind actually. It's that most of the notes that sound, that are in the chord of the new movement are different from the chord, from the notes that are in this chord, except rather crucially, for the melody note, the D. So that once again the linkage is through the D. But in this case the D is sort of the lone holdover to the next movement. And, there's a kind of very fresh harmonic color on the downbeat. So that's what I want to be heard by not too long of a pause. And of course the actual harmonic location of the next movement is declared by the second measure's chord. Measure 2 declares the new key of the movement.

K: Which we're looking at three notes with an interval of a seventh and a fifth.

H: Uh-huh, and with the F on the bottom, which for me sounds (plays the piano). Which for me sounds very much like the F is the root.

K: One of the instances of where we look at the lower note to determine . . .

H: Acoustically that F (plays) seems very strong. Much more so than the whole-tone kind of chords that are in the first measure.

K: Uh-huh. In looking at the variations, they're all 12-measure variations, and the phrase structure is mostly similar.

H: Very consistent for the most part, I think so.

K: We're looking at four phrases with a 2-measure phrase, a 3-measure phrase, a 3-measure phrase and a 4-measure phrase.

H: I believe that's correct, yea. Right.

K: And the theme is obviously the theme. Beginning with the first variation, I've been trying to search for notes and decide how it is a variant. Now with some of the variations I actually see a number of the theme pitches. Can you describe the variations?

H: I think so. Do you mean harmonically? The whole-tone sound of the first 2 beats is preserved in measure 13. And then the first sound of the next measure is the same, is exactly the same. (plays piano) Right? Same three notes.

K: Exactly.

H: (Plays mm 13 -14) It's basically the same harmonic content. I think that most of the time they turn out to be that close.

K: So it's mostly a rhythmic variation technique with breaking the chords?

H: Yea, more than any thing because harmonically, it's going to stay quite highly allegiance to the original harmonic structures. So it's really a question of spacing, and a kind of movement or motion, that's the most varied quotient. But harmonically, I think that there are the goal points that stay fairly true to the original.

K: For all variations?

H: Yea, pretty much.

K: And we see similar pitches here at m 25. With a triplet kind of rhythm, a triple feel rather than a duple feel.

H: And really again the harmonies are very close. And I think you will find invariably that in the second measure of each variation there will be some expression of the F tonality perhaps with the 7th, but mostly cadential.

K: That's certainly . . .

H: The final measures will be this F with a sort of raised 4th, a sort of Lydian F. And that's consistent through all. In fact the second cadence point, at the end of the fifth measure, though often it's an elaborated kind of measure, the harmonic sound will be very close to the one in the theme. So I think you're right in saying that harmonic structure and phrase structure are going to be the constants and the figuration is going to be the changeable thing. In that sense it's rather like old variations before the developing variation idea.

K: I have some questions here about performance. In performance, the piano score has this breath mark between variations and the full score has a double bar. Does one get a pause?

H: There isn't much pause, no, not much. I don't think I would, at this point, put any indication anymore. I think they do go quite straight through. Usually there is a little letting back of the tempo at the end of each variation but I don't think that too much more is needed than that.

K: So we arrive at the cadence with a little ritard without waiting for any plumbing to be emptied or any break between.

H: Absolutely, and you know, the original, the basic theme is so short, twelve measures. I think it really helps to not break it up.

K: At m 61, that's the fifth variation, this is the one that is a single line melody. The word I learned was "durchbrochen Arbeit." Are you familiar with that term?

H: No. I know the German term "Klangfarben melodie".

K: Changing colors in a melody. I think this is pretty much the same thing, a working-through of the melody with parts of it broken up into different voices.

H: That's definitely what it is.

K: In looking at it, as you composed it, did you have a particular, the changes of instruments is sometimes obviously for a concern of range.

H: But not always, sometimes it's also for a certain kind of sound.

K: Right, sometimes it's for the color. That's what I was asking for. So we have changes for both range and color.

H: Yea, that's right. It's sometimes practical and it's sometimes really just for the sound of the phrase and where we are in the phrase. In fact at one point Gene [Eugene Corporon] asked me about taking out some of the doublers, because it obviously makes it harder to execute, but I think the number of players is important, it changes the character.

