Abstract:

This essay presents my dissertation project *Strange Tales from Appalachia: Pammanottus* (a multi-media musical drama based on re-imagined Appalachian Folktales) and situates it in the context of key related works and compositional practices. I include my analyses of selected pieces that involve varied personal interpretations of 'musical borrowing', by which I mean the incorporation of indigenous music in Western concert music. Through close readings of Bartòk's *String Quartet No. 5, Ives' Symphony No. 4 (Movements 1&2),* and Crumb's *Unto the Hills,* I examine three techniques: Stylistic Abstraction, Cumulative Form/Collage, and Setting. Informed by this research, I discuss the process of creating my multi-media work. Finally, I present a detailed musical analysis of Crumb's *Unto the Hills* focused primarily on compositional technique. I also offer some personal reflections on the compositional issues involved in creating such hybrid music.

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Introduction

The focal point of my dissertation project is my composition, *Strange Tales from Appalachia: Pammanottus*. Based on Appalachian Folk Tales, *Strange Tales* is, to borrow a phrase from The Brothers Grimm, a modern day *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*.[1] Because it combines multiple disciplines (music composition, visual art, storytelling, filmmaking, animation and performance), *Strange Tales* is a kind of *Gesamtkunstwerk*. It combines vernacular and concert music in a style indebted to similarly synthetic works in the literature, yet very much a personal reflection of my own experiences and musical history.

The textual component of the dissertation presents *Pammanottus* and situates it in the context of key related works and compositional practices. I include my analyses of selected pieces that involve varied interpretations of 'musical borrowing', by which I mean the incorporation of indigenous music in Western concert music. I will also discuss the techniques and ideas I developed for *Pammanottus* and suggest ways in which it contributes to the development of cross-cultural interactions of vernacular and concert musics. Finally, I provide a more comprehensive analysis of Crumb's *Unto the Hills* from his *American Songbooks*. I have included this self-contained analysis as an Appendix.

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[1] Grimm, Jacob, and Wilhelm Grimm. *Kinder- Und Hausmärchen.* Grosse Ausg. 6. verm. und verb. Aufl. Göttingen: Verlag der Dieterich'schen Buchhandlung, 1850.

A) General Context

Strange Tales from Appalachia: Pammanottus is the first in a projected series of musical, multi-media pieces based on Appalachian folk tales. While there exists a kernel of extant folk material in each, the original material for the re-made stories tends to serve as a mere point of departure. For example, when I was a child, my Great-Grandfather Wronsford used to take me out in the woods to look for the lost city of Yawgeetaw. We never did find it, but one of my *Strange Tales*-in-the-making involves Wronsford's lost city, as well as drawing on other lost city myths of culturally diverse origins (El Dorado, for example).

I began *Pammanottus* by re-imagining an old story I heard from my Grandmother. Of course, many stories came to mind when I considered potential tales for *Strange Tales from Appalachia*. Yet the story I always referred to as "Pammanottus," of rather obscure and mysterious origin, has long held a special place in my memory. When I was a child, I first heard the story from my Father's Mother (Meemaw), when it was told to us as a bedtime story—from her memory rather than read from a book. No one in my family seemed to know where it came from (one Aunt thought it might be an old Slave story). Nor have the few people I've questioned who knew of the story at all (usually Southerners born in the 1950s) had any idea of its origins. Further investigation finally revealed that the story came from an illustrated book published in the early 20th Century by Sara Cone Bryant called *Epaminondas and his Auntie*.[2] [3] Because I only remembered

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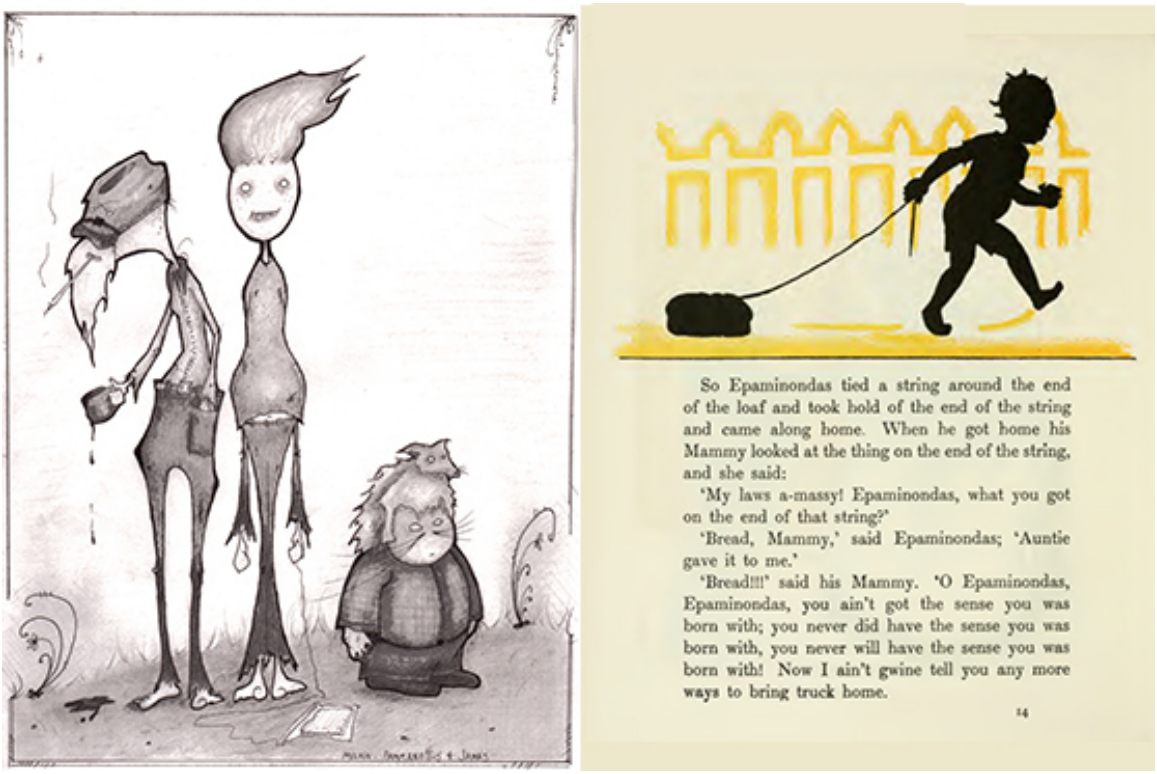
[2] Bryant, Sara Cone, b. 1873; Hogan, Inez, b. 1895 illus Boston, Houghton Mifflin

[3] When I began my research, I only knew the phonetic sound of the main character in the story, which made this difficult to investigate. I finally found the story on a website maintained by Ferris State University called The Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia. A fantastic article about the book by museum curator David Pilgrim can be found by following this link. The website also links to the full text of the original public domain story, which I have provided here: here

fragments of the story from childhood and because my idea has been to create new stories based on existing material, my *Pammanottus,* resembles the original but little.



So Epaminondas tied a string around the end of the loaf and took hold of the end of the string and came along home. When he got home his Mammy looked at the thing on the end of the string, and she said:

'My laws a-massy! Epaminondas, what you got on the end of that string?'

'Bread, Mammy,' said Epaminondas; 'Auntie gave it to me.'

'Bread!!!' said his Mammy. 'O Epaminondas, Epaminondas, you ain't got the sense you was born with; you never did have the sense you was born with, you never will have the sense you was born with! Now I ain't gwine tell you any more ways to bring truck home.

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[Example 1: my illustration and one of the originals]

My work (and I) are clearly of Appalachian origin. My music (in general) mixes classical with American indigenous musics, most notably Appalachian Folk music, though also Country music and Gospel. I will discuss my methods of integration later, but it has always been clear to me that this material should draw on indigenous American music in a way consistent with the foundational place it holds for me. Moreover, the aesthetics of my re-imagined musical folk tales are informed as much by cross-cultural influences as by provincial, domestic ones.

I approached the project with classical music very much in mind. Stravinsky's musical drama *L'Histoire du Soldat* is among my favorite pieces, and I drew on its structure in my own piece. Likewise, I considered Prokofiev's famous musical drama for children, *Peter and the Wolf*, as I intend my story as literature accessible to children and the young-at-heart alike. In integrating the classical and folk elements, I was also influenced by Takemitsu's approach to solving his own 'integration' problems as a Japanese composer of western concert music. For these reasons, I decided not to score my work for 'Appalachian Ensemble', *e.g.*, banjo, fiddle, etc.; but to rather for a standard chamber ensemble, reflecting my fundamental desire for *Strange Tales* to straddle both traditions.

Because *Strange Tales* results from my lived experience, there exist numerous sources of extra-musical influence that I have researched and incorporated.[4] My creative ecology has taken root from musical, artistic, and literary sources of varied origin, in both history and geography. The resultant cultural/temporal dissonance and consonance is a primary element of *Strange Tales*.

The title of my work is an homage to 17th Century writer Pu Songling, who wrote *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*, a collection of miniatures held in high regard by scholars of Chinese Literature. Also in the general realm of Asian short stories, the early 20th Century Japanese writer Kenji Miyazawa's work has strongly influenced my writing,

[4] Likewise, although there are *many* opportunities here to discuss cultural studies-related topics (race/ethnicity/class, for example), I am not trained in this area, and I feel that doing so is out of range in regard to my interests, academically. I would welcome a collaboration or discussion with someone interested in doing so, however.

particularly his beloved collection *Once and Forever*.[5] Miyazawa often features Japanese characters with foreign European names. He was also an enthusiastic advocate of Esperanto, the constructed international auxiliary language into which he translated some of his original Japanese texts. Similarly, in my stories from Appalachia, there exist creatures of (for example) Asian, German, and Extra-Terrestrial origin.[6]

Of course, it's difficult to consider American Regionalism without thinking of Mark Twain. When composing dialogue, I had Huck Finn in mind.[7] West Virginia writer Breece Pancake's ephemeral body of work also resonates deeply.[8] Although his dark short stories may seem a far cry from my light and often-humorous short ones, nevertheless, his atmospherics of place and ethnicity is something I reach for.

My ideas for the visual artwork were also informed by a number of sources, including Maurice Sendak (*Where the Wild Things Are*), Dr. Seuss, the woodcuts of 15th Century artist Albrecht Dürer, and by ancient Japanese scrolls (12th and 13th C. *Emakimono*—Artists Unknown*)*. I have also been strongly influenced by the aesthetics of films such as

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[5] Miyazawa, Kenji, and John Bester. *Once and Forever : the Tales of Kenji Miyazawa.* Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1993.

[6] My work contains outright homages to Miyazawa and other writers from multiple cultures and eras such as Mark Twain and Gabriel Marquez.

[7] And Twain's other "dialect" stories are of interest, especially his early short stories. McMahan, Elizabeth. Critical Approaches to Mark Twain's Short Stories. Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1981.

[8] Pancake, Breece D'J, et al. *The Stories of Breece D'j Pancake.* 1st Back Bay paperback ed. Boston: Back Bay Books, 2002.

Coraline,[9] Tim Burton's *Corpse Bride*,[10] and Suzie Templeton's version of *Peter and the Wolf*.[11]

[Example2: Movie posters for *Coraline* and *Corpse Bride*]

B) Personal Context – "Why I'm the right person to compose this piece"

Given my experience as a concert music composer, I've wanted to contribute to the long tradition of musical borrowing in Western Art music. Before I conceived of *Strange Tales from Appalachia*, I did not have a method of combining my experiences as a roots musician and concert music composer that suited both my aesthetics and the realities of performance practice. I now believe that dialogue and imagery were the missing ingredients I needed to develop this compositional practice.

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[9] IMBD entry Coraline
[10] IMDB entry Corpse Bride
[11] IMDB entry Peter and the Wolf

Originally from Kanawha County, West Virginia I began my musical studies with my Great Grandmother Zella, who was a highly skilled guitarist in the fingerpicking style made popular by The Carter Family. She had a vast store of memorized songs and tunes and was a travelling musician during The Great Depression. My Grandmother Sally is also a very fine church musician and singer, and from an early age I learned much about music from her.

At age fourteen, I met Robin Kessinger, a well-known virtuoso flatpick guitarist. Robin is the great-nephew of the famous fiddler Clark Kessinger.[12] Robin's Dad Bob Kessinger and, in fact his whole family, were great influences during my training as a 'Country' musician. I toured with Robin for many years, mostly in the South Eastern US, but occasionally out West, and once even to Nagoya, Japan. During my time as a teenage working musician, I was lucky enough to play on some old-style and historically important Country Music shows such as The Wheeling Jamboree on WWVA, a show that in its heyday featured well-known artists such as Patsy Cline and Buck Owens.[13]

In my late teens, I became intrigued by the classical music records I checked out of the local library, especially a recording of Julian Bream playing J.S. Bach's *Lute Suites*, J.S. Bach's Concerti, and recordings of Barók's *Concerto for Orchestra* and his *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celeste*. I studied classical guitar very seriously at that time, and was later, in 1990, selected by the Governor of West Virginia to receive an award given to one person annually for excellence in music performance. I soon became interested in

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[12] See Kessinger, Clark. *The Legend of Clark Kessinger.* Floyd, VA: County Records, 1996.
[13] Malone, Bill C. *Country Music, U.s.a.* Rev. ed. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985.

composition and discovered the work of Anton Webern, Igor Stravinsky, and the American Experimentalists. I was especially drawn to fellow West Virginian George Crumb's music.

During the following years, I developed a compositional style that gradually became more individual. However, I consciously excluded roots music from my compositional practice while I continued to perform as a roots/Country musician. Eventually, possibly facilitated by my work in theater, I realized that the traditional art of storytelling could provide a medium in which I could meld together the two traditions of Western Art music and the vernacular music of my youth.

C – Sources of Selected Compositional Methods from Existing Music:

Musical Borrowing and Close Reading Summaries

Composers of the Western Art music tradition have left a rich legacy of musical borrowing[14]—John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* and Bach's *Chorales,* for example. Later, in the mid-late eighteenth century, Haydn incorporated folk sources of Austrian, Gypsy, and Croatian origin into his concert music, including String Quartets, Symphonies, and Piano Concerti. Mozart famously incorporated folk material in his concert pieces.[15]

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[14] See Matthew Gelbart's *The Invention of "folk Music" and "art Music" : Emerging Categories From Ossian to Wagner.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Gelbert cites a long history of negative reception regarding Folk / Classical music integration, for example, that of 19th century musicologist G.W. Fink. The opposite argument is found in Bartók's *Essays*, which, at times, resemble an instruction manual on the subject.

[15] *Twelve Variations on "Ah vous dirai-je, Maman", K. 265/300e*

Beethoven arranged 25 Scottish Folk Songs for his Op. 108, including songs such as *O swiftly glides the bonny boat* and *O, had my fate been join'd with thine*.[16]

While Musical Borrowing itself is thus hardly a new concept, I focus here on more recent compositions that incorporate some variety of indigenous music within a classical concert music framework.[17] From study of this repertoire, I adopt four compositional methods of musical borrowing—Stylistic Abstraction, Collage/Cumulative Form, Setting, and Juxtaposition. I chose four pieces that exemplify these techniques, and will provide summaries of my analyses in respective order: *String Quartet No. 5* (Bartók), *Symphony No. 4* (Ives), *American Songbooks* (Crumb), and *November Steps* (Takemitsu). These summaries focus on techniques pertinent to my work rather than seeking to offer comprehensive analyses. However, I do include a rather large examination of Crumb's *Unto the Hills* as an Appendix. Because this work also features Appalachian Folksong, a more detailed analysis seemed appropriate.

Bartók – *String Quartet No. 5* - Stylistic Abstraction – Proportional Structures

A remarkably comprehensive approach to musical borrowing can be found in Bartók's *String Quartet No. 5* (1934). His late-period work results from a complex, refined, and notably self-aware approach to the integration of Folk music materials and values with classical music compositional techniques. This work features elements of Bulgarian/Eastern European Folk music in a Classical music context, maintaining the

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[16] see Cooper, Barry. *Beethoven's Folksong Settings* : Chronology, Sources, Style. Oxford: Clarendon Press , 1994.

[17] Of course, other areas of research were warranted for other aspects of my project (folklore, folk music and hymnody, world literature, etc.), but I am speaking about research specifically in regard to composing the musical structure.

latter's values with respect to structure and form (*e.g.*, sonata form, golden ratio), and 'modernist' harmonic schemes (*e.g.*, key relations based on whole-tone scales, 'axis' harmonic system).[18] Bartók devised a rigorously integrative language—a 'stylistic abstraction' of the grammar found in the raw materials. His late-period work results from a complex, refined, and notably self-aware approach to the integration of Folk music materials and values with classical music compositional techniques.

While it was satisfying to discover deeper structures in the work,[19] I initially chose to investigate *String Quartet No. 5* because of its obvious allusions to folk music and rhythms in the Scherzo Movement.[20] My attention was initially drawn to the *Alla bulgarese* score marking, and to the additive time signature 4+3+3/8. The work also exhibits musical references to the Hurdy Gurdy, town dances, and strange musical parodies.[21] [22]

My analysis of *String Quartet No. 5* was informed by Lendvai's theories about Axis Harmony, the Fibonacci sequence in musical pitch material and proportional analysis. I

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[18] See Lendvai, *Béla Bartók: an Analysis of His Music*

[19] Prior to this investigation, I had intuitive knowledge (supported by investigation of other music by Bartók) that there was an abstract mathematical concept that enabled Bartók to integrate the folk material with original concert music in his remarkable manner, but did not know this for certain in regard to this particular piece of music.

[20] See Bartók essays

[21] Last Movement. It remains unclear what is being parodied here. Mozart? The social trappings of concert music? I have not found any concrete explanation.

[22] It is beyond the scope of this essay to summarize or explain the entirety of Bartók's compositional approach and use of folk music. Rather, I will mention some primary sources and key concepts. In addition to the musical score and recordings, those most pertinent to my analysis are Bartók's Essays (Bartók, Béla, and Benjamin Suchoff. *Béla Bartók Essays.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976) and Lendvai's book (Lendvai, Ernő. *Béla Bartók: an Analysis of His Music.* London: Kahn & Averill, 1971) on Bartók's compositional technique.

am aware of the controversies surrounding some of these notions,[23] but theoretical disputes have little relevance to my own compositional practice—the concepts themselves are useful to me. I will next touch on a few points that are of particular importance for my own *Strange Tales*.

The Following chart[24] of the first movement of *String Quartet No. 5* illustrates several key points. First, it illustrates that while Bartók structured his opening movement around the Classical Sonata Form, he also incorporated phi (ϕ, or the Golden Ratio) for durations (in this illustration, specifically measure numbers). Additionally, the sections are arranged in arch form with the typical inversion found in the recapitulation. Second, the chart illustrates that sub-sections of the three primary sections are themselves phi-related building blocks.

