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ON THE WORKS OF HER FEMALE STUDENTS: AN
ANALYSIS OF SELECTED COMPOSITIONS

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**THE PEDAGOGICAL INFLUENCE OF NADIA BOULANGER ON THE WORKS OF
HER FEMALE STUDENTS: AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED COMPOSITIONS**

By

Diane Lynn deVries

A THESIS

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
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ABSTRACT

THE PEDAGOGICAL INFLUENCE OF NADIA BOULANGER ON THE WORKS OF HER FEMALE STUDENTS: AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED COMPOSITIONS

By

Diane Lynn deVries

Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979) is recognized as one of the most influential musical pedagogues of the early twentieth century. Her unique ability to foster musical creativity in her students, combined with her unyielding standard of excellence, brought a diverse assemblage of talented composers to her studio. The list of students privileged to study composition with her is impressive: it includes such famous composers as Aaron Copland, Elliott Carter, Roger Sessions, and Philip Glass.

Boulanger's classes also included a significant number of women. Beginning with her sister, Lili Boulanger, Nadia subsequently became instructor and mentor to composers such as Suzanne Bloch, Katherine Wolff, Helen Hosmer, Louise Talma, Julia Perry, Grazyna Bacewicz, and Thea Musgrave. Although only a small number of Boulanger's female students have attained significant recognition, it is important to acknowledge that the creative genius of these women is on a par with that of their male counterparts. Their work is worthy of scholarly attention and appreciation.

My thesis provides an in-depth analysis of individual works composed by three of Nadia Boulanger's female students: *Piano Sonata No. 1*, first movement, by Talma, *A Suite O Bairnsangs* by Musgrave, and *Pastoral* by Perry. Following a brief biography of these women, the analysis of each composition will focus primarily on the principles of

tonality, harmony, and melody in an attempt to find the fingerprints of Boulanger's teaching.

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Chapter 1

NADIA BOULANGER'S PEDAGOGICAL PHILOSOPHY AND INFLUENCE

Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979) is recognized as one of the most influential musical pedagogues of the twentieth century. Her unique ability to foster musical creativity in her students, combined with her unyielding standard of excellence, brought a diverse assemblage of talented composers to her studio. The list of students privileged to study composition with her is impressive: it includes such famous composers as Aaron Copland, Elliott Carter, Roger Sessions, and Philip Glass.

Boulanger's classes also included a significant number of women. Beginning with her sister, Lili Boulanger, Nadia subsequently became instructor and mentor to composers such as Suzanne Bloch, Katherine Wolff, Helen Hosmer, Louise Talma, Julia Perry, Grazyna Bacewicz, and Thea Musgrave. Although only a small number of Boulanger's female students have attained significant recognition, it is important to acknowledge that the creative genius of these women is on par with that of their male counterparts. Their work is worthy of scholarly attention and appreciation.

My thesis provides an in-depth analysis of individual works composed by three of Nadia Boulanger's female students: *Piano Sonata No. 1*, first movement, by Talma, *A Suite O Bairnsangs* by Musgrave, and *Pastoral* by Perry. These pieces, written between 1943 and 1959, exhibit diverse styles and compositional techniques and represent a small but exemplary sampling of the many works composed by the women who studied with

Boulanger. My analysis of these three pieces will attempt to uncover the pedagogical influence of Boulanger on her students by examining their treatment of tonality, harmony, and melody, principles that were of the utmost importance to Boulanger's conception of musical composition.

Boulanger was herself a composer early in her musical career, during which time she also developed her lifelong reputation as an organist of considerable talent. By the mid-1920s, however, Boulanger had turned completely away from writing music and began to focus extensively on teaching. The students fortunate enough to study with her from the 1920s until her death in 1979 were singularly privileged. In her studio and in the classroom, she taught a comprehensive array of musical subjects, including harmony, counterpoint, fugue, analysis, organ, composition, and music history. She introduced her students to the compositions she was intimately acquainted with, which spanned the wide range from medieval music to the works of Igor Stravinsky and other twentieth-century composers. Boulanger's self-proclaimed goal was to function as a guide to her students rather than as a leader. She said, "I try to give them the means with which to work and make no effort to shape their writing. I endeavor to enlarge their vocabulary and to acquaint them with the etymology of the thing, but leave them to themselves when it comes to expression. What a composer has to express is his own affair, not mine."¹

To ascertain the depth of her influence on her students, one need look only as far as the famous American composer, Aaron Copland. In 1921, Copland became the first American pupil to be enrolled in the Fontainebleau School of Music, and it was there that

¹ Don Campbell, *Master Teacher Nadia Boulanger* (Washington: The Pastoral Press, 1984). p. 77.

he attended a harmony class taught by Nadia Boulanger. Her clear explanation of fundamental principles and her extraordinary gift for inspiring creativity in her pupils so deeply impressed Copland that he decided to remain in Paris beyond the conclusion of the Fontainebleau session. He continued his studies with Boulanger for three years, and on numerous later occasions commented that his decision to study with her had a profound influence on his compositional career.²

In 1979 Ned Rorem, another celebrated American composer, said of his former teacher Boulanger: "So far as musical pedagogy is concerned -- and by extension musical creation -- she is the most influential person who ever lived."³

Such adulatory statements give rise to many questions. For example, what ideas and philosophies did Nadia Boulanger expound that brought exceptional composers such as Copland, Rorem, Elliott Carter, Philip Glass, Thea Musgrave, Louise Talma, and Julia Perry under her tutelage? And what was the pedagogical basis of her teaching? It would seem reasonable to deduce that Boulanger had a documented system of teaching that was unique to her, perhaps a published text or manual that chronicled her approach to composition. Indeed, at one point in her career she had developed a system of teaching music to children, advancing her belief that young students should be taught to understand harmony and musical structure before they learned to read. In 1925, Boulanger asked Walter Damrosch to approach the G. Schirmer Publishing Company regarding the possible publication of her method and its accompanying exercises. Upon rejection by Schirmer,

² Madeleine Goss, *Modern Music Makers: Contemporary American Composers* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1952), pp. 317-318.