K: It changes the character of the sound. Especially in a piece that is a wind ensemble format, where there is one on a part. So when you combine sounds, it's different.

H: So, then, there are moments in that variation when there are really quite a few people playing the theme and I wanted it to be quite a different effect than the places where there are just one or two playing the line. And in general this variation has much more the sort of character piece attitude of a miniature type concerto for little solo groups, and that's sort of summarized in that variation. The variation for two marimbas, for instance, is kind of linked to that. It's not the kind of music that you get as a rule in this piece at all. That one also, by the way, adheres very closely to the harmonic plan. When you hear it, it doesn't sound quite obvious the way . . .

K: *They're just broken chords of the original . . .*

H: Broken chords of the original harmonies.

K: *In looking at it, it's, honestly, I'd probably be lost without a piano score to look at. It's really a lot easier.*

H: Yea, it's really helpful, but in a piece like that it's quite clear it very, it can be like the kind of variation writing that went on in the 18th century where the arpeggiation of the harmony is what the variation consists of.

K: *That leads me to a question. In reading other dissertations about your works, there was one by Barbara Smit, in which she alluded to a great deal of influence by Johann Sebastian Bach.*

H: Well, yea, certainly as a performer because I conduct a lot of cantatas all the time and so I know his cantata music really well.

K: *When you mentioned something about the 18th century . . .*

H: Right. Figurational variation interests me a lot and actually harmonic variation which is something that composers in the 20th century have not done so much. Mostly our variations consist of what are called "developing variation" that is much freer with the harmonic structure. But that's not the idea of this at all.

K: *Just to mention, it's at m 67 in the fifth variation where all the horns are playing simultaneously, and they're in unison.*

H: And that color seems to me to be an important contrast point in this piece, too.

K: *Here's another point. The piano score has a fermata over the bar line and you've written "attacca" in the full score.*

H: That's very true and actually that's a second thought. If I publish the piano score actually I would take out the fermata.

K: *Should it be "attacca" right away?*

H: Well, in the same sense as the other movements, you know, there is a kind of, I think, a pulse that is a little hard to pin down but I think the performer hears coming off of the sort of summary variation. This is the biggest ritard of any of the variations [m 83-84], ending on this sort of Lydian kind of F chord. But, it's really like just an allowing for that resonance, and then on. It's not a very big pause at all. Because, again, there is a resolution of actually (plays piano). That's the end of that movement, and (plays piano) that's the most close harmonic connection, they're really the same notes, respaced.

K: *From the end of the third movement into the beginning of the fourth movement are the same notes.*

H: Yea. Though here of course, the establishment of the tonality at the beginning of the movement is much, much less emphatic. In general the harmonic rhythm of the last movement is much (unintelligible) than in the previous movements. So that sound which is carried from the previous movement is by no means tonic in its effect.

K: *With the fourth movement, I found some material here from the first movement.*

H: That's correct.

K: *It was that "b" melody. Is this cyclic in terms of other material from other movements brought back?*

H: Not really, no. There are a few momentary references, but nothing really central.

K: *It was difficult for me to find anything.*

H: I don't think that's important. Though, as I mentioned, there is a much more general thing which is carried forward in this movement which is the idea of textures in which the melody is in the outer most voices, the bass and the treble, and all the harmony occurs in between. That idea, which was very important to the first movement reappears in the last movement. A sort of a bracketing of the melodies, the kind of sound that Puccini's used.

K: *I've come up with an interesting form for this; I'm not sure what to make of it. You have an "a" section for 29 measures that I've divided into like four phrases.*

H: Right.

K: Then there's a "b" melody and I've divided that into four phrases, each with two parts, like the "a" section. The "c" melody here at m 64, that's where we have Theme b from movement one. Then there's a "d" section, and I was wondering, if you look at m 98, is that material from before? (sings)

H: I'm not sure. I don't think so.

K: So then we can call that by a new letter, "d".

H: Yea.