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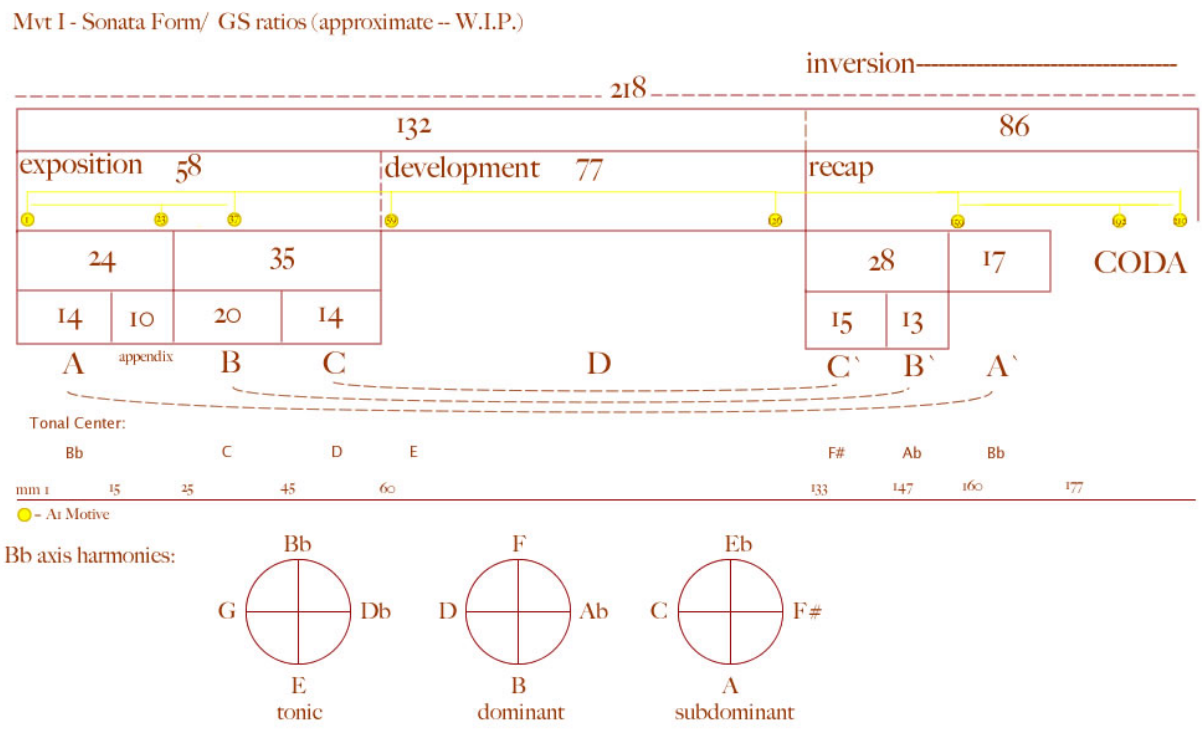
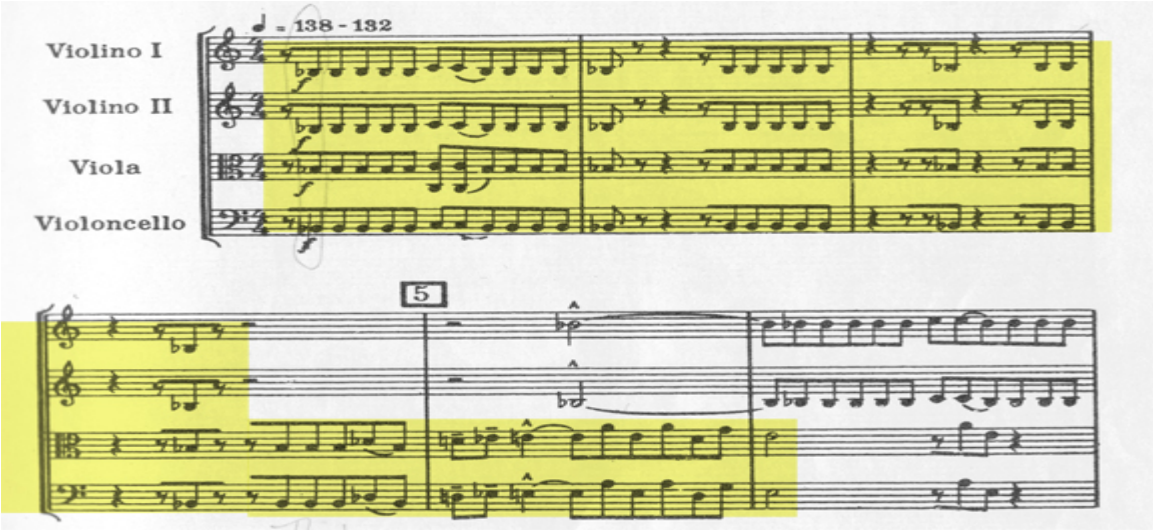
[23] Howat, Roy Bartók, *Lendvai and the Principles of Proportional Analysis* Music Analysis Vol. 2, No. 1 (Mar., 1983), pp. 69-95

[24] This chart resulted from my original, primary research.



[Example 3: Golden Ratio in Bartók's String Quartet No. V]

The small yellow circles represent the primary theme, "A_1" ([0,2,3,4,5,6] initially on Bb).



[Example 4: Instance of Primary Theme A_1]

A_1 occurs at key points in the overall structure, but the A_1 occurrences themselves are spaced according to phi-related proportions that do not exactly align with the primary structure. In other words, there are several layers of phi-proportions that occur simultaneously.

The large 'crosshair' circles at the bottom of the chart serve as an assistive reference guide to B-flat-based pitch collections according to the theory of axis harmony.[25] Observe that the tonal centers of the movement form an ascending whole-tone scale—Bb-C-D-E-F#-Ab-Bb. If one considers the illustrative axis harmony circles, it becomes clear that in addition to following a scalar pattern, the tonal center progression creates a Tonic-Subdominant-Dominant / Tonic-Subdominant-Dominant / Tonic pattern over the course of the movement, the merits of which are self-evident.

In summary, I think of 'stylistic abstraction' in this sense as the incorporation of general characteristics of folk material structured within a composed form. That is, rather than reference the source material directly, per se (a specific tune, for example), in the practice of 'stylistic abstraction' one would incorporate abstract gestures of a source material (rhythms, intervallic content, modes, etc.) within originally composed boundaries, as Bartòk did in his *String Quartet No.5* and other works.

[25] See Lendvai's book

Ives, in his approach to the incorporation of indigenous materials described as follows, often does directly reference specific tunes, and with very specific methods. Two of these methods are found in the first and second movements of his last Symphony.

Ives, *Symphony No. 4, Movement.* 1&2 : Cumulative form / collage

In his *Symphony No. 4* (1910-1916), Ives employs a technique that has been described by Peter J. Burkholder as 'Cumulative Form,'[26] whereby he constructs directed, large-scale form from fragments of a theme (here, a hymn), that results in the emergence of the theme itself from the preceding mélange.

Ives' collage is typified by the use of outwardly disjointed musical quotes blended together to follow another overall scheme. Musical collage could be likened to the collage technique used in visual arts whereby the artist glues various scraps of material together to form a larger structure. I tend to think of Ives musical collages more like the writing style of James Joyce, or a (seemingly) stream-of-consciousness style of composing that employs fragments and quotes to achieve a greater structural intent. Along with his *Concord Sonata* for Piano, Ives' *Symphony 4*, Movement 2 is an iconic example of this technique.

The 'program' of the piece is described as a series of questions and answers, with the last movement representing (to quote Ives' program note) "an apotheosis of preceding content, in terms that have something to do with the reality of existence and its religious

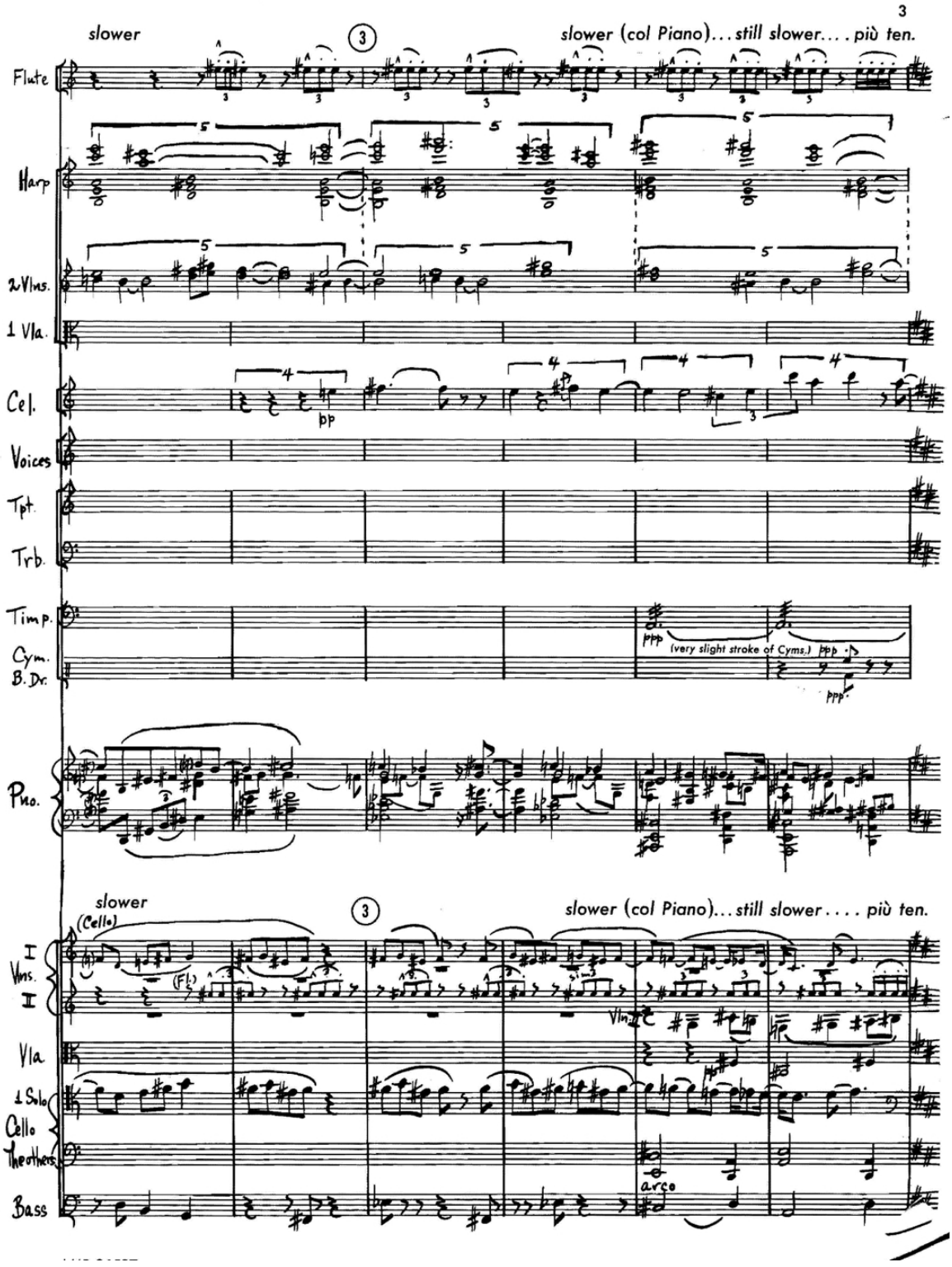
[26] Peter J. Burkholder coined the term "Cumulative Form" or "Cumulative Setting" in reference to Ives' music

experience." The *Symphony* consists of four movements, each very different in character: *Prelude*, *Maestoso*, *Allegretto*, *Fugue*: *Andante moderato con moto*, *Very slowly - Largo maestoso*.

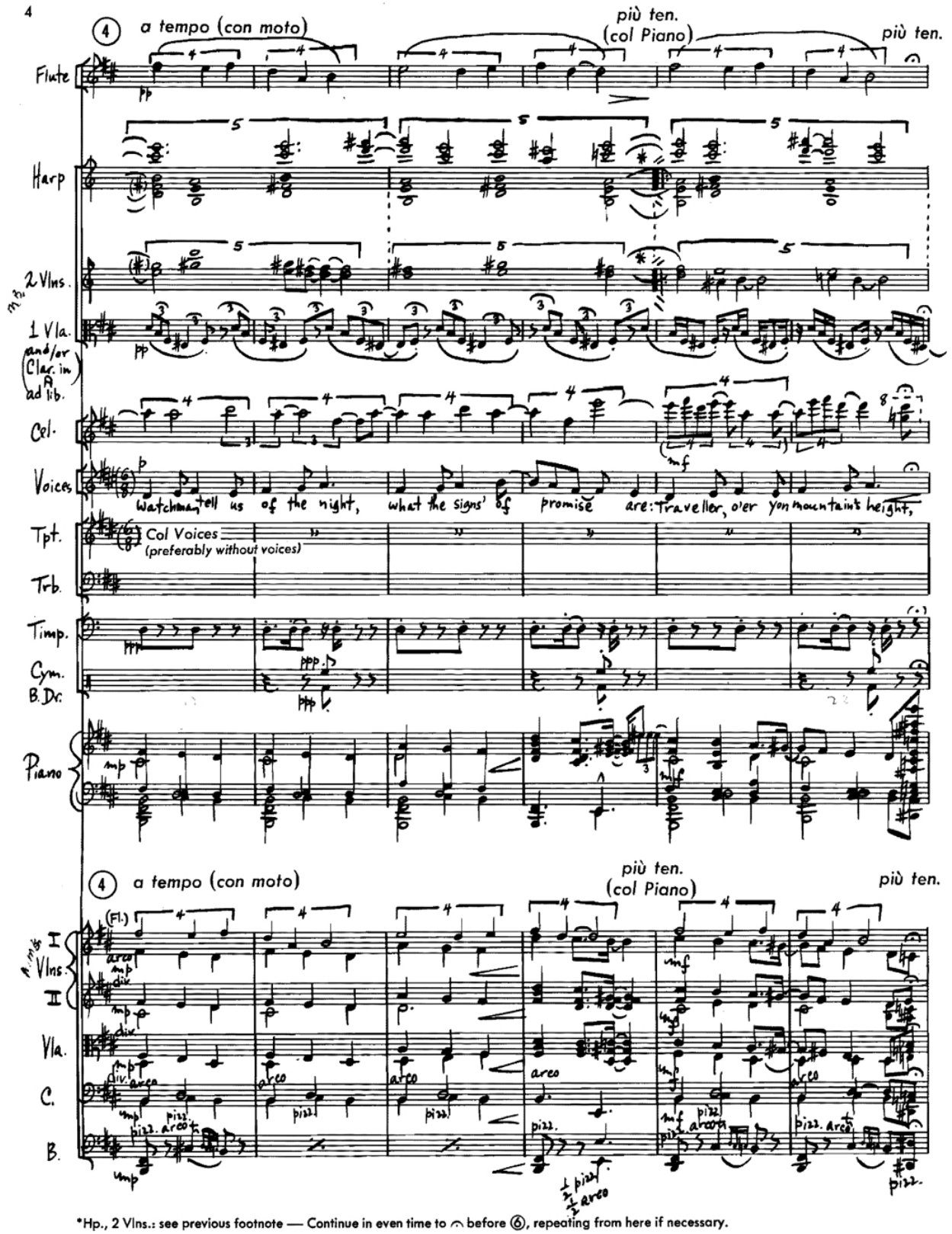
Movement 1 gradually moves towards the final presentation of its hymn by building melodic fragments of the tune. All the while, an obvious disconnect exists between layers of music: foreground and background—separate pieces of music that occur simultaneously. And a separate, "*Musica Angelica"* ensemble of strings, flutes and harp,[27] provides distant echoes of music behind more foreground-oriented layers of music.

The choir emerges very clearly from within the complex orchestral texture and sings the familiar hymn *Watchman, Tell us of the Night*. The orchestral music, rather than a traditional 'accompaniment' or 'arrangement' of the hymn, maintains a fractured, pieced-together texture; the orchestral music presents audible variations on elements of the hymn. A simple, clear example of this exists in the string music, which presents out-of sequence, displaced elements of the hymn melody.

[27] Ives also referred to this ensemble as the "Star of Bethlehem"

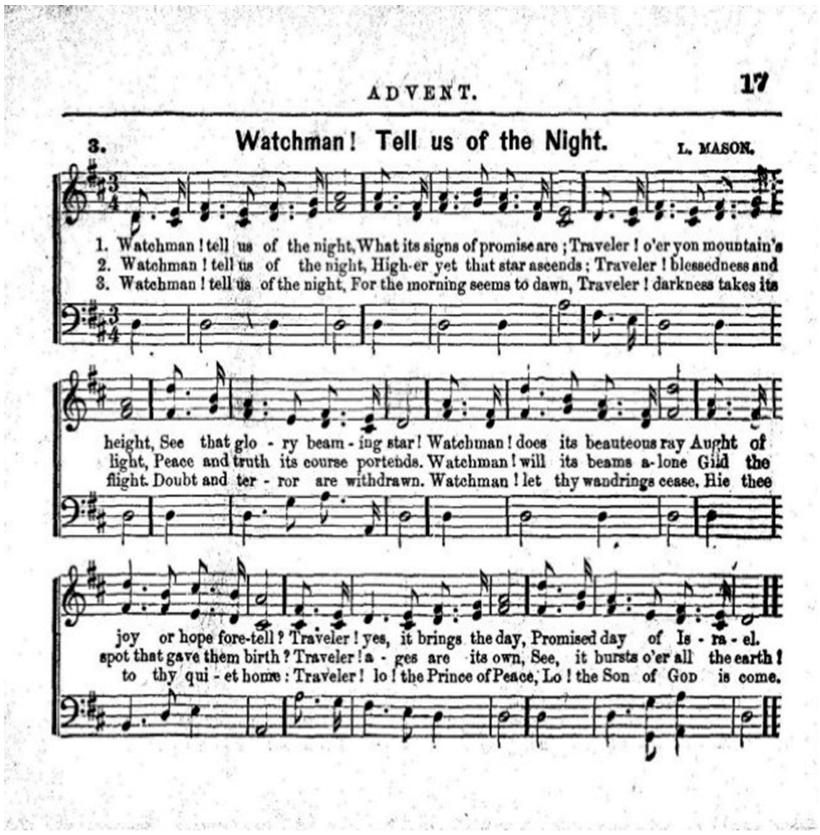


[Example 5: Ives *Symphony 4* Movement 1, *Musica Angelica* ensemble in the top four staves]



*Hp., 2 Vlns.: see previous footnote — Continue in even time to 𝄐 before ⑥, repeating from here if necessary.

[Example 6: Hymn with related orchestral music]



ADVENT. 17

3. Watchman! Tell us of the Night. L. MASON.

1. Watchman! tell us of the night, What its signs of promise are; Traveler! o'er yon mountain's
2. Watchman! tell us of the night, High-er yet that star ascends; Traveler! blessedness and
3. Watchman! tell us of the night, For the morning seems to dawn, Traveler! darkness takes its

height, See that glo - ry beam - ing star! Watchman! does its beauteous ray Aught of
light, Peace and truth its course portends. Watchman! will its beams a-lone Gild the
flight. Doubt and ter - ror are withdrawn. Watchman! let thy wandrings cease, Hie thee

joy or hope fore-tell? Traveler! yes, it brings the day, Promised day of Is - ra - el.
spot that gave them birth? Traveler! a - ges are its own, See, it bursts o'er all the earth!
to thy qui - et home: Traveler! lo! the Prince of Peace, Lo! the Son of God is come.

[Example 7: Original Hymn]

Ives could have chosen to introduce the Hymn in a fractured, more obscure way. For example, voices within the chorus could have begun the hymn from different starting points, or Ives could have displaced the melody metrically within the voice parts, or even presented the hymn in different keys simultaneously. These alternate ideas are not so out of character for 'patchwork' approaches and collage-style conglomerations of music. Ives instead chose a very straightforward presentation of the hymn. The choir sings the hymn melody in unison, lacking even 'arrangement' or harmonization of the hymn tune within the choir music itself.

When one considers the rest of the *Symphony*, especially the chaotic second movement, this curiously straight setting of the hymn may seem out of place. However, Ives' borrowing of this simple hymn as a source and incorporating it in exactly this resulted in 'Cumulative Form':

> "a complex form in which the theme, either a borrowed tune or melody paraphrased from one or more existing tunes, is presented complete only near the end of the movement, preceded by development of motives from the theme, fragmentary or altered presentation of the theme, and exposition of the important countermelodies." [28]

The hymn itself, *Watchman, Tell Us of the Night* (John Bowring, 1825), is a traditional choice of music for Advent (the celebration of the birth of Christ and his future return to Earth).

Watchman, tell us of the night,
What its signs of promise are.
Traveler, o'er yon mountain's height,
See that glory beaming star.
Watchman, does its beauteous ray
Aught of joy or hope foretell?

Watchman, tell us of the night,
For the morning seems to dawn.
Traveler, darkness takes its flight,
Doubt and terror are withdrawn.
Watchman, let thy wanderings cease;
Hie thee to thy quiet home.

[28] Burkholder, J. Peter. *All Made of Tunes : Charles Ives and the Uses of Musical Borrowing*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995.

Traveler, yes – it brings the day,	Traveler, lo! the Prince of Peace,
Promised day of Israel.	Lo! the Son of God is come!

This is a fitting, conceptually appropriate choice for the opening of Ives' Symphony, which is known to represent a response to the question of purpose and the human condition. In the words of Ives interpreter Michael Tilson Thomas:[29] "[…]and this question thunders out very defiantly—'What is the meaning of existence?' Or perhaps, as Whitman or Ruggles or even Ives himself might have said, 'What the hell is all of this supposed to mean, anyway?' And then comes a series of answers."

The raucous second movement, based on Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Celestial Train*,[30] is a labyrinth of musical quotes and colliding gestures and tones. The movement is so complex it traditionally requires two conductors in order to produce a performance. Ives describes the music as "a comedy—in which an exciting, easy and worldly progress through life is contrasted with the trails of the Pilgrims in their journey through swamps and rough country. The occasional slow episodes—Pilgrim's hymns—are constantly crowded out and overwhelmed by the former. The dream, or fantasy, ends with an interruption of reality—the Fourth of July in Concord—brass bands, drum corps, etc."