³ Campbell, *Master Teacher*, p. 3.

Boulanger never again discussed the possibility of writing a textbook. On more than one occasion she said to interviewers, “I would have nothing to say. Writing is not my function. My function is to teach.”⁴

Although Boulanger did not adhere to a particular methodology, she nonetheless strongly believed that certain crucial knowledge was required to succeed as a musician and composer. For her, the first and most important discipline of music was to learn to listen, and with each prospective student she would determine the level of sophistication of that person’s musical ear. She believed and often said that the musician’s conscience is embodied in the ear.⁵ The ability to listen effectively gave the student a distinct advantage that allowed for concentration on other equally important subjects, such as harmony and counterpoint.

In Boulanger’s classes, the acquisition of strong aural skills was achieved in large part by the intensive study of *solfeggio*. In a series of interviews given near the end of her life, she said: “The growth of talent is unpredictable, certainly, but the ear . . . if there is no ear . . . (if I sing ‘Do’ and the student sings ‘Fa’) then I am obliged to say: It will displease you or make you sad for a while, but it is better I tell you now . . . you are no musician.”⁶ Boulanger demanded that her students acquire the skills necessary to allow them to read and sing music in all clefs. It was required that all four-voice harmonic exercises be

⁴ Leonie Rosenstiel, *Nadia Boulanger* (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc. 1982), p. 202.

⁵ Laurence Rosenthal, “Confronting the Next Impossible,” *Parabola* XIV (1989), p. 78.

⁶ Campbell, *Master Teacher*, p. 86.

written in the traditional clefs because she felt that this discipline made students more aware of the linear implications of harmonic movement.⁷

A second facet of the musical education provided by Boulanger was the rigorous study of harmony and counterpoint. She said, “The laws of harmony and counterpoint are necessary to the development of the mind. All troubles come with students from the fact that they have not become familiar with the simple fundamentals. The fundamentals must be known without having to charge the memory.”⁸

Following its publication in 1946, Paul Hindemith’s *Elementary Training for Musicians* became an essential pedagogical tool for Boulanger, a book about which she said, “Nobody will ever persuade me one can be ignorant of it.”⁹ In the book’s preface, Hindemith states that, in general, music students entering a class in harmony are insufficiently prepared with respect to the basic principles governing rhythm, meter, intervals, scales, and notation, as well as the correct application of these principles. His book provides exercises that, with proper guidance, will supply such fundamental theoretical knowledge.¹⁰ Hindemith echoes the beliefs of Nadia Boulanger in a statement made at the close of the preface: “The advantages are obvious: a student thoroughly

⁷ Teresa Walters, “Nadia Boulanger, Musician and Teacher” (DMA dissertation, Peabody Conservatory, 1981), p. 263.

⁸ Ibid., p. 78.

⁹ Alan Kendall, *The Tender Tyrant; Nadia Boulanger* (Wilton, CT: Lyceum Books, 1976), p. 94.

¹⁰ Paul Hindemith, *Elementary Training for Musicians* (New York: Associated Music Publishers, Inc., 1946), p. vii.

trained in the basic principles of music is undoubtedly better prepared than other students for the understanding of harmonic technique and for rapid progress in mastering it.”¹¹

As a part of this rigorous training, Boulanger insisted that her students gain a thorough understanding of the scales and modes. A frequently assigned exercise included the daily practice of each of the different scales and modes, beginning on one particular scale degree. She felt that with such disciplined practice, the student would be completely comfortable with all of the modes within six months.¹²

As testaments to the importance Boulanger attached to the study of the modes, Thea Musgrave’s *A Suite O Bairnsangs* and Louise Talma’s *Piano Sonata No. 1* both make extensive use of shifting and dual modalities. In Musgrave’s work, several of the songs employ different modes founded on the same tonic, apparently exploiting the exercises learned during her study with Boulanger.

A second text frequently utilized by Nadia Boulanger was *Traité D’Harmonie Théorique et Pratique*, written by Théodore DuBois. Louise Talma remembered using the book primarily for the figured bass exercises it contains.¹³ Students were required to harmonize a given bass, either with or without figures or with or without soprano lines. Much attention is given in the text to the study of consonance and dissonance and to voice leading. Talma stated that Boulanger’s teaching of both counterpoint and voice-leading

¹¹ Ibid., p. xii.

¹² Walters, “Nadia Boulanger, Musician and Teacher,” p. 123.

¹³ Luann Dragone, “Interview with Louise Talma,” *LAWM Journal* [on-line]; available from <http://www.omnidisc.com/Talma/Biography.html>; Internet; accessed February, 1998.

techniques was considerably more strict than the methods employed by her teachers in the United States.¹⁴

Talma's *Piano Sonata No. 1*, first movement, offers substantial evidence of the emphasis placed by Boulanger on the study of voice leading and counterpoint. The composer's sophisticated use of imitation and motivic development throughout the various sections of the work, as well as the careful attention given to the treatment of dissonance, are a direct result of Boulanger's pedagogical approach. Further confirmation is found in Julia Perry's *Pastoral*, with its extensive fugal section for seven voices.