K: Then you use that some more rather than going on to something else. What comes after that is still "d". So that section's material is actually longer than all the others.

H: Yea, in a way you're right. Yea.

K: I've used primes with my letters showing where you're repeating this original motive. I'm wondering, is it a development?

H: No, I think your original description is right, that it is just simply another, different idea which becomes a very large section at this point of the piece. And then you can either hear that, I think that this is in a sense a continuation at m 122.

K: The meter here is thrown askew. Did you intend the meter to feel that it's one beat forward?

H: Somewhat displaced, yea, a mild kind of displacement.

K: It could make a difference in how much accent the downbeat gets. (sings)

H: Yea, I think that the accent [on beat 4] should be very strong. You've done well to include this very long episode that comes out of that change. I think of it as a little Mediaeval idea. I don't know how the Middle Ages got in here, but in any case, that's how it sort of sounds to me. It's all of that before you get anything that refers back to things you had before. Like at m 156 something finally does refer back.

K: It's like a long development section. Then you bring back the "b" melody. I'd like to address what happens in this section at m 135. Where is this material from?

(The phone rings, the tape is turned off and then started again.)

K: We were talking about m 135.

H: Well, let's see. That whole passage, all of that leading up to that is kind of choir alternations and so forth. Really, it seems to me, the way I thought of all this, the whole piece [movement] really is a sequence of dances of different characters which sort of evolve out of each other. In other words, one is suggested by another. It was deliberate that the only recurrent element was the theme you called the "b". That everything else is sort of cycling out, that is, is moving so one thing is suggesting another. And in fact, the whole opening series of phrases does not recur. Nor does that sort of series of melodies which you call the "c". They're all pretty much there and nowhere else. So then it's, in a way, the purest dance form of any because it really is like a suite in which one dance is led into from another. That is, it's anything but a rondo or a closed form or anything. The only real anomaly, formally, is the fact that one of the dance sections does come back. Why that happens is just an instinct that some recurrent element felt necessary to actually close the piece off. That is, if I kept on adding dance upon dance, I had a sense that the last movement would seem too discursive and too open ended, and that I needed to formalize at some level in order to conclude the piece satisfactorily. So that was a fairly conscious notion at that point. That I had created, in a sense, a formal issue that I needed to approach very firmly in order to make sure the form of the piece concluded appropriately.

K: That makes great sense.

H: Because it really is like a bunch of doors that keep opening, one into another, each leading to music which you aren't going to hear again and that sonority you won't hear again and the motion of the piece, it seems to me, they do suggest each other, and that series of "c" ideas becomes more and more placid, more and more tranquil, until the thing that you call "d", that little sparkly thing, (snaps fingers) wakes the piece back up. Then there's a series of things that also suggest themselves getting more and more active. That we got more and more tranquil and then we got more and more active formally didn't seem enough to me without the actual revival, of some, literally, of some material which we've heard before, which is why the "b" theme came back. And "b" is the last thing we hear. "B" is the thing that's functioning all the way through to the end of the piece. So this last movement is a very different assumption in that the other movements, the other forms in the piece are really closed forms, to some degree . . .

K: Rounded?

H: Rounded forms, and this is open ended with singular exception. That's a way I sometimes work, with this "associational" kind of thing, that is to say, I've occasionally written pieces in which there is no recurrent function. It didn't seem appropriate here, particularly with what's happened in the other movements. But also, there is a way in which I'd hope the dancers would make a number of subdivisions in the last movement,

responding to the separate ideas. When I wrote a full evening's ballet a number of years ago, I observed about dance pieces in general, that they tended to cohere in shorter sections, in shorter-breathed sections than symphonic pieces because partly due to the way dancers function because physical activity. . .

K: They need change.

H: Change of movement is natural to them, and that's most evident in this last movement. So it's there also in the second movement in the sense that the very stately kind of chorale theme and the triplet idea have a very different sort of kinetic sense.

K: And they alternate, so there's not just one long continuous idea and then another.

H: That's right. And I think that is conditioned by the idea of this movement.

K: I hear it in most of the piece, you must have been thinking about movement.