As with Ives' *Concord Sonata*, there is an intricate web of musical elements in this sonic collage. Ives' use of tiny, often obscured fragments, lines, or phrases from (erstwhile)

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[29] *Thomas, Michael Tilson Viva Voce: Conversations with Edward Seckerson*, Faber and Faber, 1994, pp. 117-23

[30] Curiously, Kenji Miyazawa wrote a notable story titled *Night of the Milky Way Railroad*

readily recognized tunes to achieve a larger-scale musical form achieves a workable solution to the common problems associated with musical borrowing—problems that especially associated with the tangling of disparate styles.

George Crumb's *American Songbooks* – Setting

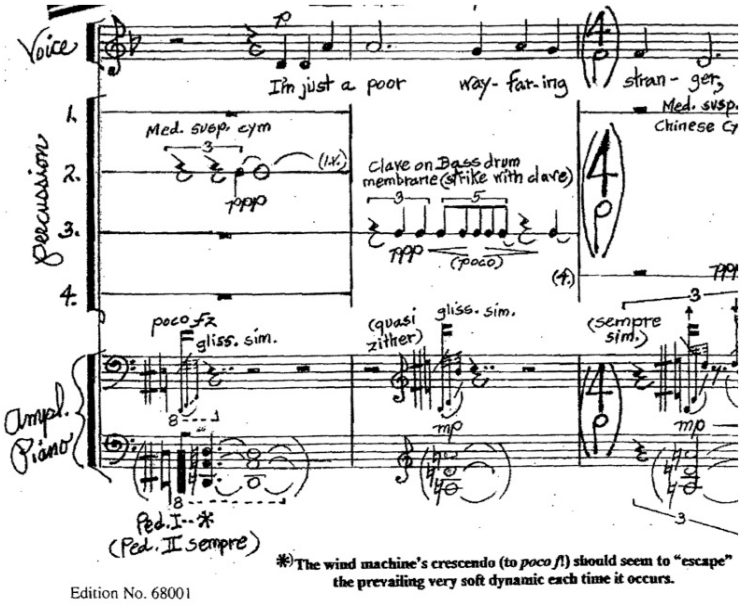
Each Songbook (2001-2010) of Crumb's ongoing series of song cycles, *American Song Books*, contains about 45-minutes of music, each drawing on particular types of American music: Revival songs, African-American Spirituals, Appalachian Folk Songs, Civil War songs, Cowboy Songs and the like. Each Songbook is scored for Solo Voice or Vocal Duet plus Amplified Piano and Percussion Quartet.

This collection of song cycles is monumental in many ways, not least in terms of orchestration, calling for a massive percussion orchestra played by a quartet, and including 150 standard Western Orchestra percussion instruments and a wide variety of 'world' percussion instruments.

Crumb's inclusion of 'world' instruments in the orchestration of American Folk Songs makes available a variety of aesthetically interesting timbral possibilities and aural recontextualizations of the folk songs themselves.

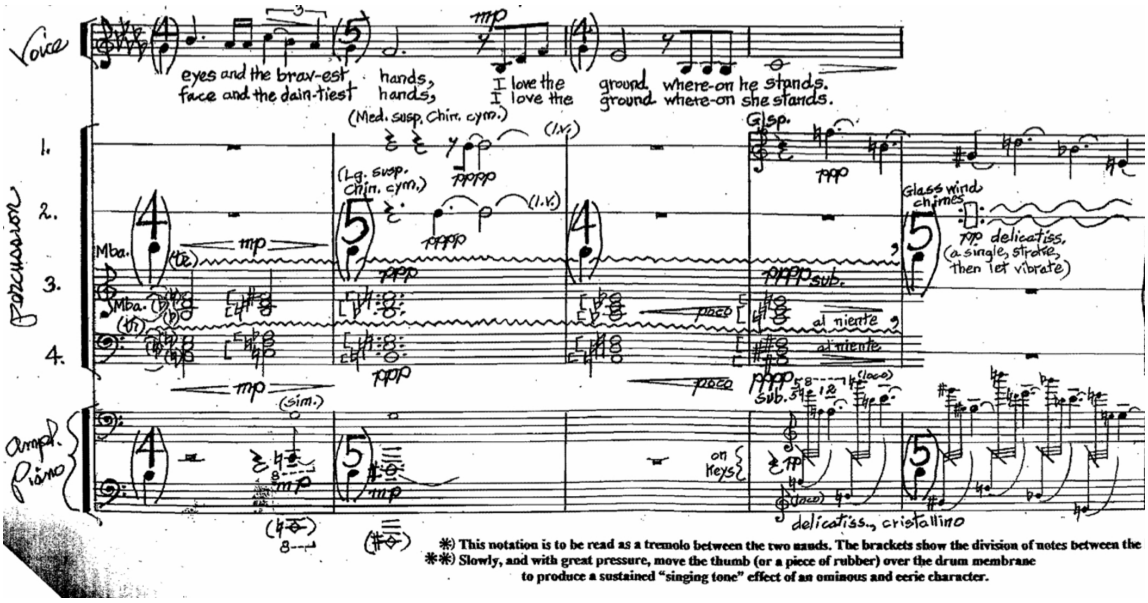
In setting these familiar songs, Crumb composed music that contrasts starkly at times with the traditional folk source material. However, the musical materials that form the settings are in some ways derived from the folk materials themselves. Sometimes the

derivation is obvious, such as the perfect 5th drones and imitation of Appalachian folk instruments found in many of the songs of *Unto the Hills*. Sometimes kinship between the setting and the source material is subtler, such as a hint of Dorian mode found in the otherwise often atonal setting of *Wayfaring Stranger*, for example.



[Example 8: Zither Accompaniment / Perfect 5th drones, *Unto the Hills* Movement I]

In many cases, this thoughtful stratification of source music and composed music creates a highly successful, poignant counterpoint, *Black is the Color* (*Unto the Hills*, Movement VII), perhaps representative of success in Crumb's attempt at folk song integration. Here, Crumb accomplishes an exquisitely heartbreaking musical fusion; his setting enhances the longing, bittersweet nature of the folk song and transforms it from a simple sentiment to a representation of profound alienation and fragile beauty. In Crumb's setting, the simple lyrics "I love the ground whereon he stands" seem to reveal a psychotic, suicidal abandoned lover. Following the lyric, crystalline, melodic tri-tone figures (piano/glockenspiel) underscore her fragile desperation.

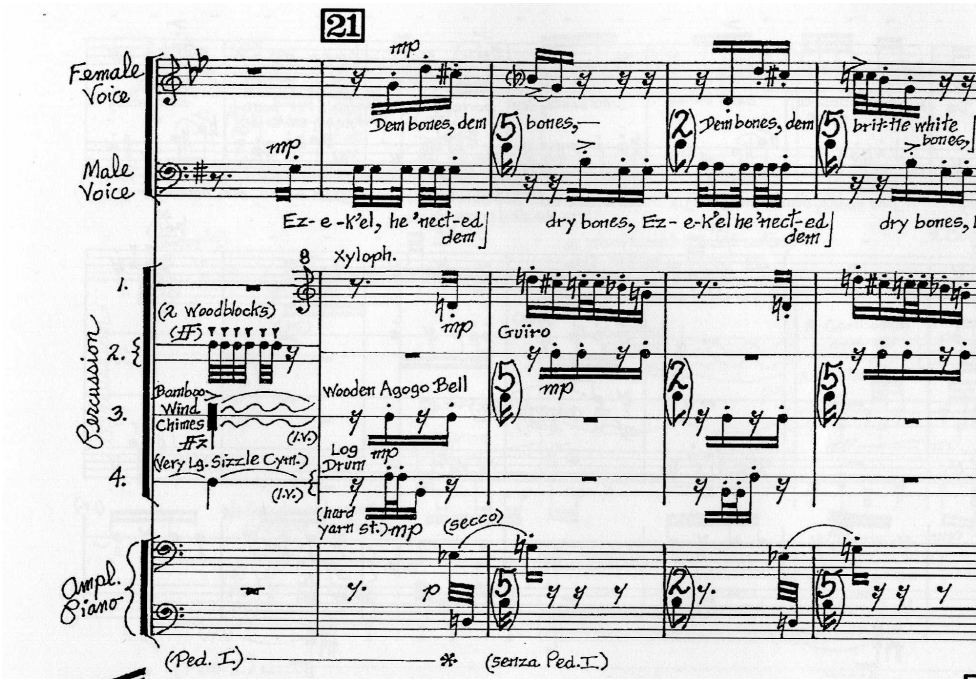


[Example 9: Black is the Color – *Unto the Hills*, Movement VII]

In other songs, and all too often, however, Crumb's settings nearly mock the source material and create something that I find close to offensive. This is indeed one of the reasons I've found it so difficult to produce hybrid music—it's very difficult to strike a balance that is both aesthetically pleasing, works with commonly accepted performance practices and training, and also does not caricaturize the indigenous musics.

To illustrate, consider Movement IV from *Songbook VI – Dry Bones*. The original tune, written by African-American songwriter James Weldon Johnson (1871–1938), is admittedly humorous. Crumb indicates in his score that the setting is *Humoresque Macabre*, a tone familiar in his work. However, the imitation of African American speech seems problematic in this setting (and in most of the other settings in this entire book). Imagine, for example, two classically trained white musicians singing the words "Ezek'el", or, "he 'neckted" in a classical music concert setting. The problem I refer to is

not that a white performer is incapable of singing in dialect—singers are trained to pronounce words in many languages, after all. The issue is more that in performance, there is a great danger that the treatment of the source materials will result in a problematic caricature. Possibly this is an issue of personal taste and not technique, but in my opinion, this setting comes across as race mimickry rather than dialect—the practice of blackface being an unfortunate precedent.



[Example 10: *Dry Bones, Voices from the Morning Earth (Songbook VI),* Movement *IV]*

This rather harshly illustrates a significant problem with hybrid music. In fact, I find the whole of *Songbook II (Afro-American Spirituals)* problematic, not because of Crumb's lack of compositional artistry, but because of his insufficiently sensitive regard for the cultural meaning of the language, culture, and history that produced these songs.[31] Perhaps telling of Crumb's mindset, he describes his score for Movement II *Joshua Fit de*

[31] Additionally, the classical music singing technique employed by the singer on the recording simply bulldozes over the subtleties of the songs.

Battle ob Jerico thusly: "I wanted a page that looked rather black … " An editor added the following bracketed commentary: [i.e., dark with the thick beams and flags of small note values]. The commentary is meant to clarify that Crumb didn't want the page to look Black (as in African-American), although it seems there would be no confusion that nothing about this music is Black.

In thinking technically about the relationship between the original folk sources and the composed material, I find that Bartok's description of folk source material in art music as "precious gemstones,"[32] accurately describes its qualities in Crumb's treatment of the folk music. His composed accompaniment materials are well worth more detailed investigation, and have been crucial as inspirations for my own work. However, I believe that Crumb's work would greatly benefit from the performance by a native singer of this folk material rather than a classically trained musician. The songs – that is, the melodies– are basically transcribed unadorned and then immersed in the rich world of composed accompaniment, leaving the culture of the source songs drastically under-represented. I imagine that casting a different performer, who sings in the performance practice tradition of the source material, would quite easily amend this issue, and possibly even elevate this work in relation to its sources.

Takemitsu's *November Steps*—Juxtaposition

Takemitsu's method in *November Steps* might, like Crumb's, be considered a combination of Stylistic Abstraction and Setting in that he juxtaposes originally

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[32] Bartok essays

composed, but indigenous-based music with originally composed orchestral music. I would like to briefly touch on this remarkable piece because I consider it an extraordinary example of how effective hybrid music can be, and also because I formed several of my own ideas as a result.

Takemitsu's *November Steps* (1968) for Biwa, Shakuhachi and Orchestra is of particular interest to me—his integration technique is predictably nuanced, and the scope and complexity of the work open up many different avenues of possible exploration. In addition to Takemitsu's very personal Western music compositional style[33]—a complex and fascinating topic in its own right – one could explore the intricacies of Japanese traditional music, notation, and performance practices—again, a vast and particularly complex musicological venture. In *November Steps,* Takemitsu takes interesting liberties in his with representation of Japanese Music. For example, traditionally, the Biwa and Shakuhachi rarely, if ever, play together. So even as Takemitsu superimposed the Japanese and the Western, he composed for two instruments that do not usually combine within Japanese music. Additionally, Takemitsu invented for the two Japanese instruments a hybrid notation that somewhat resembles traditional notation, allowing for traditional performance practices as well as composed and improvised passages more oriented to Western performance practices. From this example, I was inspired to score for unusual instrumental combinations in my treatment of folk material, e.g. snare drum and fiddle.

[33] Takemitsu's essays are a significant resource for those interested in "hybrid" music.

BIWA NOTATION: A 5-stringed instrument is required (Satsuma biwa)
The tuning is as follows: D,E,A,E,E,(1,2,3,4,5)

1 2 3 4 = the strings

V.IV.III.II.I = the number of the fret

V_2 or IV_3 = the degree of tension of the string at the designated fret; 1 to 3 indicates from light to strong tension

= down stroke of the plectrum

= up stroke of the plectrum

\+ = pluck with finger(s)

= quick alternation of the plectrum

= hit the body of the instrument with the plectrum

= hit the body of the instrument with the finger, fist or palm

= rub upward the designated string lightly from the bottom to the top with the point of the plectrum

= rub upward all strings while hitting the body of the instrument lightly with the plectrum

= tremolo finely - called *Kuzure* in Japanese

The size of the dot indicates the intensity of the playing.

SHAKUHACHI NOTATION: The first note of the playing is left to the performer's choice, then the performer should concentrate into *the sound* and listen to its changes of colour and intensity.

= slight changes upward - a small portamento

= large changes upward - upward glissando

= opposites of the above

= jumping within an extremely small interval (upward or downward) from the playing note

= jumping within an extremely large interval (upward or downward) from the playing note

= play slowly (it has to be grasped interiorly)

= play rapidly (it has to be grasped interiorly)

= from the playing note jump upward or downward to an extreme distance, then move freely as a melody

= jump upward or downward to a different note close to the playing note

= jump upward or downward an extreme distance with *Muraiki* playing - playing with much breath

= jump upward or downward within a small interval with *Muraiki* playing

= glissando up

= glissando down

= make an accent with strong breath

= *Muraiki* playing (with much breath)

= play with voice

= staccatissimo

\+ - - - - + = tap the hole of the instrument strongly with the fingers

= *Furiotoshi*

= *Otoshi*

= *Furikiri*

Vibrations

= without vibrato

= *Yokoyuri*

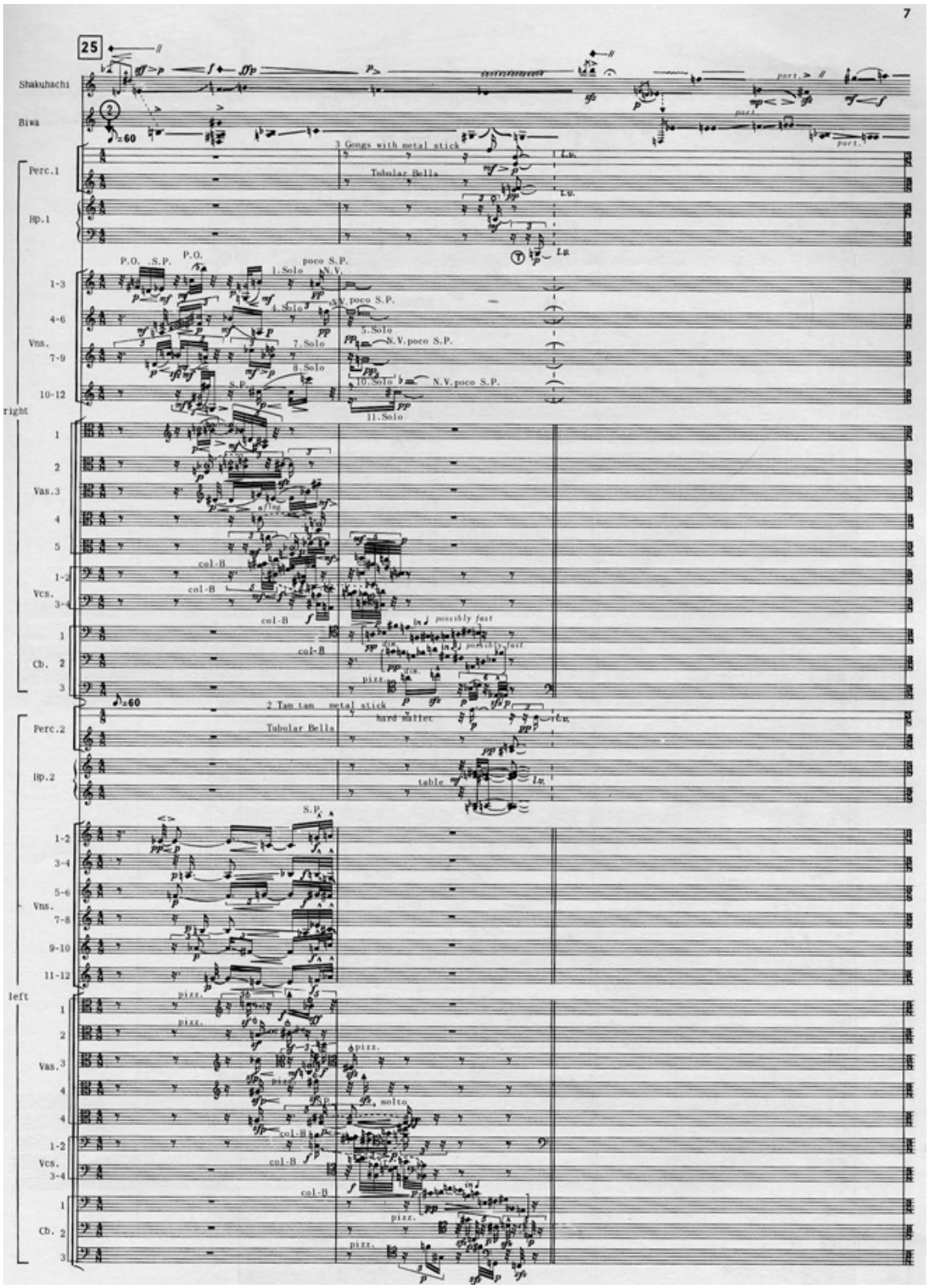
= *Mawashi-yuri*

= *Take-yuri*

= *Tate-yuri*

= *Komi*

[Example 11: Takemitsu's Biwa and Shakuhachi Notation]



[Example 12: Biwa and Shakuhachi emerge from the orchestra]

D) Compositional Elements of *Pammanottus*

In composing the music for the *Pammanottus* script, I had an abstract list of do's and don'ts.[34] Since I was working in the genre of musical drama, many of my decisions were based on text setting. My goal was not, however, to make a 'songbook' of Appalachian tunes and hymns 'set' in a composed accompaniment, to create an electro-acoustic piece with traditional Appalachian instruments, or to make a collage from a large collection of tunes. I avoided caricatures of folk material, but at the same time wanted that language to infuse my own. I decided to create a multi-layered formal structure, with the musical design blending the folk traditions in which I am steeped and a pitch-language incorporating elements of atonality, folk tune / hymnody, and 19th Century-style tonality.

Structural Elements/Form

The overall form of *Pammanottus* (the composite of music and narration) accommodates several ideas. First, I found that proportions loosely based on "The Golden Ratio", or phi (ϕ), serve my purpose—to create, what in folk music terms would be called a 'crooked' organizational construct. Crooked in this sense implies asymmetry of meter and/or phrasing.

Second, a structure created using this mathematical ratio works well with the concept of Jo-ha-kyu (序破急), a formal structural element found in Japanese Noh Drama, that translates roughly to Pastorale Beginning / Break / Quick Ending. Because my work

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[34] The list was made after careful consideration of other music, consideration of my knowledge of folk materials, and consideration of my strengths as a composer. It is in no way is a judgment on anyone else's approach to hybrid music. The more personal one's approach, the better, in my opinion.

contains many references to Asian Literature and Japanese mythology, this abstract nod to Noh drama adds another layer of meaning to my composition.

Third, I created this structure bearing in mind that *Pammanottus* is the first of several projected episodes of *Strange Tales from Appalachia*. The form I have devised permits a fractal design structure for the larger work based on the form found in *Pammanottus*. The 'micro-forms' of each movement illustrated below could each be developed as formal constructs for additional episodes.