Boulanger was also a strong proponent of what she called the *grande ligne* ("grand line," interpreted as the "long line" in music). By this she meant that each composition must have an underlying movement, a goal of melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic motion that allows the music to move from start to finish with coherence. A strong desire to achieve the *grande ligne* in the works of her students caused many of them to utilize shifting meters in their compositions in an attempt to escape the rigors of modern notation and the barline.¹⁵

Each of the three compositions analyzed in this thesis displays a strong understanding of the concept of Boulanger's *grande ligne*. In particular, Musgrave's *Bairnsangs* and Talma's *Piano Sonata* make extensive use of shifting meters to accomplish an uninterrupted musical flow, and, as in Talma's piece, Julia Perry's *Pastoral* ultimately achieves its goal of motion by restating the opening pitch collection and melodic material at the end of the work.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Kendall, *The Tender Tyrant*, pp. 52-53.

Laurence Rosenthal, a former student of Boulanger, tells of her obsession with the *grande ligne*. He says that his teacher at one point became concerned about a composition he had brought to her, and as she silently pursued its course of musical development, she became more and more perturbed. She followed bar after bar muttering, “What are you doing? Where are you going? . . . unless there is an F-sharp minor chord at the beginning of the next page, you are lost!”¹⁶

Boulanger considered rhythm to be essential to the achievement of the *grande ligne*. In a 1977 interview with Humbert Balsan, she said: “What is rhythm? One feels rhythm, but one is not able to explain it. A definition of the word rhythm -- I, myself, search for that. Stravinsky spent his lifetime looking for a truly satisfying and essential definition of the word rhythm. But it seems that these great and vital words are justified not by definition, but by their own successful expression.”¹⁷ She also said: “The physical influence of rhythm is the basis of all music, of all its prestige, and cannot be denied. No one can truly serve it if he has not been marked with the divine sign which distinguishes creators.”¹⁸

Of all of the contemporary music that Boulanger heard, analyzed, and taught, it was arguably the music of Igor Stravinsky that impressed her most deeply. She was in the audience on June 25, 1910 for the premiere of *Firebird*, and was overwhelmed by

¹⁶Rosenthal, “Confronting the Next Impossible.” pp. 80-81.

¹⁷ Walters, *Nadia Boulanger, Musician and Teacher*. p. 100.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

Stravinsky's genius, evident in his use of rhythm and in the power of his music.¹⁹ Since rhythm had always been a matter of great importance for Boulanger, fundamental both to the creation of an effective composition and to its analysis, she frequently used Stravinsky's music as an example of what she was attempting to teach. His rhythm was rigorous and strict, yet absolutely free. The emphasis that Boulanger placed on the study of his music is evident in Talma's *Piano Sonata No. 1*, which incorporates ostinato and rhythmic techniques similar to those of Stravinsky.

Nadia Boulanger considered her work as a teacher to be a privilege. Helen Hosmer, Boulanger's student and friend, stated: "Her greatest satisfaction is watching pupils develop their ideas. As a teacher she appears before her students with a colossal knowledge of music and the allied arts but she is also an artist with all the creative imagination that being an artist implies."²⁰

Boulanger's pedagogical expertise and passion for music did not end with her death. Her fervor lives on in the works of her students, especially those of the women whose works are presented in this thesis. Her students who remain compositionally active continue to acknowledge Boulanger's influence on their careers to this very day. Furthermore, many of her students are now with, or have served on, the faculties of colleges and universities worldwide, where they have continued to advance her musical ideals and pedagogical philosophy to a new generation of composers.

¹⁹Rosenstiel, *Nadia Boulanger*, p. 90.

²⁰Helen Hosmer, "The First Lady of Music," *Music Educators Journal* XLV (1958), p. 62.

Chapter 2

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES: LOUISE TALMA, THEA MUSGRAVE, AND JULIA PERRY

The compositions of Louise Talma, Thea Musgrave, and Julia Perry shed significant light on Nadia Boulanger's pedagogical approach. Because these women may not be familiar to some readers, it is appropriate to provide some biographical information about them before engaging in an in-depth analysis of their work.

Born in October 1906 to American parents in Anarchon, France, Louise Talma's exceptional career was distinguished by a long list of achievements. She was the first woman to receive two Guggenheim Fellowships, to be elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters, and to receive the Sibelius Medal for composition. In addition, she was the first American to teach at Fontainebleau and the first American woman to have a full-scale opera performed in Germany.¹

Talma's musical education began with piano lessons given to her by her mother as a birthday gift at age five. Her father, a pianist, died when Louise was an infant, and her mother, an opera singer, abandoned her career to teach her daughter and supervise her musical studies. By 1914 her family returned to the United States, where Talma continued

¹ Anne Gray, "Remembering Louise Talma," *IAWM Journal* II/3 (1996), p. 23.

her education. Following high school, she studied theory and composition at the Institute of Musical Arts, later to be known as the Juilliard School. Forced by her mother's illness and her own financial difficulties to quickly complete her Bachelor of Music degree, Talma transferred to New York University and graduated in 1931, after studying there for only two years. She earned her Master's degree from Columbia University in 1933, then taught at the Manhattan School of Music for two years before joining the faculty at Hunter College, where she remained until 1978.²

From 1926-1939, Talma spent each summer at the Fontainebleau School of Music, where she studied piano with Isador Phillip and theory, composition, and organ with Nadia Boulanger. Talma originally intended to become a concert pianist, but Boulanger convinced her that she possessed a more formidable talent as a composer. Even after joining the faculty at Fontainebleau, Talma still considered herself a student of the French pedagogue, and continued to attend Boulanger's classes and study privately with her.³

Talma was a highly prolific composer whose published works first appeared in the late 1930s and ended with her death in August of 1996. Her oeuvre included more than forty major works, including four orchestral pieces and a three-act opera which have been performed by the Baltimore Symphony, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the NBC Symphony, and the Frankfurt Opera House, among others.⁴ A song cycle was left

² Ibid.