H: Oh, absolutely, and thinking of movement which can, which needs to be displaced periodically by something else which is another kind of movement which is definite enough. And I noticed that the Pilobolus folks did respond in the first movement, in fact, most exactly to a sectional relationship to the piece in that sense. I think that it's very characteristic of dance music and not of symphonic music. There's almost no symphonic development in this piece. It's actually why I thought the variations would be an appropriate idea for the medium, because variations has in its nature the filling up of a certain space with different kinds of movement—that is a traditional variations. I would say the closed bound variation, the different idea variation occurs, but up till then, that is very much what variation idea was all about, above all in the Classical period. The harmonic structure serves as a kind of grid for different kinds of movement. I've also noticed that a lot of choreographers have chosen variation kinds of pieces for choreography which makes much sense.

K: It gives some continuity with change.

H: It gives some kind of understructure with very, very sharp contrast on the surface.

K: You mentioned symphonic development. It happens at the point where we are in the fourth movement, m 140. I've compared this to the first movement development section of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. He takes the motive and decreases it until it's only one note.

H: Yea. This is one of those rather rare development places in the piece right there, the place you're talking about. It's a little bit similar to the one stretch in the first movement where motives are treated developmentally, and it's the same sort of idea here,

because so much of this piece is statement, there isn't a lot that is really developmentally treated. If one was writing a symphony or something where a kind of structural argument is being proposed, such passages would predominate.

K: I have a question about the ranges here. They are rather extreme getting near the end. Is that because we are getting near the end?

H: Yea, I wanted a different, a rather more raw kind of sound here from the ensemble. That was really calculated and it should have a much less decorous effect here, with the basic sense that it's the end of the movement, that the frame we've established should be enlarged.

K: The last few chords. There's a feeling of bitonality.

H: Well the end expresses a kind of unresolved polarity between the C and E which has been present in the latter part of the piece. Between the two roots of C and E. It has its origins back a ways in the piece, but the final chord certainly expresses that. It's a quandary whether it's balanced quite right . . . whether the forces are aligned so that you hear the right balance, I'm not sure.

K: So one should hear this as two sounds, two chords?

H: Well, yea. In the tapes that I've heard so far, the G#'s don't stay strong enough once the G naturals in the brass are played very loudly. I don't know if that's a problem in the scoring or just a problem of regulation. The dynamic of the piece I think depends on that being in a kind of equilibrium. It's a good lesson in the thing that every composer knows in that the very heavy brass, only one or two of them can obliterate the rest of the ensemble.

K: I've noticed that there are a couple of sections where you tripled the notes in the woodwinds, and had just single brass play.

H: Uh-huh, and even then you can lose everything else.

K: With modern-day brass players.

H: Well, it's always been true. Any single player on trombone or trumpet can sit there and, with a will, absolutely eliminate the rest of the orchestra . . . quite amazing. Which makes a situation like that very tricky to figure out how to do it.

K: Tricky how to notate it.

H: How to notate it, how to get it down so that you get a sound that you're looking for.

K: *When you stand in front of an ensemble it's no problem.*

H: Of course. It's a very different thing.

K: *Talking about notation, in the piano score at m 182, m 184, the piano has notes tied over and in the full score there's a break between the notes.*

H: Right.

K: *So it's a different sound.*

H: Yea. Just conceived in terms of a different medium.

K: *The bassoon holds on.*

H: Right. That does come out the way I wanted it to because I want the ear to focus on the motion of the bass. I think it has that effect. You're absolutely right. A composer can [contemplate/causate/cause on the page] how to ensure a relationship between tones, but you can't absolutely account for every situation. The performer, on the other hand, has a tremendously efficient way of dealing with those very same things. If we were to hear Brahms symphonies played probably the way they were first read or even first performed, with very odd ideas that he had about where to locate various instruments, I think we would find them surprising unintelligible. We now understand the discourse of the music sufficient for most orchestras that play that music to make a tremendous amount of adjustments so that the ideas come through. But, a lot of that has been acquired through tradition of the business and with performances under a number of different circumstances. It's not on the page, that is to say if you were to do just everything the way it seems to be displayed on the page you would not have nearly as coherent a picture of this music as we generally get. I think that's true for a lot of music. Though, 20th century composers are expected to be more efficient.