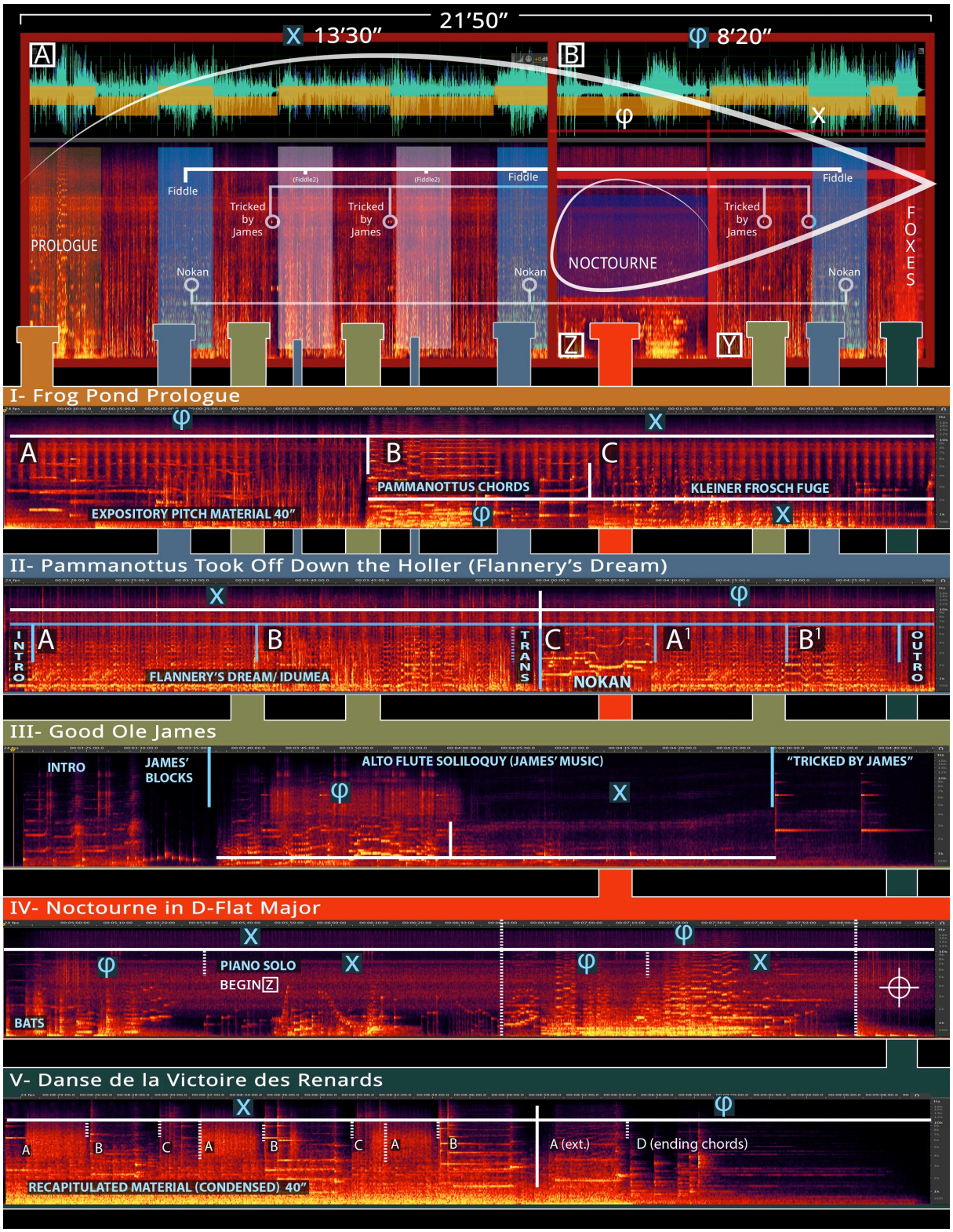
Although I had this structure in mind, I did not wish to render these proportions strictly: rather than measure my score in seconds and try to arrange the sounds exactly in time aided by technology, I chose instead to honor this ideal structure, leaving room for minor deviations. This permitted me to articulate perceivable structural relationships without sacrificing breath for precision.

The performance by UVA performance faculty on which I based the following, rather complex chart[35] is remarkably close to my ideal. The chart illustrates several aspects of my formal design. It shows that *Pammnottus* is a bipartite structure with an A-section followed by a B-section, roughly .618 times the length of the A-section. In the chart, this relationship is illustrated by X and ϕ. Within the B-section, there is an inverted echo of that larger structure, represented by a Z-section, which is in turn roughly .618 times the length of the following Y-section. Structurally, this Z-section is the focus of

[35] The chart is dependent on the particular performance because it is illustrating proportions based on the spectral representation of the performance recording.

Pammanottus— Movement IV, *Noctourne in D-Flat Major* (See the example.) Secondly, the chart illustrates where the various iterations of the individual movements occur within the overall 21-minute structure— follow the color-coded paths that lead to excerpted spectral charts of each individual component ('movement').

From these stacked spectrographs of the individual movements, the registral similarities and differences of each component can be readily observed. Of interest, for example, note that the energy highlights of each movement often strategically complement or contrast with one another. Also, each individual movement-level micro-form presents a different variation on the primary form of the piece. Note that the most energy within the nocturne movement gathers in relatively the same position within the movement as the movement's position in the overall structure. These sorts of formal considerations are adaptations of ideas I picked up from my study of certain other music (*e.g.*, Bartòk) and have become characteristic of my present compositional technique.



[Example 13: form diagram for *Pammanottus*]

Borrowed Material

The most obvious inclusion of traditional Appalachian music occurs in Movement II – *Pammanottus Took Off Down the Holler (Flannery's Dream)*. However, there are several factors at work beneath the surface that enrich its meaning. Although I consciously made it possible to perform my work as a live, music-only chamber work by creating separate 'movements' from the different musical components of the piece, in the music/narration composite version, music from the various 'movements' repeats throughout the story (see the chart). Movement II is repeated most of all, and is the spiritual cousin to Stravinsky's main fiddle theme from *Soldier's Tale*. Inspired also by Takemitsu's unorthodox combination of traditional elements in *November Steps*, I added a kick drum/snare accompaniment to the fiddle tune—something one would never find in traditional Appalachian music. I also drew on the techniques of Charles Ives, and altered a second borrowed tune, *Idumea* (AKA *Was I Born to Die?* or 47-bottom), a favorite of the Sacred Harp repertoire, to serve as the bass line accompaniment. This technique is not found in traditional music, where bass lines are typically improvised on root/dominant notes and 'runs', and would never be created from entirely different tunes. Lastly, I included a sonic homage to the sound of the Nokan, a flute associated with Japanese Noh Drama,[36] which plays over a snare drum solo in a contrasting section of the movement.[37] I will first explain the source materials, and then illustrate how I integrated them.

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[36] example: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvK79-1G6xk

[37] It's possible that there is no other example of a snare-kick drum/ Nokan duet in any sort of music, much less Appalachian or Japanese folk music.

Flannery's Dream is a well-known fiddle tune generally agreed to have its origin in Eastern Kentucky. Possibly due to Ricky Skaggs' recording of the tune, it is commonly and incorrectly labeled as a 'bluegrass' tune. *Flannery's Dream* is of the 'Old Time' tradition that pre-dates bluegrass. In bygone eras, the tune was traditionally presented as a 'name that tune' challenge, and performance practice was such that *Flannery's Dream* was typically couched in storytelling. Predictably, the story varies. Sometimes the accompanying story is of a Civil War-era fiddler named Flannery who had a dream he was being chased by a bear while this music played in accompaniment. Flannery woke up and composed the tune based on his dream in order to win a marathon fiddle contest. The other commonly told story is one of an imprisoned Revolutionary War soldier/fiddler who composed the tune to stump a guard—hence the 'name that tune'[38] challenge that historically accompanied the tune in performance.

Besides the traditional couching of the tune in a story (as it is in my piece...),[39] two intertextual connections influenced my selection of *Flannery's Dream* from the huge repertoire of Appalachian fiddle tunes. The first is the fiddling Revolutionary/Civil War soldiers in these stories and with that in Stravinsky's *Soldier's Tale*. The second is the story about being chased by a bear in a dream, which relates to a forthcoming piece in the *Strange Tales* anthology called *Preacher and the Bear*.[40]

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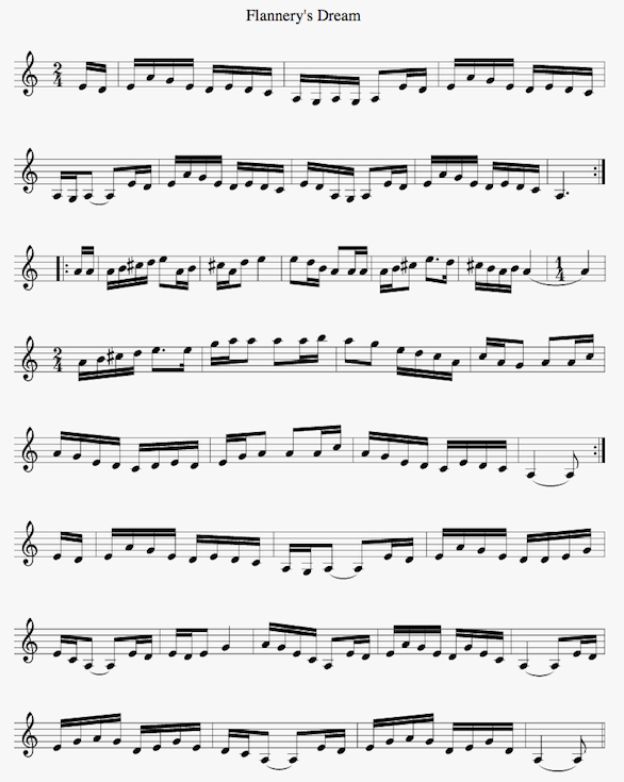
[38] An interesting commentary on this practice that mentions my friend Fraley, coincidentally: http://boards.ancestry.com/localities.northam.usa.states.kentucky.counties.elliott/2101.1/mb.ashx

[39] It is quite common that tunes have "tales" associated with them

[40] Compositionally speaking, I find detailed, deep interconnectivity such as this appealing, but I wouldn't necessarily expect such detail to be transparent to a listener.

As is typical of traditional Appalachian music, there exist several versions and even names for this tune. I heard the famous Kentucky Fiddler J.P. Fraley[41] talk about it when I stayed at his at his house towards the end of his life. Mostly, though, the version I have adapted derives from that of West Virginia guitarist Robin Kessinger and Ohio fiddle champion Roger Cooper, and is represented in *Pammanottus* by the version we play in my part of West Virginia (Kanawha County).[42] Besides the storytelling aspect, these personal associations were very important to me. Also, it's a somewhat 'Crooked' tune on (mostly) A-minor pentatonic. In summary, I had compelling historical, compositional, programmatic, and personal reasons for my selection.

On the right: A transcription of John Hartford's version of Flannery's Dream, via The Tune Archive. Listen to Ricky Skaggs version on YouTube Roger Cooper's version on iTunes (closer to the version I have incorporated in my piece)	

[Example 14: Flannery's Dream Transcription/audio versions]

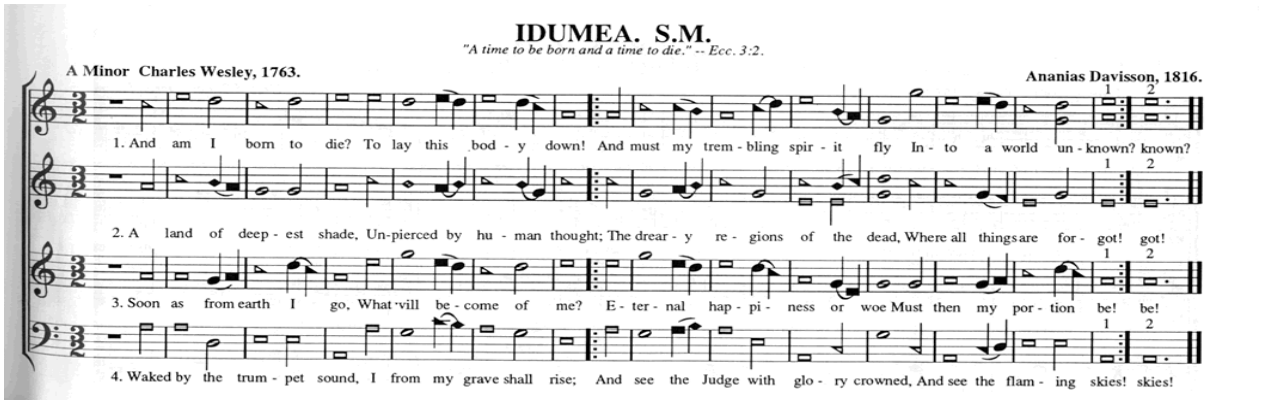
41 http://bluegrasstoday.com/jp-fraley-passes/

42 That is, with less emphasis on a 'borrowed' C# as some of the more modern or Kentucky versions. This will become a point when I discus pitch later in the essay.

I adapted a familiar tune from the Sacred Harp repertoire, *Idumea*, for the bass line accompaniment to my transcribed fiddle tune melody. In my story *Pammanottus*, the main character repeatedly embarks on a somewhat Sisyphean yet one would think easily accomplished errand. I wanted to lament his futile efforts (and foreshadow his death), with rather disproportionately grand existential angst, by way of the unarticulated words to the hymn:

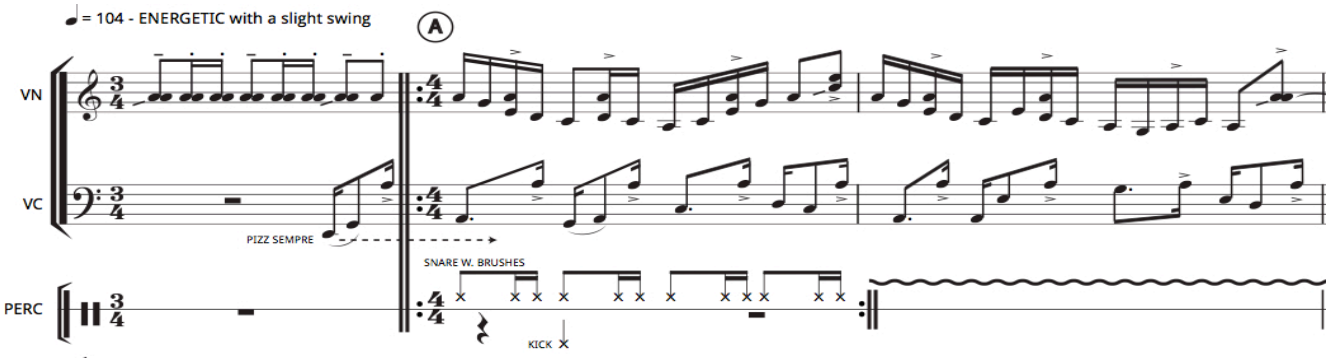
And am I born to die?
To lay this body down?
And must my trembling spirit fly
Into a world unknown
A land of deepest shade,
Unpierced by human thought,
The dreary regions of the dead,
Where all things are forgot?

Soon as from earth I go,
What will become of me?
Eternal happiness or woe
Must then my portion be;
Waked by the trumpet's sound,
I from my grave shall rise,
And see the Judge with glory crowned,
And see the flaming skies



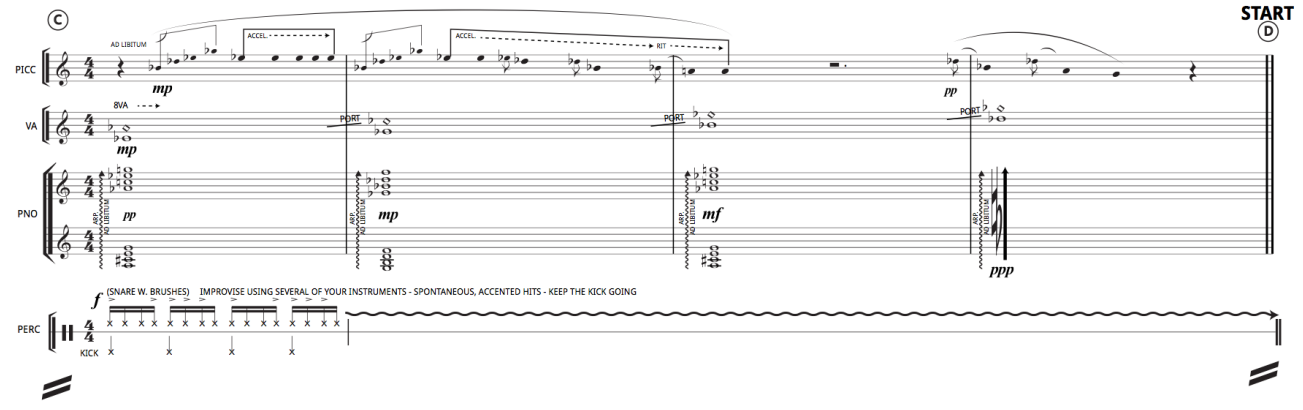
[Example 15: Traditional *Idumea* shape note Score]

Finally, under the melody and bass lines, I added a kick drum/snare accompaniment as in the following excerpt:



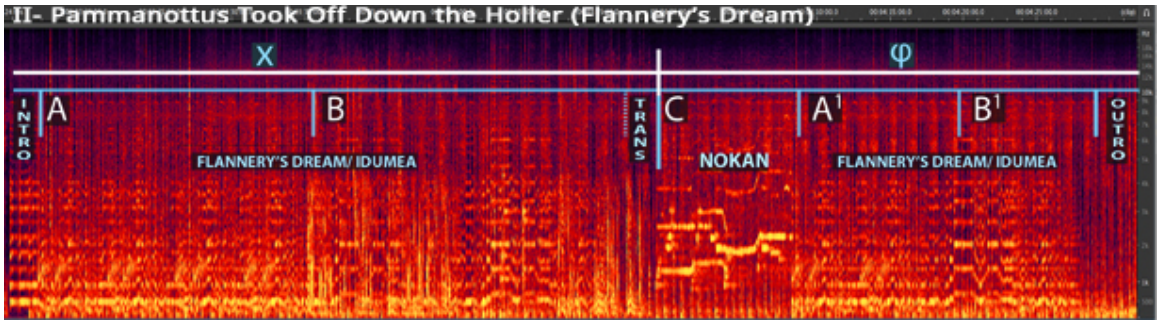
[Example 16: Fiddle tune setting]

Flannery's Dream is itself a crooked tune, and I wanted to create a crooked Form to hold it. I also wanted a contrasting timbre for an interruptive section within that form to underscore parts of the narration by means of a sonically striking reference to the Japanese Nokan, the Japanese flute I mentioned earlier. My intent with this music is to evoke the magical realism of the *were*-foxes. A good example occurs when the narrator discusses a dusty neon sign in the middle of the woods, and this music is heard.



[Example 17: Nokan Section Score excerpt]

A form diagram of all these elements in performance seems fitting:



[Example 18: Movement II Form]

In addition to quoting and otherwise borrowing a fiddle tune and hymn, I also borrowed a style from the classical music repertoire. At a crucial moment of the script, the narrator says, "Up above, the right arm of the Milky Way was shining in the sky and a family of Bats took off up in it." It seemed appropriate to reference a nocturne, given the night imagery. I had in mind an extended instrumental section of the musical drama—that is, with no dialogue. Once again, I took a cue from Takemitsu, this time from his seemingly contradictory Mahler-esque score for Kurosawa's film *Ran*.

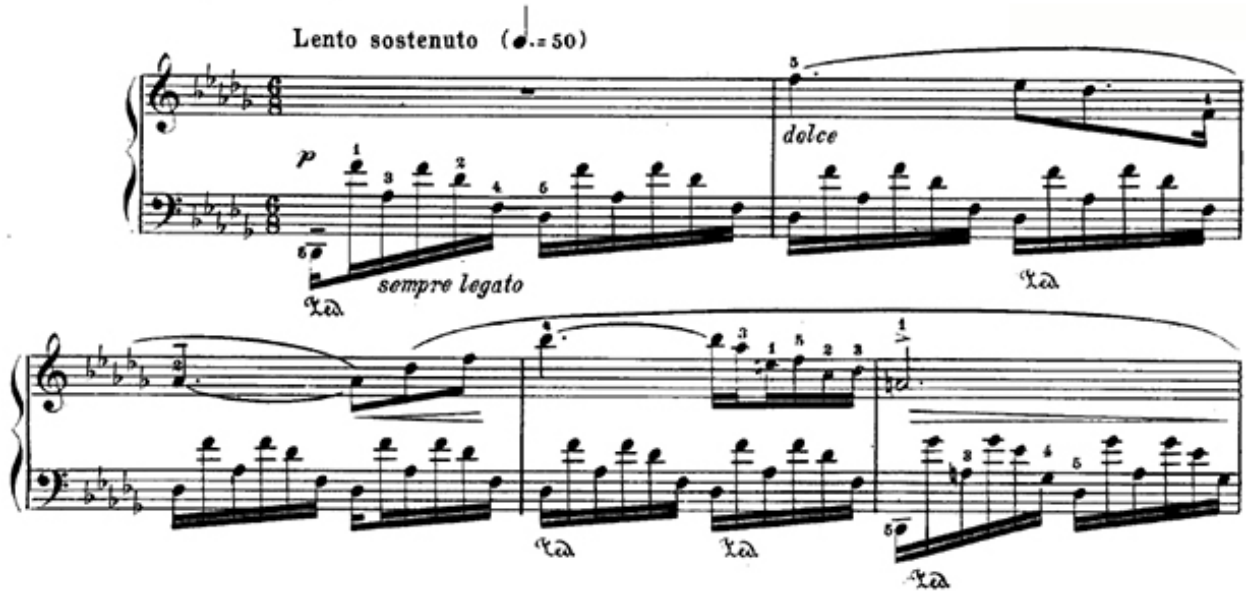
The film is set in Feudal Japan, and therefore seems to call for a traditional Japanese musical score. The story, however, is an adaptation of Shakespear's *King Lear*. Somehow, the alien late-19th Century-type orchestral score serves as counterpoint to both the story and the setting, and I hoped to accomplish something similar in my adoption of a Chopinesque piano style for my Noctourne,[43] which I strategically positioned in my

[43] 'Noctourne' is a spelling for this word that I have adopted due to a personal association with *Rota Fortuna*, *The Kingis Quair*, and abstractly, the SATOR square.