³ Rosenstiel, *Nadia Boulanger*, p. 298.

⁴ Dragone, "Interview with Louise Talma," *IAWM Journal*, accessed February 1998.

incomplete when she died at the Yaddo Music Camp in Saratoga Springs, New York, where she had spent a portion of each summer in her later life.⁵

Thea Musgrave was born in Edinburgh, Scotland on May 27, 1928. Upon the completion of her public school education in 1947, she enrolled at the University of Edinburgh as a pre-medical student. Throughout her undergraduate years Musgrave studied piano, harmony, counterpoint, and composition under Mary Gardner Grierson and Hans Gal, and in time her focus was diverted from medicine to the full-time study of music. She received her Bachelor of Music degree in 1950 and was awarded the Boucher Scholarship as well as the prestigious Donald Francis Tovey Prize, named in honor of the eminent Scottish musicologist and author. After graduation, pianist Clifford Curzon, a close friend of Mary Grierson, recommended Musgrave for postgraduate study in Paris with Nadia Boulanger.⁶

Musgrave's studies with Boulanger continued for four years at the Paris Conservatoire and as a private student. Because of the Conservatoire requirement that all teachers of composition be active composers, Boulanger was not permitted to teach composition there. However, she structured her piano accompaniment class to extend far beyond the traditional parameters of such a course. Musgrave says of this class: "It wasn't [a] piano accompaniment class; we never did any accompanying on the piano, but it was so much more. We did score reading, figured bass, transposition, and, of course,

⁵ Gray, "Remembering Louise Talma," p. 23.

⁶ Donald L. Hixon, *Thea Musgrave: A Bio-Bibliography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), p.3.

Stravinsky. It was a wonderful general music education.”⁷ In 1952, upon completion of her first two years of study in Paris, Musgrave became the recipient of the Lili Boulanger Memorial Prize in composition.

Musgrave returned to Great Britain in 1954, finding employment as a pianist and coach for the British Saltire Singers. She continued to compose during this time, and as her reputation and her work became known, she began to receive commissions from schools, ballet and opera companies, music festivals, and the British Broadcasting Company.⁸

In 1959, Musgrave traveled to the United States on a scholarship awarded by the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood. On this visit she made the acquaintance of Aaron Copland, himself a former student of Boulanger, and spent much time studying the works of Charles Ives, whose influence was to be evident in several of her later compositions.

Musgrave was appointed to the faculty of the University of London in 1958, and continued to teach there until 1965. Most of her energy during this time was devoted to composing, although throughout these years she was also employed as a lecturer and conductor in the United States and Europe. In 1970, she became a guest professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara, a position that further established her increasing involvement in the music of the United States. It was in California that she met the

⁷ Jane Weiner LePage, *Women Composers, Conductors, and Musicians of the Twentieth Century: Selected Biographies* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1980), p. 147.

⁸ Hixon, *Thea Musgrave: A Bio-Bibliography*, p. 4.

American violist Peter Mark, whom she married in London in 1971.⁹ Musgrave took up permanent residence in the United States the following year.

Musgrave is the recipient of two Guggenheim Fellowships, awarded in 1974 and 1982.¹⁰ In January 1998, she received the National Opera Association's Lifetime Achievement Award for Composers. The BBC Symphony premiered her latest orchestral work, *Phoenix Rising*, in February 1998, and with three recent, critically-acclaimed compact discs and the publication of a solo guitar work, Musgrave gives no indication of retiring as she celebrates her seventieth birthday.¹¹

Born in 1927, Julia Perry grew up in Akron, Ohio, and studied voice, piano, violin, and composition at the Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey. Upon completion of her Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Westminster, Perry continued her composition studies at the Juilliard School. In the summer of 1951, she studied with Luigi Dallapiccola at the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood, and in 1952 received a Guggenheim Fellowship. Subsequently, Perry moved to Europe, where she studied composition with Dallapiccola in Florence and with Nadia Boulanger in Paris. She received a second Guggenheim Fellowship in 1955 and again traveled to Europe to study with Dallapiccola.¹²

⁹ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁰ Nicolas Slonimsky, *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1971), p. 1279.

¹¹ Deborah Horne, "Musgrave Rising," *G. Schirmer News* [on-line]; available from <http://www.schirmer.com/news/Feb98/musgrave.html>; Internet; accessed February, 1998.

¹² Mildred Denby Green, *Black Women Composers: A Genesis* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1983), p. 72.

Upon her return to the United States in 1959, Perry continued to compose extensively. She taught at Florida A&M and at Atlanta University until she suffered a paralytic stroke in 1971 and was forced to retire. The stroke rendered Perry's right hand unusable and left her hospitalized for several years. However, she eventually taught herself to write with her left hand, and resumed composing before her death in 1979.¹³

Perry's best-known works are her *Stabat Mater* (1951) for solo voice and string orchestra; *A Short Piece for Orchestra* (1952); *Pastoral* (1959) for flute and strings; and *Homunculus, C.F.* (1969) for soprano and percussionists. She received both a Fontainebleau and a Boulanger Grand Prix for a sonata scored for either violin or viola, which she composed about 1952.¹⁴

Julia Perry's musical style is considered to be somewhat eclectic, reflecting her diverse cultural interests. As an African-American, she incorporated into her compositions both the traditions of black music and the twentieth-century techniques acquired during her studies with Dallapiccola and Nadia Boulanger.¹⁵

¹³ Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans: A History* (New York: W.W.Norton & Co., 1971), p. 472.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Eileen Southern, "Julia Perry," in Stanley Sadie, ed., *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London: Macmillan, 1980), Vol. 9, p. 549.