K: *Is that an expectation, or maybe a tradition, that started with Stravinsky?*

H: Yea, Stravinsky was very responsible, but I think Mahler was also very responsible for this because Mahler's preventive or dynamic writing and highly conductorial marking of the score I think conditioned, once we got vested in his music in the 1950's and 1960's, has changed the way people think about writing a great deal. Many, many scores are as polishing of the result right at the notational level.

K: I've heard you speak before about your willingness to leave some room for interpretation open. You were speaking about tempos and (this was at the CBDNA several years ago where Bob Spittal was talking about Three City Blocks) and in looking at the tempo of this work and in the piano score, you've written quarter note at 100 at the beginning and then have a lot of the Italian modulations. The wind score has some markings that are more specific, but, still, there are many markings that are subjective markings, "ritardando", "meno mosso".

H: I really prefer as much as possible to go with that and expect that the people who will take the time to absorb it will get it "righter" than I could if I would become more detailed about these things. I think it almost always pays off if people give enough time to it. And then there are those cases where you pay a certain price for that, but I'm willing to pay it. Both as a performer and as a composer, I take the idea that I'm welcoming the energies of the performers rather than having a graven image of what it should be. I've certainly found over and over that there are performances whose shape I couldn't have guessed at but which reveal or provide something about the music that I'm very glad to have which I might not get if I was much more prescriptive about it. I also feel that way about orchestras. Whenever I've conducted an orchestra I haven't been with before, one of the interesting things for me is always just to kind of psyche-out where one can get initiative and adjust a bit to it so it may affect a lot of things about the way you do a piece--just the strengths of the ensemble that you have. And that's always one of the interesting things for me. I think its part of the interesting thing about being a composer. You hear pieces played in which by encouraging volunteerism, you get better results than if you had tried to pin something down.

K: There was a student with whom I took some classes last year. He composed everything on computer and would only perform it with his computer. He didn't trust other performers is what he said. (There is a change of tapes at this point.)

H: You get hooked on that version of the piece and you're terribly disappointed when real performers don't do it that way, which of course they won't. It's a funny sort of leading of the ear "down a garden path" to present something so regular and imperturbable that it actually becomes a current performance idea. I had the bad fortune of being the conductor once where the composer had created a MIDI version of the piece, at the tempos that he liked, and we couldn't do that. It was not very effective for us, but that was really in the ear what was being hoped for--an incredible steadiness and rigorousness of tempo. And the clarity at crazy speeds, which performers provide eventually to an amazing degree, but it may not be the best way to go about conceiving of a performance. I think, however, there's more and more that kind of expectation. It's interesting, it's good to have the medium of computers for those people who really want a definitive rendering of something that may be quite complex to produce any other way. I think that that is one of the great arenas for computers. If you have a conception that really has to be precise, in levels that would be really impractical to obtain. It's turned out

that Nancarrow's music [Conlon Nancarrow (b. 1912)] in transcriptions for players and in the pieces that have been written for players recently, it turns out that it's really inappropriate to play for a lot of people. On the player piano it's great. That's the way he learned to think, and his particular rhythmic language sounds fine in that medium. When you go and transcribe it for a violist who's like playing a regular rhythm but which happens to be divided into sevenths, it's just not humanly either satisfying or realizable. But Nancarrow and the player piano were made for each other, and I think if he had a computer, those similar conceptions would have been very natural for that medium, too. He was that sort of thinker. But it's a very specialized mentality that would release that.

K: As a performer, I think that it's stretching a lot of expectations of performers. We're expected to provide much more precise readings of rather complex rhythms and notations.

H: It does push us as performers, and that's fine, as long as we continue to assert that performances are an extremely variable event and depend on conditions that are quite hard to predict--where we do it, and with what people we do it, and even how many times we've done it are really big factors, and if we don't take advantage of those things we would be missing chances.