Appalachian Folktale. My envisioned graphics for this section include very large-scale deep space imagery, which contrasts greatly with the delicate, single piano notes at the beginning of the section. Sometimes, the contrast created by the juxtaposition of opposites helps convey a point, and my point here pertains to the tiny, yet poignant and meaningful nature of human endeavors.

Unlike my careful selection and literal use of *Flannery's Dream* and *Idumea,* I didn't want to literally borrow a Chopin *Nocturne*. Instead, I composed new music in a similar style that references both pieces from his Op. 27:

OP. 27, NO 1 (OPENING)



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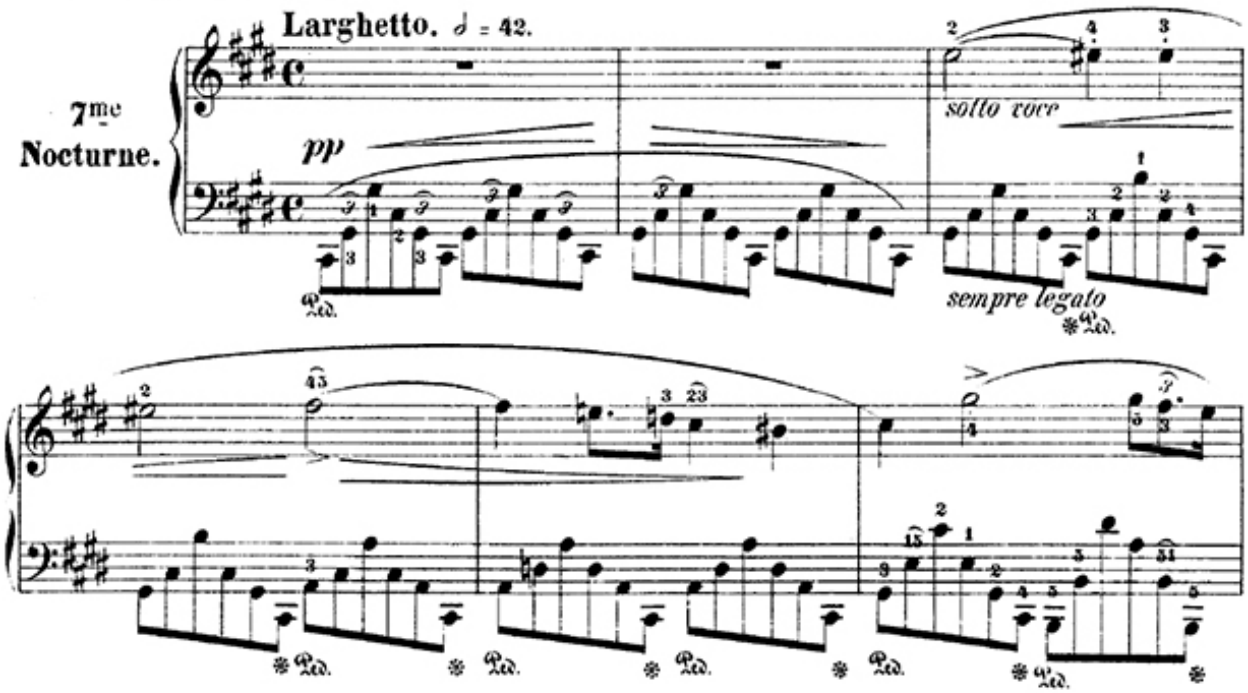
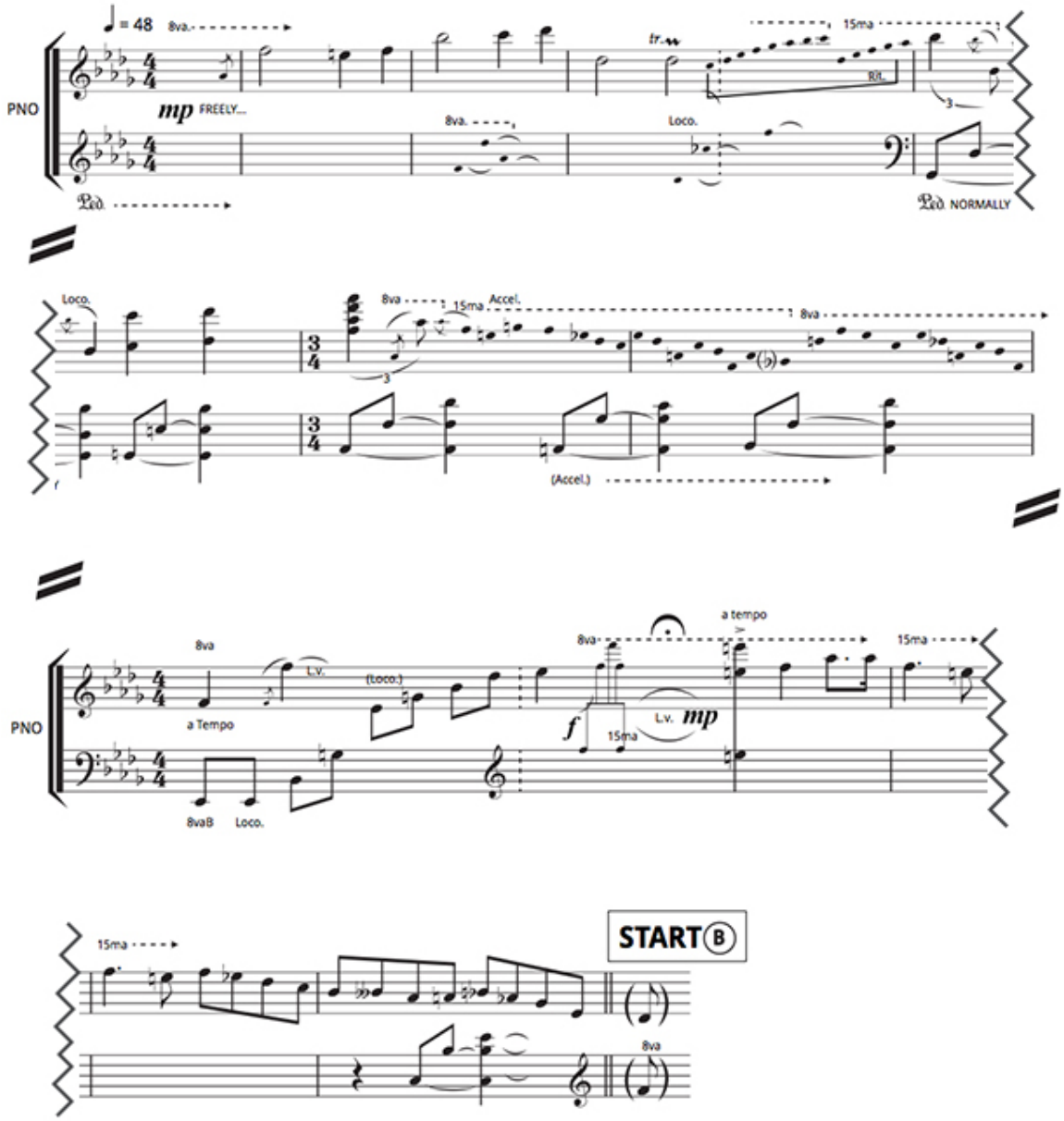


[Example 19: Chopin Nocturnes Op 27]

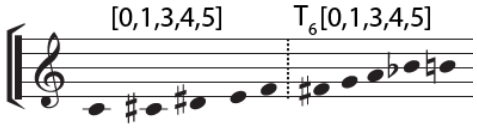


[Example 20: *Noctourne in D-Flat Major (excerpt)*]

Pitch Materials:

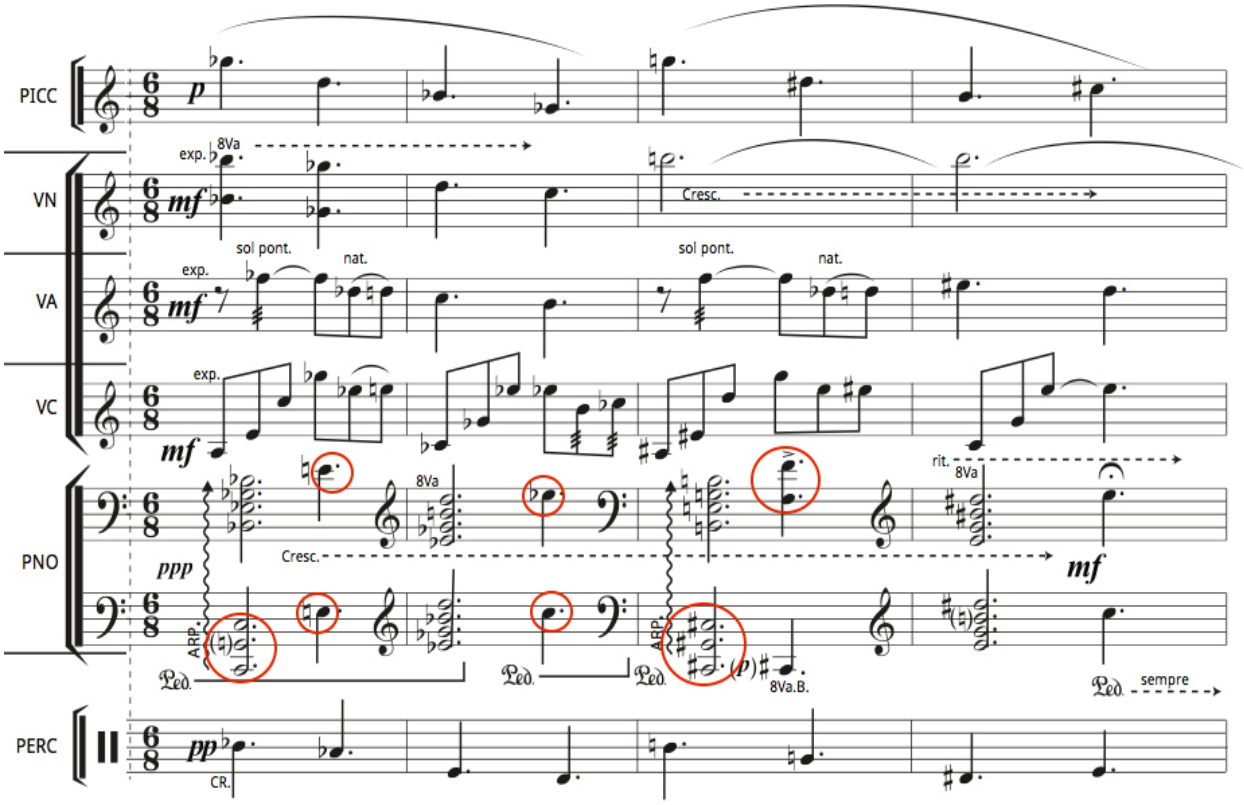
In *Pammanottus*, I wanted to develop a pitch language that could encompass the disparate elements I drew on. I began by considering some very general principals of the material I had at hand. Given the prevalence of pentatony in Roots music, as in *Idumea* and *Flannery's Dream*, I knew that I wanted to incorporate the idea of pentatony in my musical language. Another aspect of Roots music is the so-called 'Blue Note', a term I am using here only for common reference. To clarify, I refer to the ambiguous third often found in folk materials rather than a reference to Jazz or Blues, per se (see the above transcription of *Flannery's Dream*, with it's inclusion of both C and C# in the root note A).

The Nocturnes I referenced are both structured on the same root note (C#/Db), but are in different modes—minor and major. Actually, both Nocturnes make frequent use of the major/minor third found on E/F(E#). So, from these basic ideas, I developed the following pitch collection:



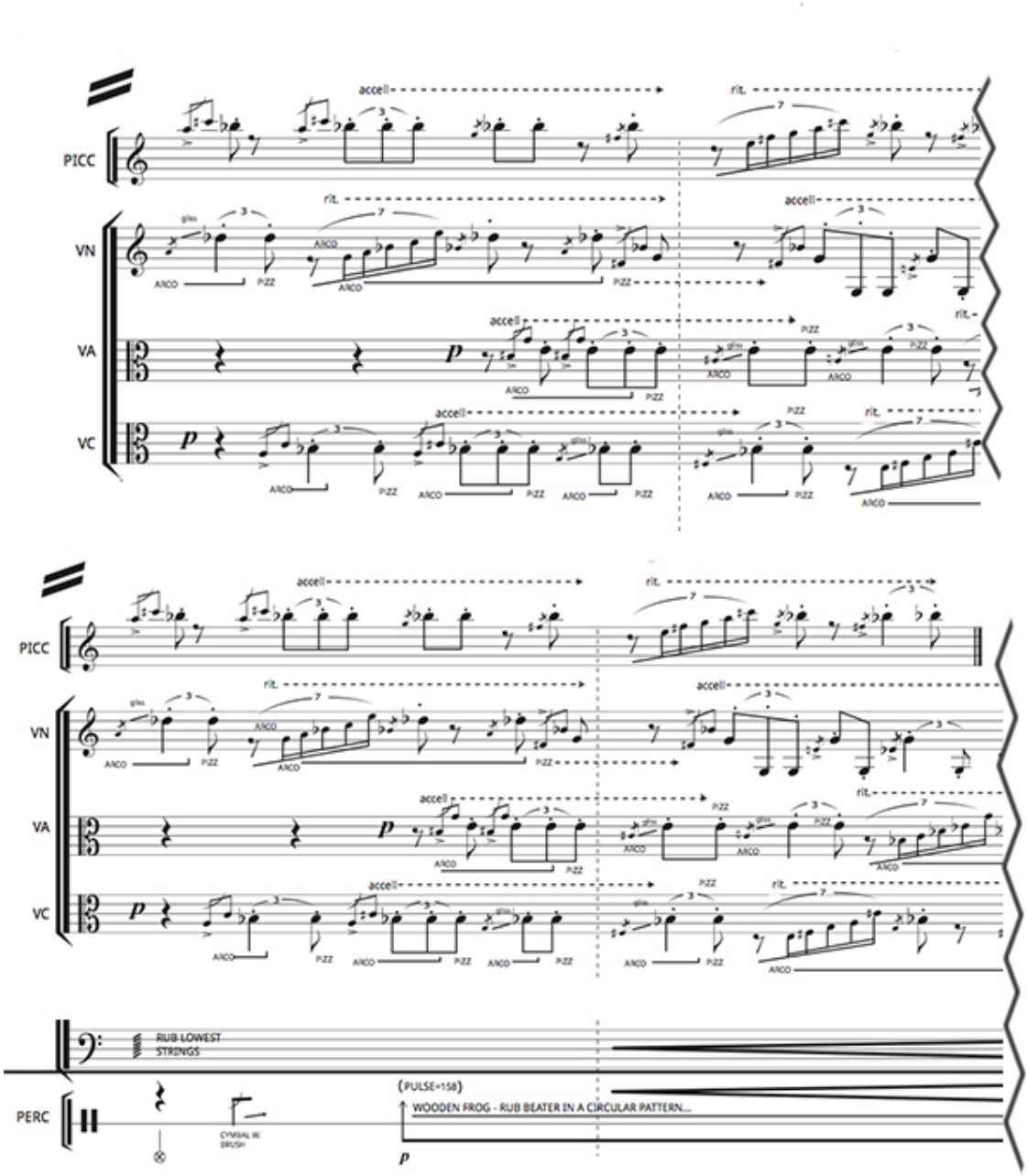
[Example 21: Pitch collection]

The first four notes could be read as the scale degrees 7-1-2-3 in Harmonic minor mode with a major third added at the end, or simply half of an octatonic collection with a strange half step at the end. The following example, 'Pammanottus Chords', illustrates how I utilize this characteristic of my pitch materials.



[Example 22: Pammanottus Chords]

The following example illustrates a focus on just the [0,2,3] (and inversion) elements of my collection:



[Example 23: Little Frog Fuge]

Summary

For my dissertation project, I was able to draw on my proficiency in several disciplines to support my composition, and I will expand on this in future work. The incorporation of storytelling and art seems to offer a solution to integrating Appalachian folk and classical concert music. My extensive investigation of extant music that incorporates indigenous/concert music lead me, through critique, to ideas I may not have considered otherwise, and proved to be a great asset. I hope that my work contributes to the practice as one of many possible approaches to a complex compositional challenge: how can one respectfully incorporate the music of a marginalized culture in concert music? By 'respectfully', I don't necessarily mean 'without humor', as I hope that the humor in my work makes clear.

I don't think there is a single answer to this question of how to integrate indigenous and classical music, nor do I think that one should only deal with music from one's own familiar culture (although that is perhaps a significant advantage). I hope I have sparked some ideas with the concepts I illustrated from existing works and from my own solutions to this question.

Appendix - An Analysis of George Crumb's *Unto the Hills [American Songbook III]: Songs of Sadness, Yearning and Innocence*

I am including this detailed discussion of Crumb's compositional approach in *Unto the Hills* because it is a primary influence on my own compositional decisions in *Pammanottus*. Using the first movement, *Poor Wayfaring Stranger*, as a model, I will discuss Crumb's harmonic language —which often includes octatonicism, pentatonicism, and atonal elements — and demonstrate Crumb's integration of this harmonic language in his setting of the original folk song. Following this, I offer a critical commentary of Crumb's use of Appalachian folk sources in this musical context.

Crumb's usage of Appalachian folk songs as the basis of his concert piece constitutes 'musical borrowing' in the truest sense. This idea may seem counter-intuitive, considering that Crumb is of Appalachian origin, geographically, but it is nevertheless the case. As is typical when classical composers incorporate folk music in original compositions, 'borrowing' brings up many questions concerning appropriation and 'authenticity,' for example.

Crumb's Compositional Approach: ***Form and Thematic Material***

About 'Unto the Hills'

The title *Unto the Hills*—while evocative of Appalachian imagery—borrows from *Psalm 121 - A Song of Ascents*:

1 I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

2 My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.

3 He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

4 Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

5 The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand.

6 The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.

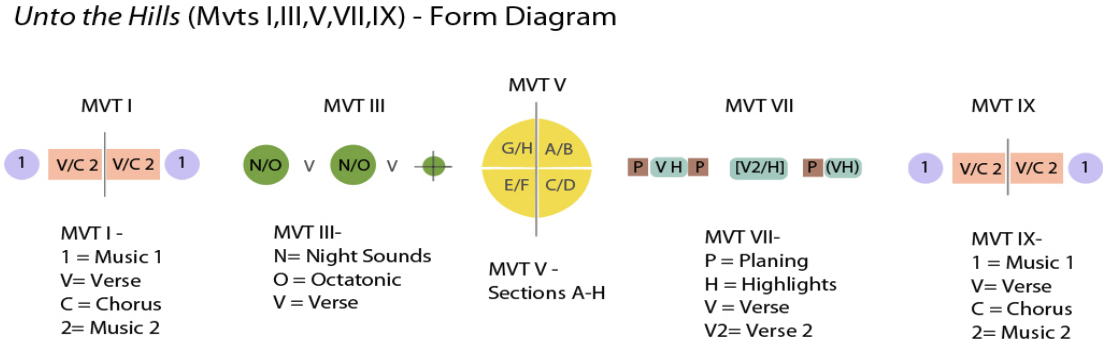
7 The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.