Chapter 3

LOUISE TALMA: *PIANO SONATA NO. 1*, FIRST MOVEMENT

Piano Sonata No. 1 was composed by Louise Talma in 1943 and was given its premier performance, with the composer at the piano, in 1945 during a League of Composers Concert. In 1947 it was awarded the North American Prize, an award given by the E. Robert Schmitz School of Piano, in a competition open to composers from Mexico, Canada, and the United States.¹

The first movement provides evidence of the pedagogical influence of Nadia Boulanger through its stylistic similarities to the music of those she taught early in her career and to music she emphasized in her classroom and studio. Throughout the work, Boulanger's emphasis on *la grande ligne* is exhibited through the use of changing meters, and by the utilization of tonal centers as framing devices. The A section of the Allegro reveals characteristics found in the works of Aaron Copland, Boulanger's first American student, particularly in its rhythmic energy, contrapuntal texture, and tonal juxtaposition. Following the B section, which displays a jazz influence, section C then employs ostinato and rhythmic techniques similar to those of Igor Stravinsky. Stravinsky was a close friend of Boulanger, and throughout her career, her commitment to him led her to devote much classroom and studio time to the teaching of his works.²

¹ Helen McLendon-Rose, "The Piano Sonatas of Louise Talma" (DMA dissertation, U. of S. Mississippi, 1992), p. 41.

² Rosenstiel, *Nadia Boulanger*, p. 208.

Selected examples from this movement, and a list of the corresponding measure numbers, are included in Appendix A. A full score, which would be of most benefit to the reader, may be obtained through Carl Fischer Inc., 62 Cooper Square, New York, NY 10003.

Measures 1-48 provide a slow introduction to the first movement of Talma's *Sonata*. The key signature of three flats, when combined with the opening contra-great C, could indicate a C-minor tonal center. However, scale degrees 3 and raised 6 of C minor do not appear until m. 4, where they exert very little tonal influence: E^b occurs in cross-relation with E-natural, and the A-natural of the melody is superimposed in dissonant fashion over G in the bass. In addition, the absence of both the leading tone, B-natural, and dominant-to-tonic relationships in this passage further undermines aural recognition of C minor as a tonal center. Given the strong presence of B^b, the flat seventh scale degree, in m. 3, it may therefore be determined that mm. 1-5 are mainly constructed from pitches of the C Mixolydian scale.

Modal/tonal mixture of this type is intrinsic to large sections of the movement. Juxtaposed with this mixture is the consistent articulation of three distinct interval classes between the soprano and bass lines: ic2 (M2/m7), ic3 (m3/M6), and ic5 (P4/P5). Various permutations of these interval classes generate two diatonic pitch class sets, [0,2,5] and [0,2,7], which form the harmonic foundation for much of the first movement and function in combination with key relationships as generators of tonal motion (Ex. 1).

In addition to the motivic pitch class sets and modal/tonal ambiguity, mm. 1-3 also establish a pattern of octave motion that is prevalent, both linearly and harmonically, throughout the movement. Measures 4-5 present a fourth essential element of this work,

contrary motion between the outer voices, which here concludes with the vertical sonority C-D-A (pitch class set [0,2,5]). The importance of this grouping of pitches is emphasized by the *sforzando* dynamic marking and the fermata, which is to be held “very long” (Ex. 2). Ongoing examination of the first movement reveals a preponderance of these intervallic relationships in both the linear and vertical dimensions of the music.

It is necessary at this point to provide clarification of the terminology used in the preceding discussion and that which follows. Although the terms “interval class” and “pitch class set” are most often applied to atonal works, Talma’s *Piano Sonata No. 1* is not atonal. However, since harmonic motion in this piece is also not entirely determined by standard tonal progressions and cannot always be described using that terminology, some of the language of atonality will be utilized in combination with the more familiar tonal vocabulary for a clearer analysis of the piece.

Following the fermata in m. 6, elements of C major and C minor are juxtaposed in mm. 7-10. The alternation of E and E^b, as well as the reappearance of the A-natural, may be seen to derive from m. 4. The tritones formed by the descent from E^b to A in mm. 7-8 and m. 9 offer small-scale models of the long-range descent from the opening to closing tonal centers of the introduction, the tritone-related areas of C and G^b. Descending, predominantly chromatic bass motion from C to F in mm. 6-16 is also accompanied by vertical sonorities and melodic lines built primarily from the two foundational pitch collections, [0,2,5] and [0,2,7] (Ex. 3). By m. 17 the music has modulated to an F tonal center, but in a manner comparable to the opening, scale degree 3 of this tonal area does not appear until m. 19 and occurs as A-natural rather than the expected A^b of the key signature. The D^b of m. 16 (which in combination with the missing A^b would have

assisted in establishing an F-minor area) has been replaced by D-natural, suggesting with the A-natural an F Mixolydian collection of pitches; this is reminiscent of the minor/Mixolydian duality of mm. 1-6. In mm. 20-21, an open fifth rooted on F and preceded by a major-second grace note is approached in the outer voices by contrary motion. This sonority contains the pitch class set [0,2,7] and, like the cadential [0,2,5] set in mm. 5-6, is marked with a *sforzando* dynamic marking and a fermata (Ex. 4).