K: I'd like to ask a few general questions.

H: Sure, go ahead.

K: You've stated that you had been "contemplating for some time" writing a piece "for winds, concise (about eleven minutes), and abstract (without extra-musical associations)" before you wrote Music for Eighteen Winds. You also stated that you had ideas about a piece for symphonic wind ensemble before you were approached about the commissioning of Three City Blocks. Were there any prior ideas or contemplation before you were asked to compose Olympic Dances?

H: Well, I just wanted to do a different piece that was different from the other two. Not more complete than that.

K: Of course you probably knew that you would be writing another wind piece at some point. This just happened to be the opportunity?

H: Yea, and I just felt that it had to be another attitude than what I took before. *Three City Blocks* is very layered and has a lot of overlay kind of choir-ish things that go on. Individual instruments are not heard much in that piece, rather rarely. Taking that into account, and with *Eighteen Winds*, it's a piece that is in a way expended chamber music. It's even more that than an ensemble piece. Every player in that piece is under equal . . .

K: There's no first or second part . . .

H: Really not at all, not at all, uh-huh. It's very, what we always think of as exposed writing for all the parts. And the thinking is very conditioned by that. In this case I wanted to make a piece in which a kind of balance between solo and choir writing went on. And also a piece of a different character. I suppose a more poised, or if not poised, even the kind of movement which suggested the kind of momentary flow that I associate with dance. Also, I like the idea of winds and dancers partly because I think that it's something about the attack of wind instruments and the possibilities for clarity that seem to go very well with the visual impression that certain kinds of dancers can make. But the main idea was to do something that was different from the other two.

K: You called Music for Eighteen Winds a chamber wind piece where you have a lot of soloists, but I think there is a lot of blending of the sounds of the winds in that work.

H: Yea, this is true. It's a piece which is really formally all based on the same idea but sonically, it's really two pieces. It's really two movements which are united by the fact that they contemplate the same ideas. It's much, much more organized in terms of focus on a central musical idea than this piece or the *Three City Blocks*. But I think that one of the things that I like about the wind ensemble in general is that there is something about the absence of the strings that seems to point the listener towards the savoring of the individual timbre of a given moment. Somehow in the orchestra everything resolves toward string sound.

K: Is that the acoustics of the orchestra or the nature, the tradition of composing?

H: More the tradition of the orchestra. Particularly if you think of the orchestra as string-centered as I always have.

K: I think your addressing the timbre of winds playing together helps to explain why the piano version is a work that sounds, well, even kind of romantic.

H: Yea. It's a very different effect, indeed. And of course that's one of the things about the pedal on the piano. It creates harmonic situations which are completely different from, really the antithesis of what winds do. I was hoping that the piece would sound very different in the two versions, and I think it does.

K: So you're not only aware of it but you anticipated it.

H: Oh, yea, I was thinking of it as a real virtue.

K: When I was researching into the history of the commissioning of the work, I spoke with Tom Duffy. He asked for a work that could be performed with dancers, but was not just a "dance work". The CBDNA wanted a work that could stand on its own.

H: Yea, right.

K: And I thought that he said you responded with something like, "Great, I'll write a work without thinking of dancers."

H: I didn't quite do that. I didn't think about a scenario. And I didn't think about specific movement, but I certainly thought about dancers in ways that we've been talking about.

K: Right, that's why I had to ask.

H: I thought about those Greek vases where there are people caught in an action. That was the image that I had. But you know, most dance pieces that have a certain sort of coherence, let's just say, can stand alone without the dancers. Some of them, actually in my experience, . . .

K: The great ballets?

H: It's great to see them, but in some ways, some of the best dances that I've ever seen are pieces for which the composer didn't write a dance, and some of the best orchestra pieces in the world are pieces that have sort of stopped being dances--The Rite of Spring, Petroushka. The Firebird is often danced. It's interesting to me that the absence of the plot was the most important thing.

K: So that's what you meant by saying you weren't thinking of a dance. Certainly you were thinking of movement.

H: Right. The absence of a plot is very helpful. I enjoyed that.