8-The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

The individual movements of the piece are based on eight well-known Appalachian Folk Songs,[44] with the exception of the exclusively instrumental music found in Movement V: I) Poor Wayfaring Stranger II) All the Pretty Little Horses III) Ten Thousand Miles IV) Ev'ry Night When the Sun Goes In V) Appalachian Epiphany: A Psalm for Sunset and Dusk (Instrumental Interlude) VI) Down in the Valley VII) Black, Black, Black is the Color VIII) The Riddle IX) Poor Wayfaring Stranger (Echo)

[44] As is common with information transmitted via oral tradition, many versions of these songs exist which exhibit variant texts and even harmonization. In his program note, Crumb states that he and his daughter simply chose the versions they liked the best and included them in the piece.

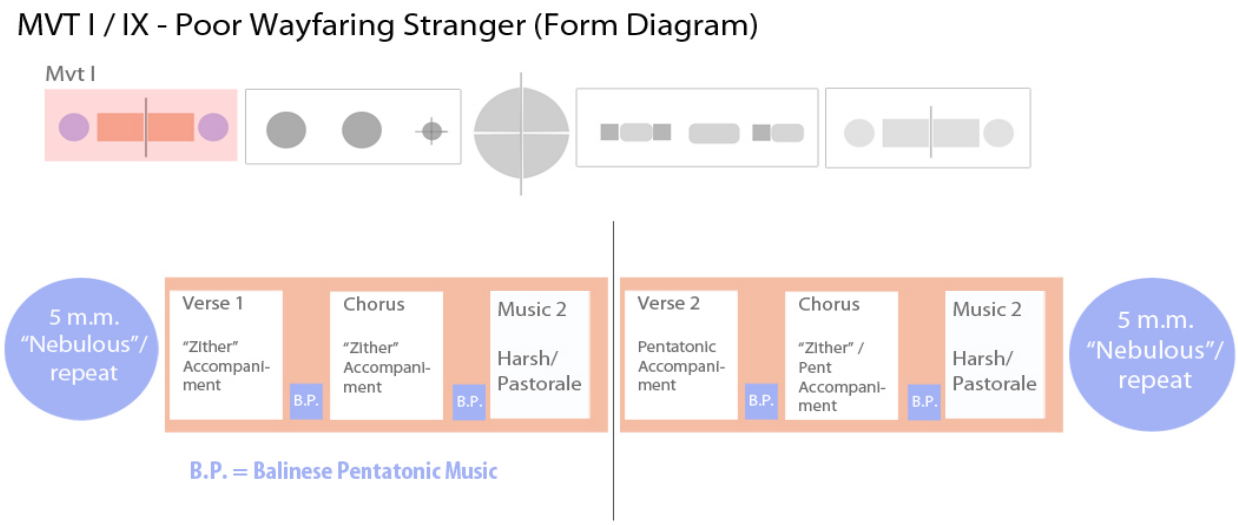
The movements of *Unto the Hills* are arranged in arch form: three of the nine total movements precede a central, 'circular'-form movement (Movement V), and three follow. This creates a mirror image, which reflects around the center of Movement V. [45]



[Figure 1: Form Diagram]

Each individual movement displays its own sort of formal symmetry, either bi-partite or tri-partite structures. The individual movements—parts of a symmetrical overall design themselves—often contain symmetrical sub-sections characterized by 'types' of music. Beginning with Movement I, I will illustrate the overall form of each movement using graphical representation. Then I present a description of the types of music that articulate each individual movement form. I have given each type of music a descriptive designation of my own invention for ease of reference.

[45] The focus of this essay is movements I, III, V, VII, and IX, and I confine my discussion and illustrations to those Movements.



[Figure 2: Movement I/IX]

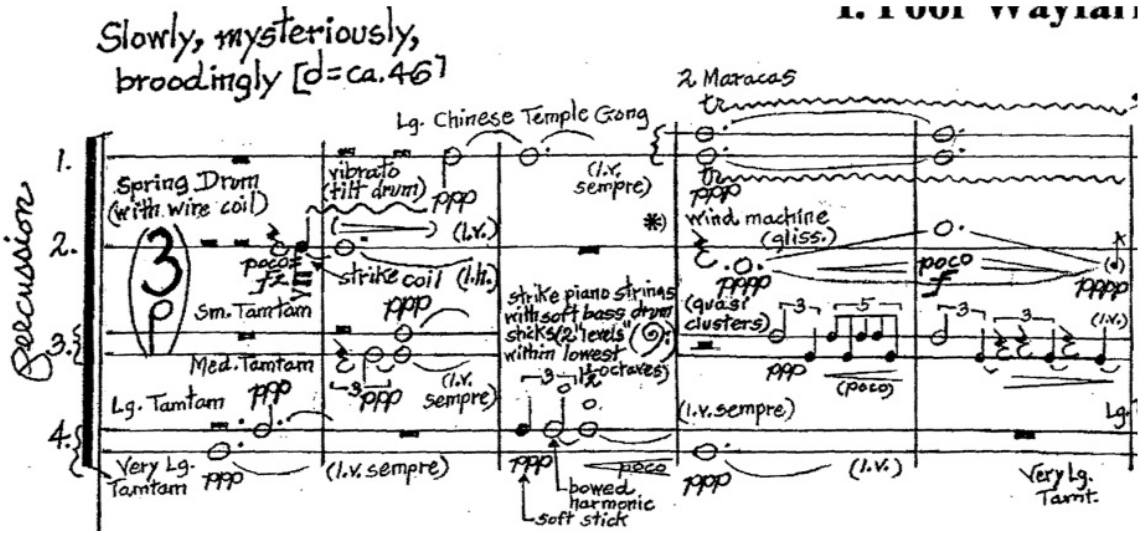
Four distinct types of music articulate the bi-partite structure of movements I and IX:[46]

- Music 1: a repeated five measure phrase of 'Nebulous Percussion Music', which provides prefatory and supplementary remarks, or, beginning and ending points of formal punctuation.
- Verse / Chorus: the actual song *Poor Wayfaring Stranger*
- Music 2: intermediate instrumental music
- Balinese Pentachord (B.P. Music): an odd, recurring pentatonic figure

Music 1: This music is best represented by the opening gesture of the piece, a cavernous, nebulous sound produced by tamtams of various sizes and a Spring Drum (with a wire coil). This is an unfocused and complex timbre, which gives the illusion of reverberation one would experience in a large enclosed space. Slightly more focused notes sound from a Chinese temple gong and a harmonic produced from the large tamtam by means of bowing the edge of the instrument. The resulting texture is soft and diffuse, while at the

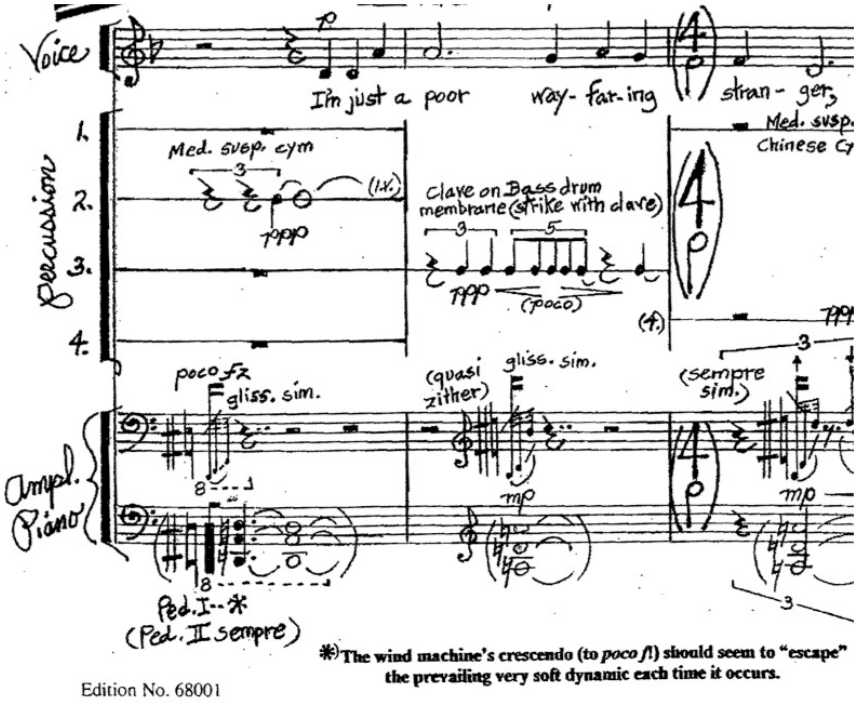
[46] Movements I and IX are nearly identical – they act as "bookends" for the other movements of *Unto the Hills*.

same time providing a distinct, slow pulse (3/2, *Slowly, mysteriously, broodingly* [halfnote = ca. 46]). In contrast, maracas play a very small, dry trill held through the consequent two-measure phrase, which helps contrast and contextualize the vast sound of the tamtams. At mm. 3 an 'old fashioned' wind machine (the type heard in Ravel's 1912 Ballet *Daphnis et Chloë,* for example) crescendos while Percussionist 3 plays a triplet/quintuplet pattern on the low strings of the piano (damper pedal depressed) with bass drum sticks (Figure 3).



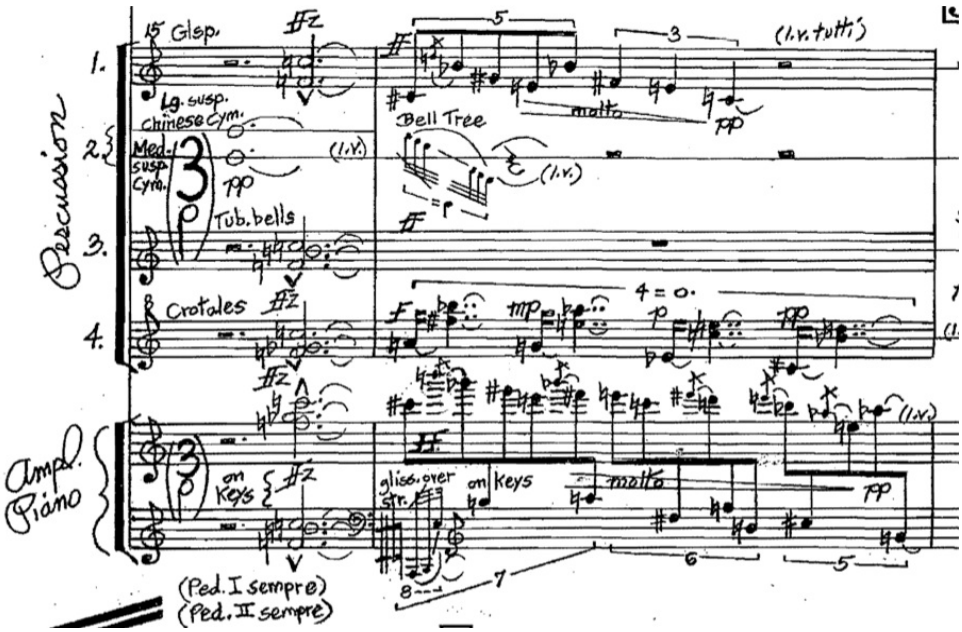
[Figure 3: example of Music 1, 'Nebulous Percussion Music']

Verse/Chorus**:** An 'unaltered' vocal performance of the song. For the initial accompaniment texture, the pianist plays a high, 'quazi zither' pattern accomplished by depressing the sostenuto pedal combined with strumming on the inside of the strings. Additional accompaniment often consists of the triplet/quintuplet pattern encountered in Music 1 played on African Log drums and on Claves (placed on the membrane of a bass drum).



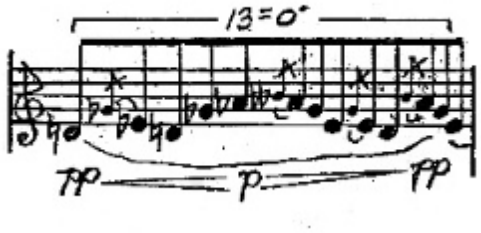
[Figure 4: Typical Verse with 'zither' accompaniment]

Music 2: acts as punctuation for the Verse/Chorus pairs and occurs twice: once immediately preceding rehearsal 5 then preceding Rehearsal 9. Music 2 is itself bipartite and consists of a startling, dissonant segment, and a more pastoral-sounding segment, which echoes the folk melody (played on a Soprano Recorder by Percussionist 1).



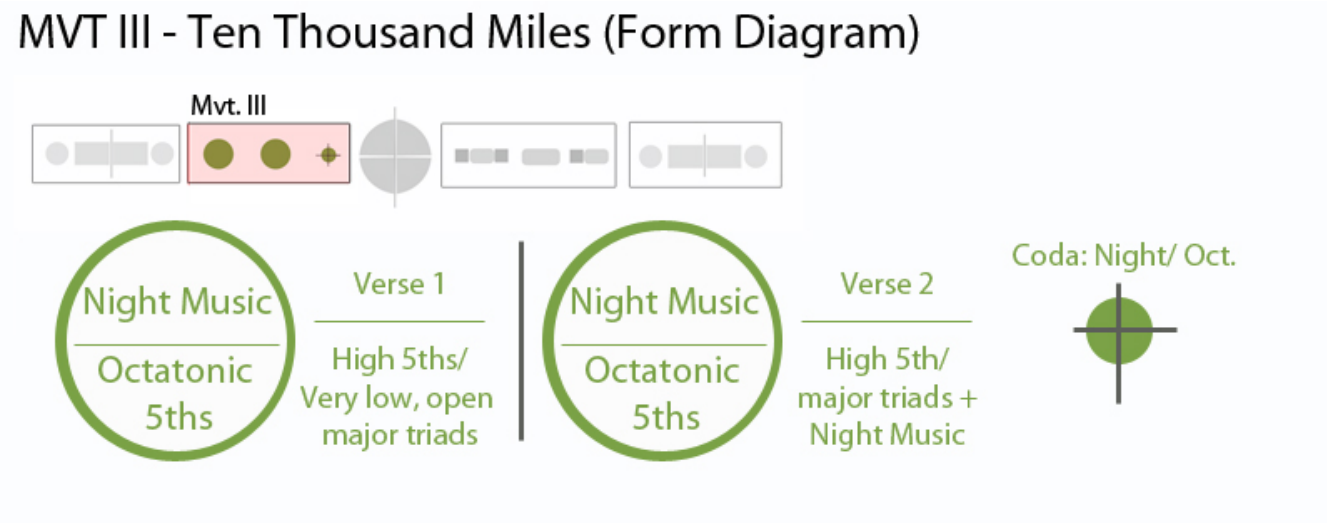
[Figure 5: 'Harsh' segment of Music 2]

Balinese Pentatonic Music: At the end of the first phrase of the song, Japanese Temple Bells produce a rhythmic pattern that foreshadows the coming theme which I designated 'Balinese Pentatonic Music' (B.P. Music). One measure before Rehearsal 3, Percussionist 1 plays the 'Balinese Pentachord Music' on the Almenglocken, which punctuates each Verse and Chorus. This figure follows each Verse/Chorus pair but, additionally, occurs as ghostly, unpitched echos throughout the piece.



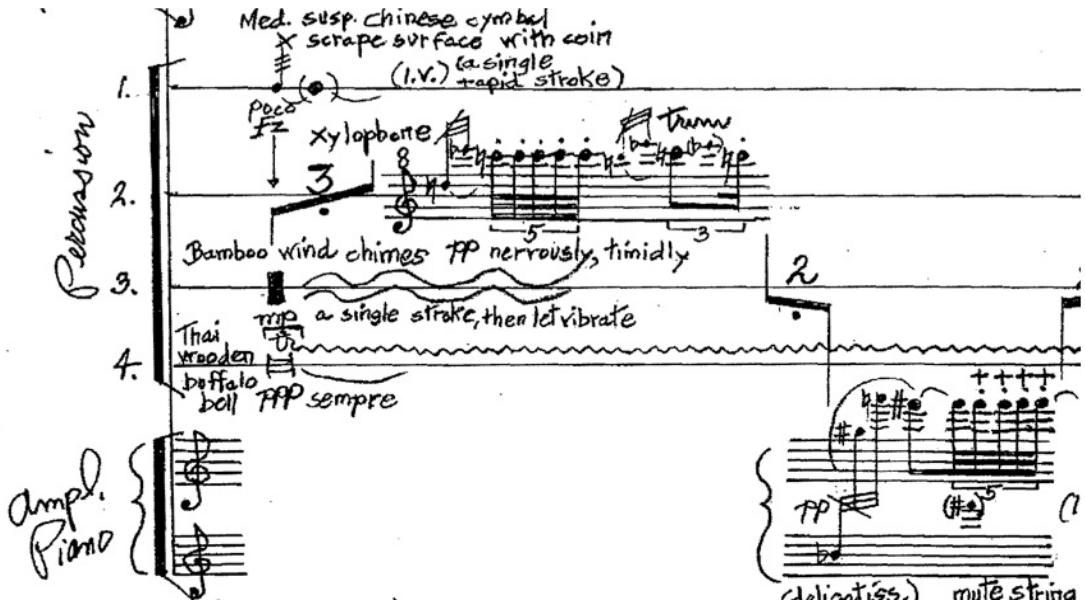
[Figure 6, Typical instance of 'Balinese Pentatonic' music]

Movement III - Formally, like Movement I, Movement III favors symmetry and consists of a few main types of musical elements: Night Music, "Octatonic 5ths", and Verse Music.



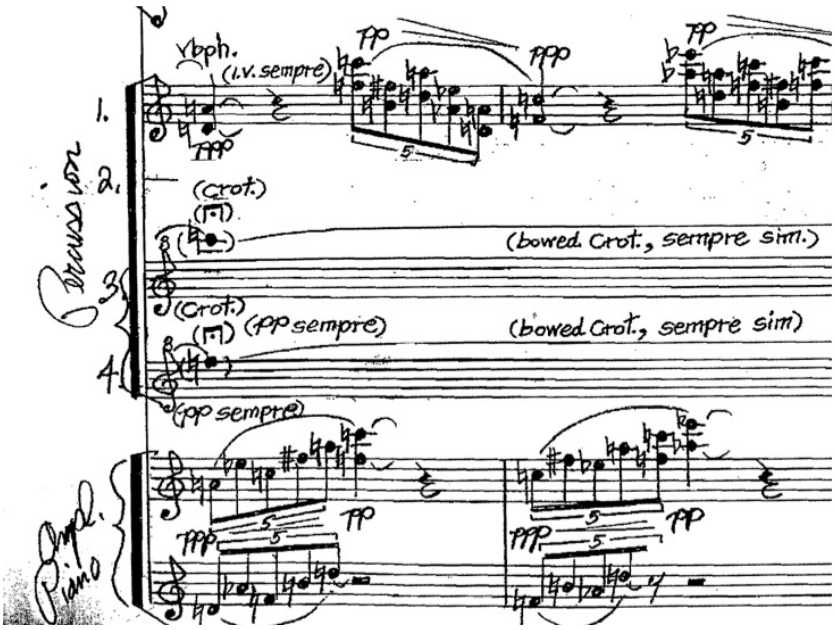
[Figure 7: Movement III]

Night Music: The score indicates that the initial music of Movement. III is performed *Senza Misura*, "like tiny, intimate sounds of nature". Like the Wind Machine heard in Movement I, some instruments are enlisted here for their literal mimetic qualities: the Cuica, Bamboo Chimes and the Vietnamese Wooden Frog. The call and response gesture played on the xylophone and piano also evoke insect sounds, birdcalls or 'Night Music' (of the variety often heard in other music by Crumb and the onomatopoeic music of Bela Bartòk – *Piano Concerto 3*, Movement, 3 for example). I will discuss pitch content and other details of harmonic relationships later in this essay, but for now it is useful to note that pitch content of these figures derives from the Balinese Pentachord.



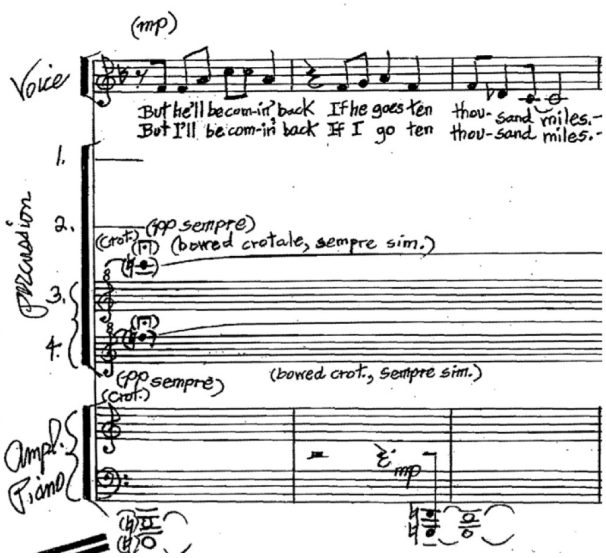
[Figure 8: An example of 'Night Music']

Octatonic 5ths: This 'type' of music begins after the nature sounds, following a five second pause during which only the Wooden Buffalo Bell is heard (like a constant drone of night sounds). The piano and Vibraphone trade off, each playing perfect 5ths in quintuplet rhythm. The 5ths are continuously transposed in order to outline notes of ascending and descending arpeggiated diminished 7th chords. When grouped together, the pitches represented by this pattern of 5ths form an octatonic collection. An exception occurs at the end of this phrase when an A-E 5th occurs before Rehearsal 19 as a kind of appoggiatura - the notes do not exist in this particular octatonic collection).