During the second section of the introduction, mm. 22-48, tonality continues to be determined both by intervallic relationships and linear motion in the bass. The A^b of m. 22 is followed in m. 26 by an octave-transferred g^b, passing through f in m. 28 and e^b in m. 30 before arriving on d^b in m. 32. This line descends through scale degrees 5-1 of D^b major, a long-range bass motion that then descends by thirds before concluding with the two cadences in mm. 34-36 (Ex. 5). These cadences are not IV-I plagal cadences in D^b as the bass motion may imply, however, but progressions that move in deceptive fashion from G^b to B^b-minor triads. Varied harmonic and melodic combinations of [0,2,5] and [0,2,7] are interspersed throughout the voices in the measures leading up to these cadences, which themselves incorporate the [0,2,7] pitch collection.

The leaping G^b–D^b bass motion of mm. 34-38 proceeds to a descending circle-of-fifths progression beginning in m. 39, paired with a descent in the soprano line that is subdivided into thirds. Together, the lines form a sequential passage which leads to the closing four bars of the introduction. Measures 45-48 are constructed harmonically and melodically from the [0,2,5] pitch collection with the F^b of m. 46 suggesting G^b Mixolydian mode, linking the closing measures of the introduction with the opening C Mixolydian area and the F Mixolydian of m. 16 (Ex. 6). Although aurally less plausible,

one might consider E^b Phrygian as the tonal center of these measures, since most of the pitches of that scale are present. In that case, a different connection may be made between the opening C tonal center, the F of mm. 17-21, and this mode. The root pitches of these harmonic areas form the pitch collection [0,2,5], providing further evidence of the significance of this pitch class set in determining tonal motion.

The *Allegro molto vivace* of the first movement is divided into four large sections plus a coda. Section A (mm. 49-75) is dry and percussive, incorporating *forte* dynamic markings that are interspersed with punctuating *sforzando* chords. Measures 76-109 form the B section, which provides contrasting, more lyrical material. The dynamic marking for much of this passage is *subito piano*, and the only significant melodic line of the movement occurs in this section. At m. 110, the C section reintroduces the percussive nature of the A section, while section D, beginning at m. 168, is permeated with octave leaps and other types of disjunct motion. Both sections C and D are highly developmental, modulating through multiple key areas and utilizing fragments of the melodic line introduced in the B section. The coda starting at m. 228 provides a modified reprise of material from both the introduction and section A.

Unlike the first measures of the introduction, the A section opens with an unambiguous C-minor triad, then proceeds with incomplete C-minor seventh chords that ascend in imitation between the right and left hands. Each of these chords (consisting of the pitches C, E^b, and B^b) creates pitch class set [0,2,5] and, because of the emphasis given to the E^b-B^b fifth, continues the pattern of ambiguity with regard to tonal center, for it cannot be aurally determined if the music is centered around C minor or E^b major. Quartal motion in m. 54 briefly replaces the minor-seventh sonorities and leads to the

climax of the line in mm. 55-56, a non-traditional, C-minor half cadence (Ex. 7). The use of the sostenuto pedal breaks the staccato of the ascending line and blurs the already uncertain cadential motion.

Following a brief return of the incomplete C-minor seventh chords in the bass, now moving in contrary motion with the upper voice, the cadential F-G motion of m. 56 is repeated at m. 58. Its effect is further weakened by staggered right hand/left hand statements in diminution, and by the absence of the earlier *sforzando* dynamic marking. In mm. 60-64, C minor finally extricates itself from E^b major as the bass initiates an arpeggiated pattern rooted on the pitches of that key. In mm. 60-61, the right hand alternates trichords and tetrachords utilizing the pitch collections [0,2,5] and [0,2,7]. Although E^b is the bass pitch in m. 62, C minor is made increasingly evident as the prevailing harmony by the addition of the leading tone, B-natural, which appears for the first time in the A section.

Measures 65-72 center around F minor; the harmonic motion from a C-based area to one on F duplicates that found in the first section of the introduction. As in earlier tonal areas, the absence of both a leading tone and tonic/dominant progression in the prevailing key weakens the aural recognition of that specific tonality. Although the bass pattern continues to revolve around F minor in mm. 69-72 (now minus scale degree 3), the simultaneous sounding of B-natural and B^b superimposes the previously successive tonal areas of C minor and F minor, creating another harmonic duality for this section of the piece. Chordal sonorities in the right hand have been replaced by a linear pattern constructed primarily from the pitch collections [0,2,5] and [0,2,7], moving in predominantly contrary motion to the bass (Ex. 8). This contrapuntal motion continues

until m. 73, at which point the music appears to focus exclusively on the key of C minor with the reintroduction of E^b and the same F-G melodic motion found earlier in mm. 54 and 56. In these concluding bars of the A section, however, the leading tone, B-natural, is replaced with B^b; the C minor-E^b duality returns, with the final harmony comprised simply of two pitches forming the interval of a sixth, the tonal duality expressed by the E^b bass and the C above it (Ex 9).

Section B of the Allegro begins with a six-measure introduction which now centers around E^b major. In contrast to much of the preceding music of this movement, the leading tone is present in these measures, functioning not as traditional tonal harmony would dictate but as a major seventh over the tonic. The C is also present, but functions simply as scale degree 6 of E^b rather than asserting a tonal area of its own. The bass voice of m. 81 introduces an unexpected accented G^b; this interjected tone may be considered a “blue note,” a lowered third that anticipates the jazz character of the upcoming section.