K: You spoke about the friezes, and you wrote about it. There's some dichotomy there with the image of stopped motion and yet you have the movement of dance. Do you recognize that? How do you reconcile them?

H: Oh yea. I was imagining what the motions were. The fact that the motion was stopped is not what interested me. It was the fact that they all depicted actions which suggest movement. I didn't think that the dancers would reproduce (snaps fingers) a freeze-frame.

K: No, there's always motion in the music.

H: I thought of perhaps somebody looking at one of the vases and imagining the kind of movement.

K: *OK.*

H: Some of those vases are people chasing or people playing a game, you know. There are all kinds of things, but it is clearly just a moment from what's clearly something that began at some prior point.

K: *Great. Thanks very much . . .*

H: Dynamite.

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- Harbison, John. *Concerto for Viola and Orchestra*. New Jersey Symphony, Hugh Wolff, conductor, Jamie Laredo, viola. Notes by Jack Sullivan. New World 80404-2.
- Harbison, John. *The Flight into Egypt for Soprano, Baritone, Instrumental Ensemble & Chorus*. Cantata Ensemble, Cantata Singers, David Hoose, conductor, Roberta Anderson, soprano, Sanford Sylvan, baritone. New World 80395-2.
- Harbison, John. *Four Songs of Solitude for Solo Violin*. Curtis Macomber, violin. Notes by Eric Salzman. CRI 706.

- Harbison, John. *Four Songs of Solitude for Solo Violin*. Michelle Makarski, violin. Notes by Mark Swed. New World 80391-2.
- Harbison, John. *Mirabai Songs for Soprano & Orchestra*. St. Luke's Orchestra, David Zinman, conductor, Dawn Upshaw, soprano. Notes by John Harbison. Elektra/Nonesuch 79187-2.
- Harbison, John. *Music for Eighteen Winds*. New England Wind Ensemble, Frank Battisti, conductor. Centaur 2288.
- Harbison, John. *The Natural World for Mezzo-soprano, Flute, Clarinet, Violin, Cello & Piano*. Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group, John Harbison, conductor, Janice Felty, soprano. Notes by John Harbison. New World 80395-2.
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- Harbison, John. *Quintet for 2 Violins, Viola, Cello & Piano*. Boston Symphony Chamber Players. Notes by Richard Dyer. Elektra/Nonesuch 79189-2.
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- Harbison, John. *Remembering Gatsby*. Baltimore Symphony, David Zinman, conductor. Notes by Dennis Bartel. Argo 444454-2.
- Harbison, John. *Samuel Chapter for Soprano & Chamber Ensemble*. Collage New Music Group, John Harbison, conductor, Susan Larson, soprano. Notes by Richard Dyer. Elektra/Nonesuch 79129-2.

- Harbison, John. *Simple Daylight for Soprano & Orchestra*. Boston Symphony Chamber Players, Dawn Upshaw, soprano. Notes by Richard Dyer. Elektra/Nonesuch 79189-2.
- Harbison, John. *Sonata No. 1 for Piano, "Roger Sessions in Memoriam"*. Ursula Oppens, piano. Music & Arts 699-1.
- Harbison, John. *Sonata No. 1 for Piano, "Roger Sessions in Memoriam"*. Robert Shannon, piano. Notes by John Harbison. Bridge 9038.
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- Harbison, John. *Symphony No. 2*. San Francisco Symphony, Herbert Blomstedt, conductor. Notes by Michael Steinberg. London 443376-2.
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- Harbison, John. *Twilight Music for Horn, Violin & Piano*. American Chamber Players. Koch International Classics 7027-2.
- Harbison, John. *Ulysses' Bow*. Pittsburgh Symphony, Andre Previn, conductor. Notes by Richard Dyer. Elektra/Nonesuch 79129-2.
- Harbison, John. *Variations for Violin, Clarinet & Piano*. American Chamber Players. Koch International Classics 7027-2.
- Harbison, John. *Words from Paterson*. Boston Symphony Chamber Players, Sanford Sylvan, baritone. Notes by Richard Dyer. Elektra/Nonesuch 79189-2.