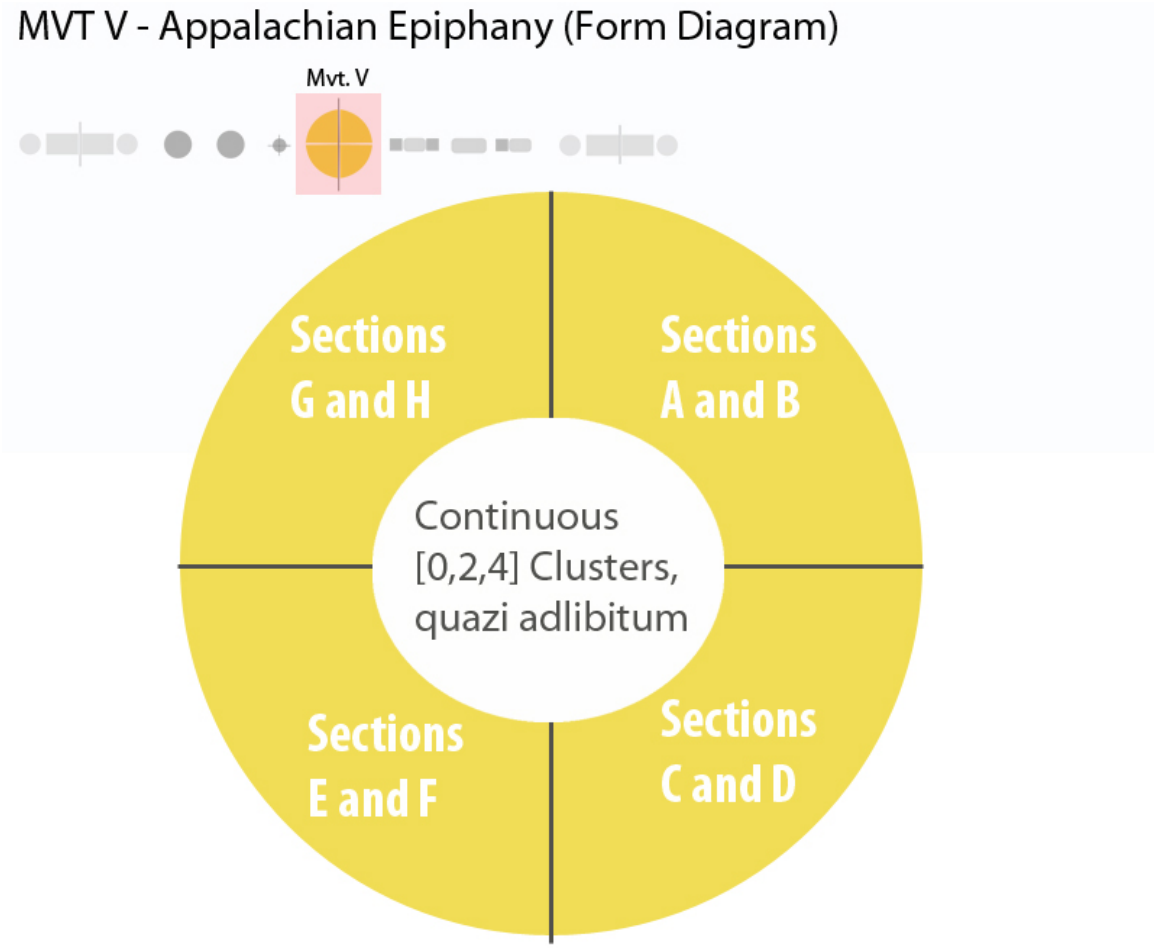
[Figure 9: Octatonic 5ths]

Song Music: The very simple-seeming accompaniment for this movement most usually consists of a high pitched perfect 5th (F5-C6) produced by bowed crotales and low perfect 5th underpinnings in the piano centered around Gb2. The nature sounds begin to intrude on this stark texture towards the end of the song setting. The song itself is in F major with strong pentatonic tendencies. Adding some harmonic variety to the plain, anhemitonic variety pentatonicism, an occasional flatted seventh (E flat) in the melody hints at Mixolydian mode and an occasional flatted sixth (D flat) borrowed from minor mode occurs in the melody towards the ends of phrases.



[Figure 10: Song Music]

Movement V - In comparison with the other movements, Movement. V is unusual in two significant ways: the manner in which the composer Crumb's notation notates the music, and the lack of a clear folk song source as its basis. First, the score is literally drafted as a central circle of music—that is, musical staff lines drawn in the shape of a circle—with arms of additional music radiating in orbit around it. The ensemble forms two groups: Percussionists 1 and 2 play 'circle-music', while Percussionists 3 and 4, along with the pianist, play the music found in the radiating arms.



[Figure 11: Movement V]

Secondly, Movement V is the only movement of *Unto the Hills* not obviously based on an Appalachian folk song. The music not only lacks singing: the singer plays no part in music creation at all. Crumb's work incorporates violinists playing wine glasses, or singers directed to play drums of some sort as witnessed in other pieces such as *Black Angels* or *Songs, Drones, and Refrains of Death*. The composer could have easily called for the singer to double on a pitched percussion instrument or asked the singer to hum wordlessly—perhaps intone an Appalachian folk song, for example—but he does not. Proceeding with these two observances in mind, the scoring technique allows for a

somewhat ‘open’ musical performance. Percussionist 1 begins ‘circle-music’ with clusters of [0,2,4] trichords[47] played on the vibraphone. Crumb directs the percussionist to play these clusters with “extremely soft sticks to produce a music on the verge of inaudibility (quasi quasi subliminal!),” and, additionally, the percussionist articulates the music at dynamic level “*sempre ppppp*!” Along with the Vibraphone chords, Percussionist 2 plays soft accents on various cymbals and an abstractly pitched melodic line on the bowed flexitone.

The score direction indicates that at some point “during the second revolution of the 'circle-music', the sequence of radiating ‘Arm-music’ begins. The orbiting arm-musics occur in Call and Response pairs (A/B, C/D, E/F, G/H). Each arm concludes with a five second interval. During these five-second intervals, sound rings within the illusion of cavernous space. This designation greatly differs from an indication of five seconds of merely waiting or silence. The Call portions of the arm-music pairs consist of chisel-piano music (performed utilizing a two-person-tandem technique). The Calls evoke the odd half-step pentatonic music found in previous movements while the Responses mimic the nature sounds found in Movement III.

Movement. VII returns to the song form abandoned in Movement V and consists of four main types of music: Planing Music, Verse, Verse II, and Highlights:

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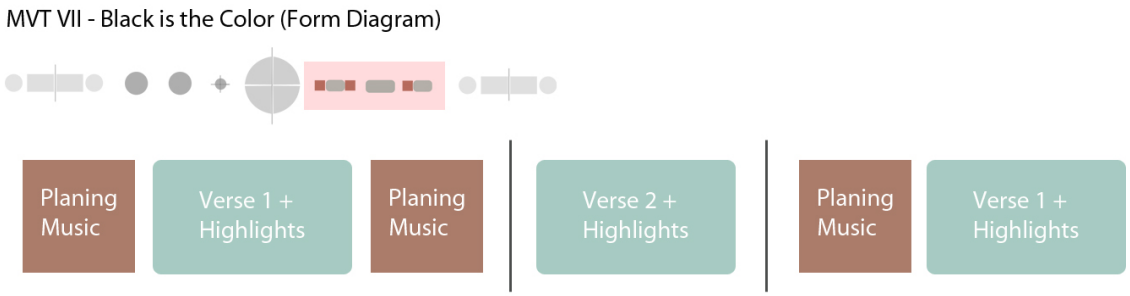
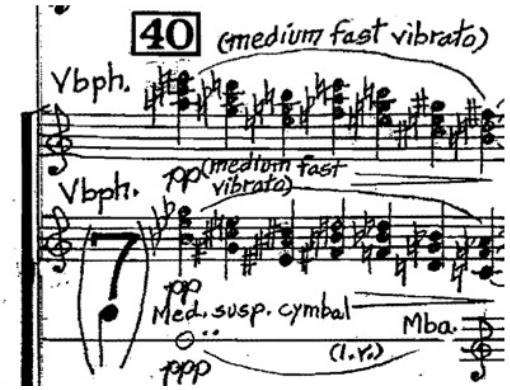
[47] One may interpret these clusters as disembodied [0,2,4] trichords or members of a whole-tone collection. However, I distinctly hear these trichords as the initial three degrees of major scales. Considered as members of a collective rather than individual clusters, one observes that the successive trichords eventually accumulate all twelve transposition levels needed to represent all twelve major keys. The clusters often transpose by intervals of perfect fourths or fifths, which helps strengthen the “major key” associations a [0,2,4] trichord might suggest.



[Figure 12: Movement VII]

Planing Music: Percussionists 1 and 2 play minor triads, related by transposition 6, on vibraphones. The top triad is in root position, the lowest in second inversion. These combined minor triads recall the octatonic fifths encountered in Movement. III in harmonic content, gesture and timbre. Two minor triads related by T6 form hexachord (0,1,3,6,7,9), an octatonic collection fragment.

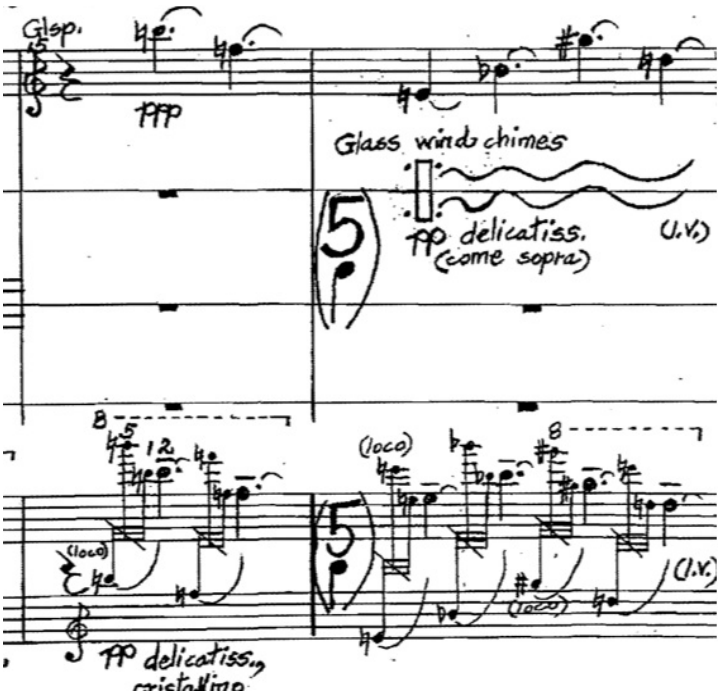


[Figure 13: Example of 'Planing Music']

Verse 1: The original melody, performed here in Bb natural minor. Accompaniment includes piano harmonics that outline the tonic triad, a bed of marimba notes which sound the above-mentioned hexachord transposed up a half-step (a Bb minor triad over

an E minor triad in second inversion). The sustained marimba texture moves in a planing motion, which accompanies the melodic phrases.

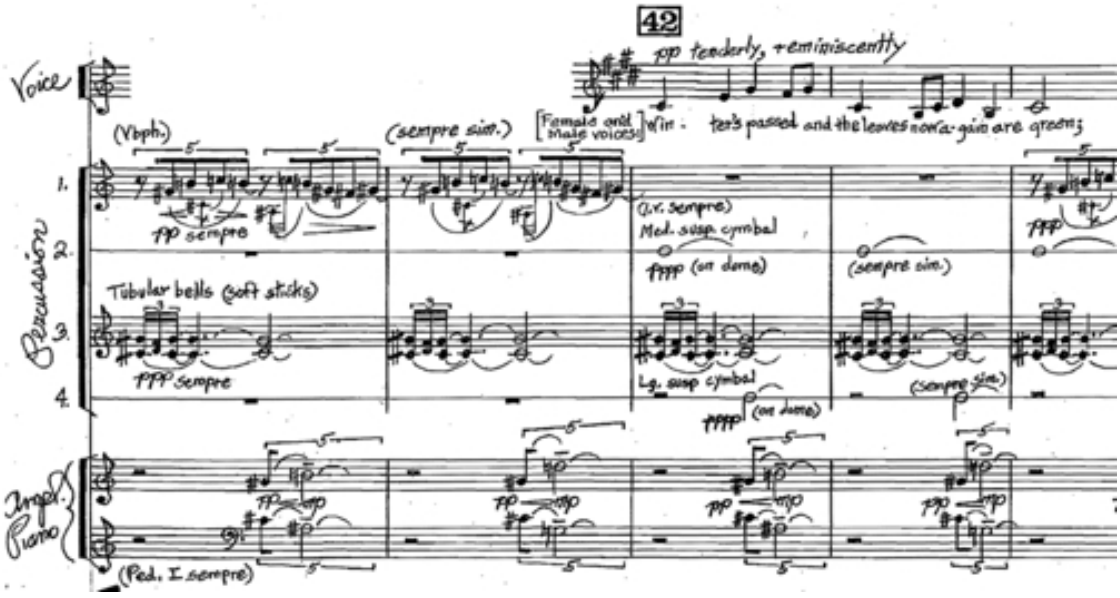
Highlights: Single, high pitched notes played on the glockenspiel and the piano. The piano plays ornamental notes an octave above and below the melodic notes. The melodic motion of these notes adheres to an octatonic collection.



[Figure 14: Example of 'Highlights']

Verse 2 (C# minor): The melody, although transposed, remains the same as in Verse 1. However, the accompanying ensemble music differs markedly from the prior accompaniment. This new music includes an interesting accompaniment figure in the piano built from small-scale symmetrical musical shapes. The piano slowly plays a pattern that outlines a half-diminished 7th chord. This figure emerges from above and below a C#-G# perfect 5th. The right hand moves up outlining an arpeggiated diminished

chord from G#4 to D7, while the left hand does the same, but in mirror image: downward, outlining an arpeggiated dimished 7th chord from C#4-G2.



[Figure 15: Symmetrical Accompaniment Pattern excerpt]

Compositional Approach: Movement I as a model

The term 'pentatonic' describes a variety of scale-types, and certainly, some types of pentatonic scales evoke certain cultures.[48] The folk sources Crumb chose for his settings typically employ the Major and Minor variety of pentatonic scales the commonly found in American/European folk music. In addition to these typical pentatonic modes, Crumb, a classical music composer, responds to this native pentatonicism with his own peculiar hemitonic pentachord [0,1,4,6,7] (the 'Balinese Pentachord' mentioned previously). Crumb employs this pentachord in tandem with the typical Major and Minor pentatonic scales found in the folk sources. Perhaps this pentachord acts as a kind of missing link

[48] The hemitonic variety of minor pentatonic built on the notes A,B,C,E,F recalls Japanese traditional music, for example.

between standard pentatonicism and octatonicism, which is the third element of Crumb's harmonic language I will discuss.

Movement I offers a particularly clear and comprehensive view of these elements functioning together in Crumb's compositional design. Additionally, it demonstrates Crumb's subtle reference to more traditional harmonic practice one might associate with the well known folk song *Poor Wayfaring Stranger*.

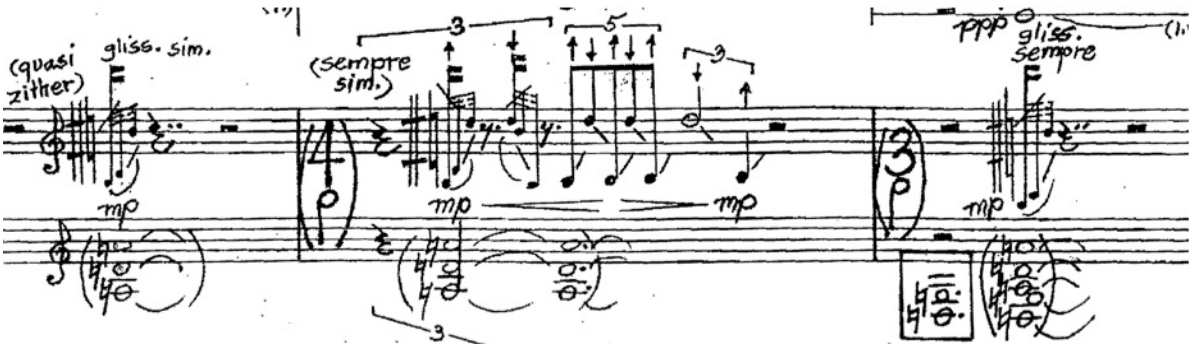
Superficially, one may readily observe many instances of text painting in the composed settings for these folk songs. For example, consider the following lyrics: "I am a poor wayfaring stranger / While traveling through this world of woe." The opening gesture of the piece, which, as stated before, is a cavernous, nebulous sound produced by tamtams of various sizes, low notes played on the piano strings with percussion implements, and notes played on the reverberative Spring Drum (with a wire coil). The thunderous, rumbling sound produced by this method and the mimetic sounds of the wind machine imitate that of a coming storm. The large, desolate soundscape helps support the sentiment of the song lyrics by means of traditional-style text painting.

The chosen texts certainly provide ample opportunity for text painting. While these elements abound in all of the settings, Crumb's composed music reflects the folk songs in more subtle ways. The melody of Poor Wayfaring Stranger is strictly D minor pentatonic of the ahemitonic variety (D-F-G-A-C as opposed to D-E-F-A-Bb). The common harmonization of this tune draws from a mixture of Natural Minor, Harmonic Minor, and

Dorian modes. Crumb's setting avoids these common harmonization practices nearly altogether. In doing so, Crumb is able to more abstractly—perhaps more comprehensively—reference the original material in question.

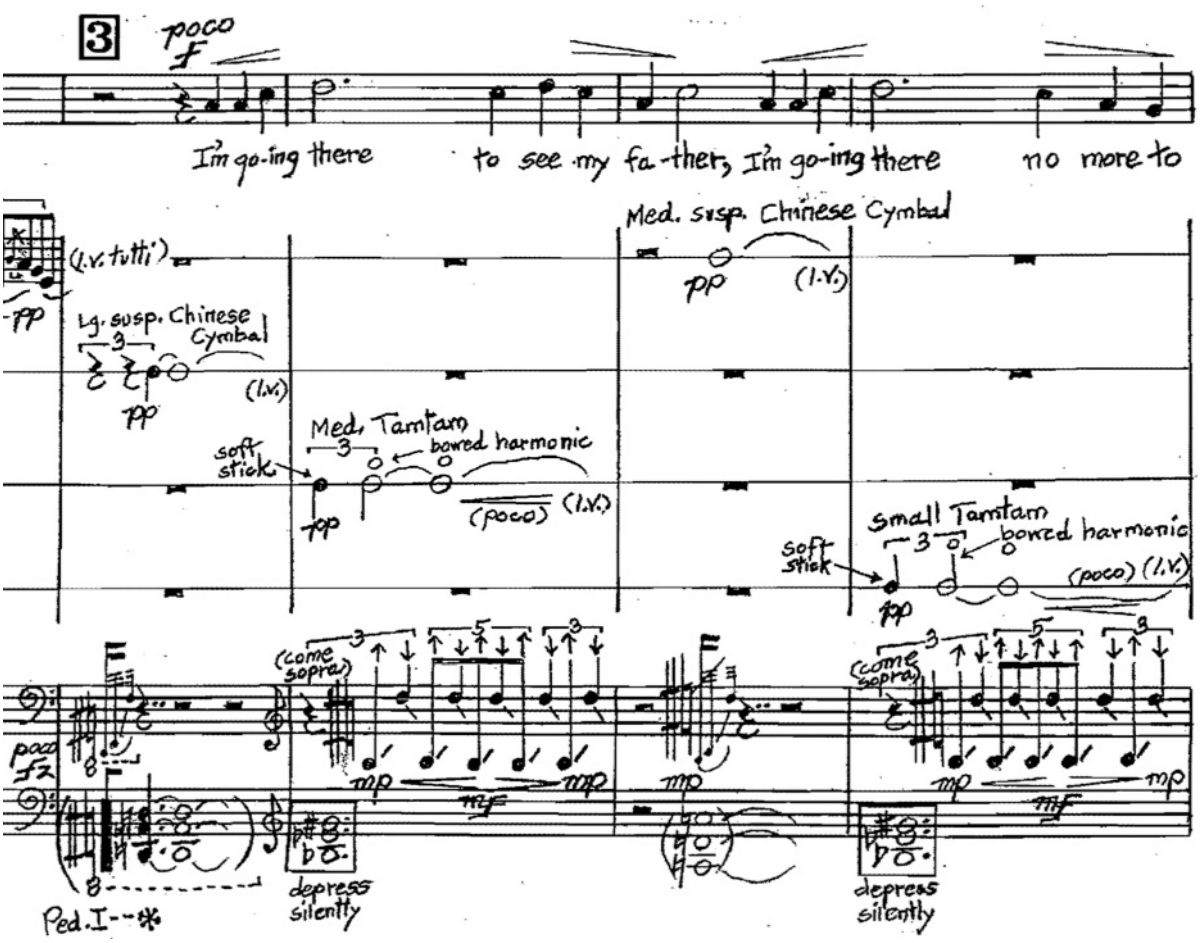
At Rehearsal 1, the piano plays a low drone on D1-A1-D2 that echoes the opening interval of the melody. The piano notes are produced via an extended technique that involves silently depressing the desired keys and securing the pitches with the sostenuto pedal while also holding down the damper pedal. The pianist then strums the cluster of strings around the secured pitches then releases the damper pedal, causing the desired pitches to emerge from a cloud of surrounding pitches.