The anacrusis of m. 82 sets in motion the first recognizably lyrical melody of the movement. Also for the first time, the composer utilizes a single tonal center, E^b Mixolydian, for an extended amount of music. Although the use of Mixolydian mode tonally links this passage with previous sections, the stylistic nature of the music is now significantly changed. This mode, with its flatted seventh scale degree, is frequently utilized in jazz, and the rhythm of the melodic line and accompaniment in mm. 82-97 is definitely jazz-inspired. At m. 98 the G^b is reintroduced to the texture, the “blue note” further reinforcing the special character of this section.

Coexisting with this passage is an important unifying element of the sonata movement, the continued use of the [0,2,5] pitch collection. This is clearly illustrated in mm. 94-97, where both the melody and accompaniment are primarily constructed from this pitch class set (Ex. 10). Beginning in m. 98, the melody is no longer confined to the uppermost register but shifts between voices. This restatement of the melodic line is a modified repetition of the two earlier phrases, a change effected not only by the addition of the “blue note” but also by the *forte* dynamic and increased use of disjunct motion.

Although the B section formally ends on the downbeat of m. 110, the accented E^b in m. 104 brings the final melodic statement to a close, an ending further punctuated by the rests that follow. Measures 105-109 subsequently form a codetta for the B section. Still constructed from the pitches of E^b Mixolydian, the alternation of the major and minor third in the bass again emphasizes the strong jazz influence.

In m. 109, the accented G-natural in the bass serves as a pivot between the closing of the B section and the G Phrygian tonal center that opens section C. By indicating extensive use of sostenuto pedal, Talma blends the diverse pitches at the end of B, contrasting sharply with the sudden shift in articulation, tonality, dynamic, and meter that occurs in m. 110.

The shift to the Phrygian mode coincides with a return to the percussive style of the A section. The bass motion from m. 110 to the second eighth note of m. 114 prepares an ostinato pattern between G and A^b that proceeds, in Stravinsky-like fashion, through changing meters until m. 122. Simultaneously, the soprano line unfolds an ascending G-Phrygian scale (minus scale degree 6, E^b), interwoven through an angular melody that is also characteristic of Stravinsky. This scalar motion breaks at m. 121 with the climax of

the line, b^{b2} . The ostinato has now shifted up an octave, and in mm. 122-123 two added tones, C and F, become pivot notes to a transitional passage in A Phrygian, which follows in mm. 124-130. A crescendo marking leading to the *sforzando* on the downbeat of m. 124, followed immediately by *subito piano*, reinforces this shift in tonal center.

Stylistically similar to the preceding phrase, the ostinato pattern beginning in m. 124 again utilizes scale degrees 1 and 2 of the Phrygian scale. Increased disjunct motion in the melody allows for more rapid movement to the high point of the line in m. 129, f^3 , which functions as an upper-neighbor tone to the E-natural of the cadence in m. 130. As at previous cadential points, such as those in the introduction, mm. 56 and 75 of section A, and the ends of phrases in section B, the cadence is not prepared by the dominant harmony or leading tone. A shift in tonal center to C major is then effected with the appearance of the new tonic in the bass on the third beat of m. 130, a change further reinforced by the replacement of B^b with the leading tone, B-natural. The C-major ostinato moves in contrary motion to the disjunct melodic line, continuing the pattern of preceding measures. As in earlier sections of the movement, long-range harmonic motion is dictated by the [0,2,5] pitch collection, manifested by the tonal shifts from G to A to C in mm. 110-132.

A stylistic shift away from the dry and percussive nature of the opening measures of the C section takes place in m. 136, where it is replaced by more lyrical motion centered on E. This change is indicated by slurs (their first appearance in this section), the increased presence of crescendos and decrescendos (thereby effecting smoother, less abrupt dynamic changes), and the composer's instruction that this section is to be played "*lusingando*," an Italian term interpreted as "alluringly."

Although mm. 136-143 are focused on E as the tonic, determination of a specific scale is made difficult by the absence of one particular defining pitch. As in many previous passages, scale degree 3 is not sounded, and scale degree 6 shifts between its raised and natural forms, here C[#] and C-natural. Given the prevalence of Mixolydian modes in this movement, these measures may be interpreted as E Mixolydian with a shifting sixth scale degree. The two instances of C-natural, found in mm. 137 and 139, may also be seen to anticipate the sequential C-major section which follows.

Measures 144-149 are only temporarily uncertain with regard to specific mode or key. The pitches necessary for this determination appear in m. 148, where the entrance of the B-natural leading tone and scale degree 3, E-natural, determine unequivocally a C-major tonality. This abbreviated section descends to a two-measure transitional passage centered on B (mm. 150-151), which, although lacking the leading tone and employing the flat seventh, may be interpreted as the dominant of a V-I cadence in E. When mm. 150-151 are compared with mm. 142-143, it becomes evident that these two groups of measures contain the identical pitches formed from the collections [0,2,5] and [0,2,7].

At this point in the movement, tonality begins to shift rapidly. Between mm. 152 and 156, two bars each of E Mixolydian and C major are succeeded by one measure of the same B-based collection. These measures compress the tonal scheme of mm. 136-151 into five bars. Measures 157-161 again juxtapose C and E^b, as found in the A section, and are followed by two bars exclusively in E^b. From the anacrusis of m. 164 to m. 167, G Phrygian recurs with emphasis on the pitches of the ostinato pattern that opened this section, G-A^b. In a manner similar to that of section A, the opening and closing measures of section C are motivically and tonally linked.