Interestingly, at the point of the melody where the harmony traditionally changes to either a G Major chord (Dorian) or G Minor chord (Natural Minor), Crumb instead provides D-G-A-D-A in the piano 'zither' accompaniment, giving the impression of a G-suspended chord in second inversion. Because this chord lacks a B or a B-flat, the G-based chord commits neither to major nor minor quality, thus avoiding association with either harmonic mode.



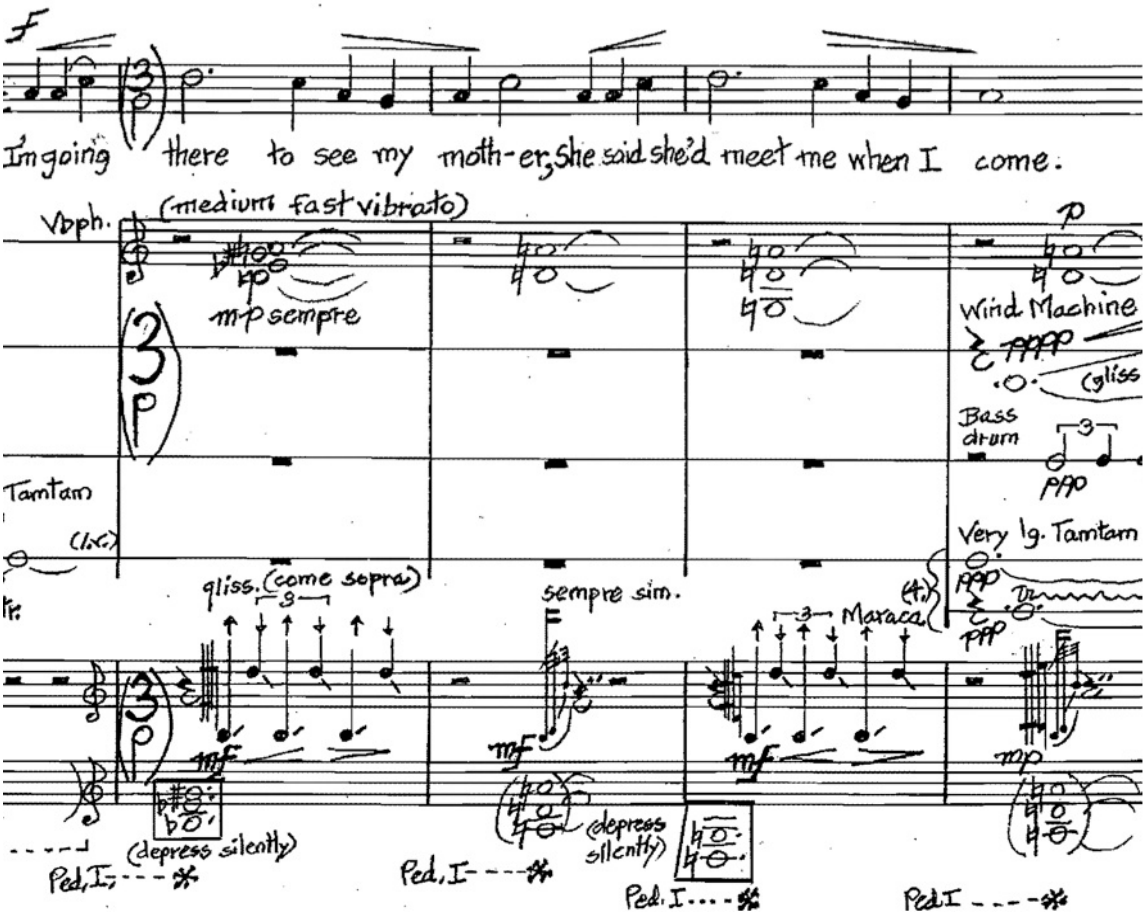
[Figure 16: Implied harmony]

At Rehearsal 3, the Chorus begins. As before, the melody is accompanied by the Zither-like piano strumming, this time strumming the notes Bb, Eb and G#. At this point in the original song, the harmony would be Bb major (VI, in natural minor mode) with the third of the chord (D) in the melody. Although the Eb and G# create a bit of dissonance with Bb major, the Bb in the bass supports the harmonic change to VI, and the Eb and G#(Ab) might be aurally interpreted as a variety of quartal, or 'suspended' harmony much like the D-G-A accompaniment found in the previous verse.



[Figure 17: implied harmony 2]

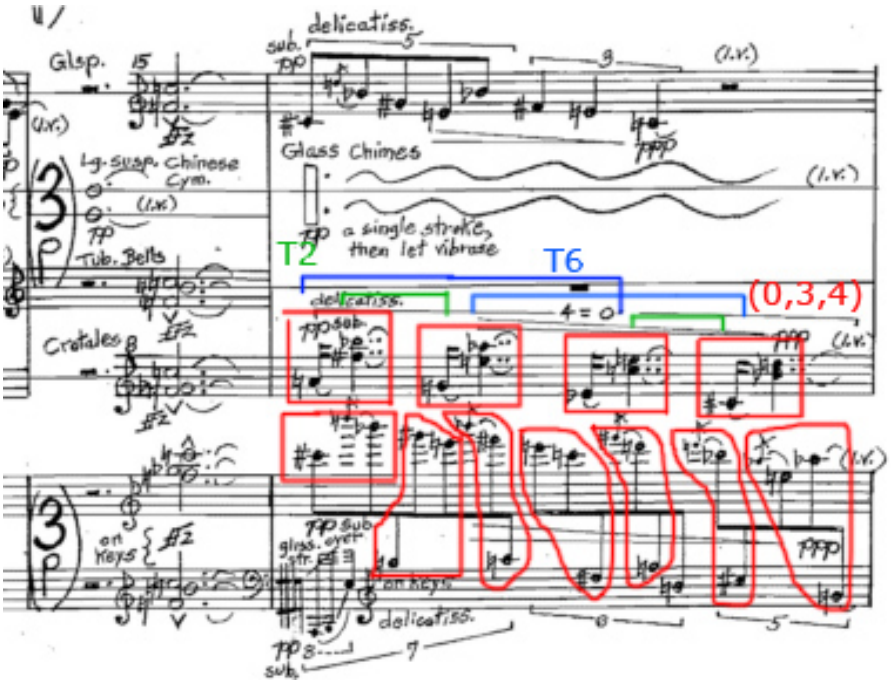
Further examination of this particular accompaniment music as found in the later iteration of the chorus near Rehearsal 7 reveals a yet subtler bond between the composed music and the folk song sources. This time, the accompaniment music includes the D-A interval more prominently (mostly in the vibraphone), which strengthens the presence of the (0,1,6,7) tetrachord in the harmonic fabric of the composed setting. The (0,1,6,7) Tetrachord contains most of the notes of the Balinese pentachord and also reflects and supports the opening 5th interval found in the folk melody—half-steps above and below the lower and higher notes outlining the opening perfect 5th interval of the melody.



[Figure 18: Supporting 5ths]

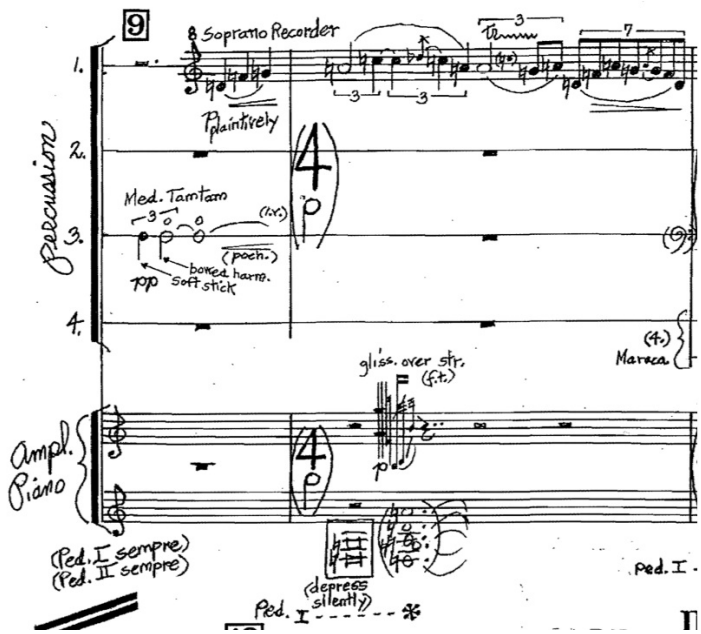
Following the first verse of *Poor Wayfaring Stranger*, Music 2 elaborates on aspects of the Balinese pentachord. The opening sonority of Music 2 is composed of a clear, normal

form instance of the cell (0, 1, 6, 7). A more complex gesture follows which combines the cell (0,3,4) and its inversion (0,1,4) in various ways. The (0,3,4) cells are related by transposition at levels 6 and 2, a harmonic relationship that Crumb develops further throughout *Unto the Hills*. Concurrently with the piano's linear spelling out of (0,3,4) trichords, Percussionist 4 plays semi-arpeggiated (0,3,4) clusters while Percussionist 1 plays highlights consisting of root notes from the piano's transposed trichords (these highlights emerge as thematic material in Movement VII).



[Figure 19: (0,3,4) Cells]

A more direct reflection of the folk material emerges from the disruptive, stark sounds of the passage. Percussionist 1 plays a D minor pentatonic melody on a Soprano Recorder—an unexpected instrument for a percussionist—which both recalls the melody of the folk song and the gesture of the Balinese Pentatonic music.



[Figure 20: Recorder Melody]

The example illustrates ways in which Crumb subtly reflects the original material in the composed setting by means of indirect harmonic references to traditional arrangements of the song, and direct reference to important intervallic content of the folk sources. In this example, the pianist plays music directly on the strings in a manner that imitates a zither, which sounds like an autoharp or a dulcimer. This is an abstract reference to the folk material by means of invented instrumentation that mimics some Appalachian musical instruments.

Critical response to Crumb's usage of Folk Sources in *Unto the Hills*

Perhaps because I am both a composer of art music and a performer of certain types of Roots music including Appalachian folk songs, I am personally very interested in music that attempts a fusion of art and folk music. Also as a long-time follower of Crumb's music, I am deeply interested in his approach to Musical Borrowing, especially in setting

these Appalachian songs. Coincidence is such that I also originate from the same place in West Virginia as the composer, and have a similar experience in my exposure to these songs and to Appalachian music in general. Bearing these points in mind, I find one aspect of Crumb's approach to setting these songs problematic. In the program note, Crumb writes:

> "In confronting these songs head-on, so to speak, I determined to leave the beautiful melodies intact (only occasionally 'spreading' the metrics for a more spacious effect or compressing the bar for greater momentum), since one could not hope to 'improve' on their pristine perfection."

It is my opinion that these melodies are not left intact at all, but rather translated to fit the language of Western Art music performance practice. While this in itself does not necessarily detract from a musical endeavor of this variety, it occurs to me that Crumb's composed settings would be all the more effective if the performance of the songs used their 'natural' musical language (see the suggestions below). Perhaps this counter-intuitive fusion would surpass mere juxtaposition and further bring out the carefully designed subtleties found in Crumb's composition. The performance of *Poor Wayfaring Stranger*[49] found at the following web address is a more appropriate performance of the folk song: http://web.lyon.edu/wolfcollection/songs/riddlepoor-pt11246.mp3

I propose that the exact same setting would be greatly enhanced by one or more the following strategies: A) employ a native singer of this music B) employ a performer of another style of roots music to interpret these songs C) invent notation that can instruct a

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[49] Riddle, Almeda. 1959 Miller, Arkansas. Recorded by John Quincy Wolf, Jr. The John Quincy Wolf Folklore Collection, Lyon College, Batesville, Arkansas.

Classical singer in methods of performing the songs that could replicate some of the more salient features of an indigenous interpretation.

One concern may arise when one considers paths A or B: how can a folk singer perform the often difficult score reading, meter counting, or pitch and rhythm requirements one often encounters in western art music compositions? One solution may be simply to ask the performer to memorize the piece and leave aside any score reading whatsoever. In my experience, the memorization skills and ability to perform complex rhythms, etc. that many folk musicians possess are considerable. If one could find a performer of such music willing to accomplish this task, this may be the best solution. Following the same idea but perhaps accomplishing the goal differently, one might consider a recorded, digitally manipulated composite as the medium for such a compositional endeavor.

If one intends a composition of this variety to be portable and performable (live) by more than one specific group or special performer, "Path C) inventing a special notation" may provide a solution to the problem. Such a notation could simply be a reference to a specific performance from a recording of the folk source in question and an indication to imitate those musical mannerisms. In my experience, though, classically trained conservatory musicians have a good deal of reluctance to actually do this in preparation for performance in addition to their inherent lack of ability to perform the music in such a manner. Such a notation could be very specific, though, and indicate difficult microtonally tuned notes and a variety of intricately described, complicated performance instructions on how to articulate otherwise simple-enough musical gestures naturally

suited to Appalachian performance tradition. It seems unlikely, though, that more specific notation will garner the desired results.

Either way, besides the general pitches and rhythms of the melodies, 'leaving the melodies intact' does not describe Crumb's treatment of the folk sources. Perhaps he simply ignored these problems to accommodate the very performance issues I just mentioned. Perhaps he didn't see these issues as problems at all. Performance difficulties or practicalities aside, I find the omission of common folk music performance technique problematic and a serious detraction from the effectiveness of the composition.

This raises several questions: is such music by its very nature antithetical to western concert music performance? Is it simply the singer's responsibility to interpret the score in such a way that the singing better reflects the folk material? Putting aside the problematic aspects of this piece, and, in fact, every piece of hybrid music that does not in some way address performance practice of source materials, Crumb's settings are compositionally successful in other ways. *Unto the Hills* is a 'Setting' quite literally, perhaps sharing similarities with a gold band fashioned as a setting for an otherwise minimally altered precious stone. Pedagogically speaking, this piece, with its masterfully crafted composed settings but questionable consideration of its folk sources, offers an excellent composition lesson for composers interested in incorporating folk (or non-classical) music in art music.

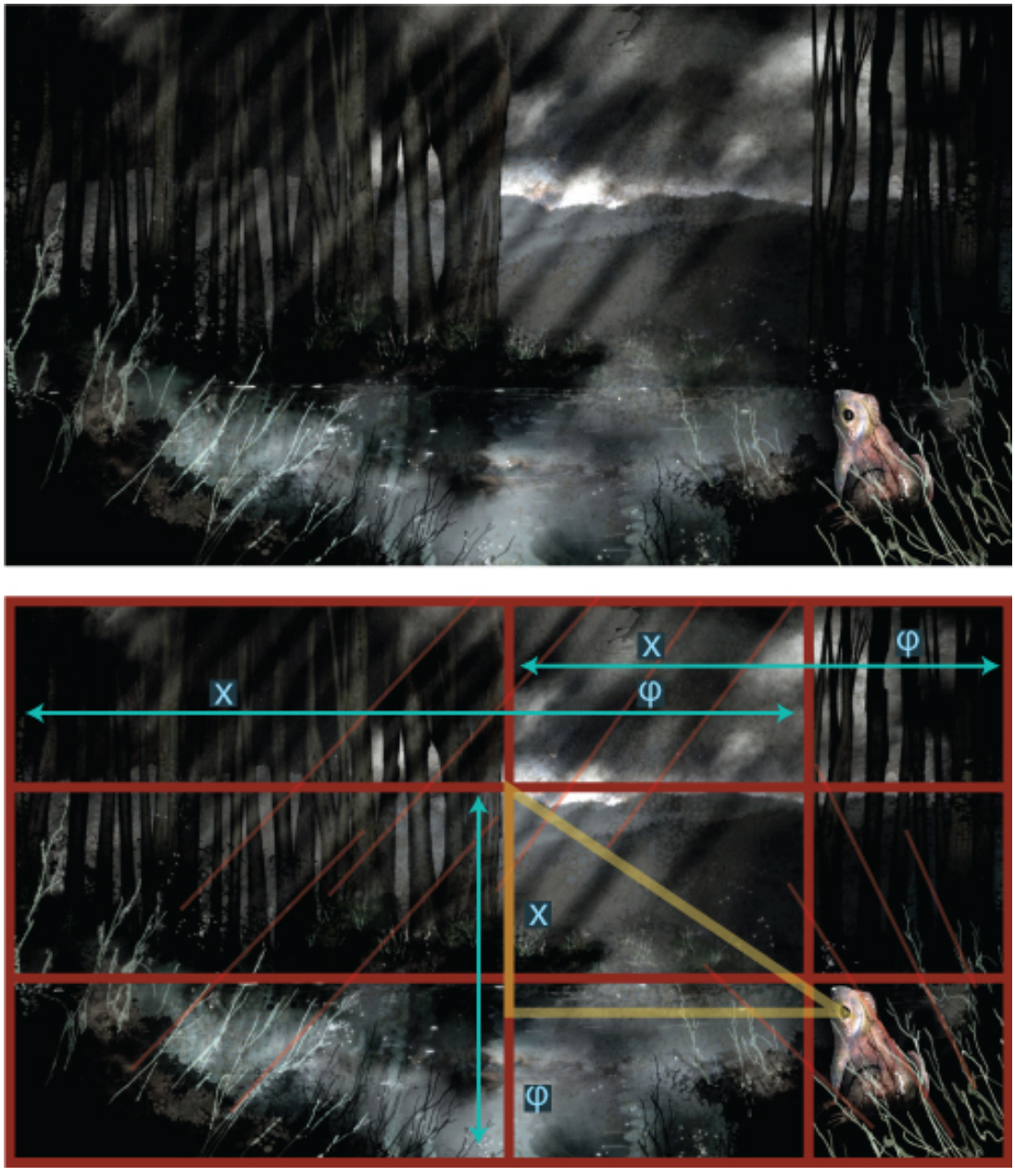
Appendix II – About the Artwork

The artwork for *Strange Tales* was technically created with a mixture of analog and digital techniques. I usually begin with pencil and paper and then add ink, sometimes followed by watercolors. Then I either do a hi-resolution scan of the sketch or take a hi-resolution photo and import it into Photoshop. From this point, I add colors and detail using a Wacom tablet. Once the composition nears completion, I extract the elements to form layers, which can then be individually manipulated and animated in the After Effects program with further editing and color correction done with the Premiere Pro program

The structural design of the images comes from my musical structural design.. For example, in the image below, I employed a standard rule of thirds vertically involving the bands of sky, mountains and water. However, I wanted to incorporate the Golden Ratio proportions I employed in my music, and did so by dividing the composition horizontally into two overlapping Golden Rectangles. I added a contrasting layer of geometry by creating a right triangle in the middle of the image, the points of which are formed by the point of light at the top, the reflection of the light on the bottom, and the frog's eye on the right. The height of the triangle itself forms another nested Golden Rectangle that incorporates the bottom of the composition as one of its sides (see illustration).

Although I have recently started working with an accomplished stop motion animation director Melanie Mandl to bring this project to the screen, we will

incorporate my compositional structures in our collaborative work. We will do this by A) my engagement in the film storyboarding and production B) by filming puppets on a green screen, which will allow us to replace the green space with my paintings. . The concepts in the example below will be reflected in the cinematography.



[Figure 21: Proportional ideas in the artwork]

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