Against the linear motion of the right hand in mm. 136-167, the lower voices provide contrast by moving in disjunct and often contrary motion, while the now familiar pitch collections of [0,2,5] and [0,2,7] continue to dictate the progression of the melody (Ex. 11). The recurrence of these important germinal components provides additional evidence of the remarkable cohesion with which Talma constructed her sonata.

The octave leaps in mm. 162-167 anticipate the octave motion of the opening of section D, which begins in m. 168. Continuing the harmonic process initiated at the end of section C, modulation between tonal areas occurs even more quickly and with little or no preparation. Tonal centers first shift from G^b Lydian in mm. 168-178 to C major in mm. 179-183, reflecting in reverse order the tritone relationship of the introduction. Quartal linear motion is then introduced, beginning with the A^b on the downbeat of m. 184 and followed by a modified sequence on G in m. 187, root movement that is the reverse of the G-A^b bass pitches of section C. Measures 191-195 are centered on C[#], but only C[#], D, and E are utilized in this passage, the C[#]-D half step strongly suggesting Phrygian mode. This is the initial appearance of C[#] as a tonal center in this work; its introduction in the final section of the movement provides a large-scale tritone relationship similar to that of the introduction, here linked with the G Phrygian that closes section C in mm. 164-167.

Rapid modulation continues through mm. 196-203, a contrasting passage in which tonality becomes progressively more ambiguous as chromaticism increases. Arpeggios in the upper voice move in sequential motion, accompanied by pitches in the bass that form the [0,2,5] and [0,2,7] pitch collections when combined with portions of the soprano line (Ex. 12).

This sequential passage achieves its goal of harmonic motion in m. 204, which initiates a passage based on F[#]. With scale degrees 2 and 6 absent during this passage, it is again difficult to establish unequivocally a scale or mode. The emphasis on A-natural may indicate F[#] minor, but the additional emphasis placed on lowered scale degree 7 more likely suggests Mixolydian, in keeping with the prevalence of this mode throughout the movement. Octave leaps are reintroduced on F[#] to form an underlying ostinato, to which c[#] is added beginning in m. 213. Originating in a low register, the soprano forms an independent line that moves in counterpoint with the ostinato. As with preceding sections, this line is constructed in large part from the pitch collections [0,2,5] and [0,2,7]. As dynamic levels gradually increase with the climbing register of the right hand, an abrupt shift to F Phrygian in mm. 220-227 further precipitates the forward motion. The F-G^b motion of the new ostinato in these bars refers yet again to earlier passages based on the G-A^b half step.

Musical momentum becomes increasingly frenetic, reaching its climax with the syncopated eighth note of m. 227, a c⁴ that elides with the opening measure of the coda. The final key center of the movement is rooted on C, thereby tonally connecting the opening and closing bars of the piece.

The coda is divided into two short, distinct sections. In the first, mm. 228-231, the tempo marking is *Largo*, the identical marking of the introduction. These five measures contain an altered reprise of the opening bars, complete with pitch class sets [0,2,5] and [0,2,7]. As before, tonality is based on C Mixolydian (again with the E/E^b cross-relation in the third bar), dominant-to-tonic relationships are nonexistent, and the leading tone, B-natural, is absent. Measures 230-231, like mm. 4-5, expand in contrary

motion. While the right hand is an octave-transferred repetition of the opening, the bass line contains dramatic octave leaps which nevertheless still trace the earlier, conjunct line. The climax of the passage is reached on the downbeat of m. 232, a five-octave expansion of the pitch C that links into the concluding Allegro.

The closing section is a modified restatement of mm. 49-56 with its first bar, m. 232, clearly derived from m. 55. As before, C-minor and E^b-major tonalities are in juxtaposition, but the addition of D^b in m. 233 refers back to m. 231 (and even m. 5) as the chromatic upper neighbor to C, the tonal center on which this movement ends. Pitch collections [0,2,5] and [0,2,7] are utilized extensively in constructing the ascending line, and the importance of both the octave and contrary motion are emphatically reinforced as the movement comes to a close. As in m. 56, linear motion from F to G forms an important cadence; however, what was earlier a half cadence is now a concluding tonic cadence with the addition of V-I motion in the bass. The final chord contains only two pitches, C and G, doubled in octaves. Consistent with much of this movement, scale degree 3, the note necessary to determine the specific quality of this concluding sonority, is absent.

The large-scale harmonic movement from the beginning of Section D to the end of the coda, G^b to C, forms a mirror image to that of the introduction, which moves from C to G^b. This type of framing technique provides a sense of balance and closure, evidence of Boulanger's strong emphasis upon the goals of motion in a composition, *la grande ligne*.³

³ Rosenthal, "Confronting the Next Impossible," p. 80.

Because of the stylistic similarities to the music of Aaron Copland that are found in Talma's *Sonata*, it is of interest to note how effectively his observations regarding Boulanger's teachings reflect the results found in this analysis. In his book, *Copland on Music*, he discusses Boulanger's emphasis on *la grande ligne*. He says, "Much was included in that phrase: the sense of forward motion, of flow and continuity in the musical discourse; the feeling for inevitability, for the creating of an entire piece that could be thought of as a functioning entity."⁴ *Piano Sonata No. 1* effectively embodies *la grande ligne*, most particularly in the use of tonal centers as frames for each individual section and for the entire movement.

Luann Dragone, founder of the Louise Talma Society, says this of the composer's work: "Almost all of Talma's music is tonally centric with certain pitches that seem more important than others and that serve as tone centers for the composition in part or as a whole."⁵ Talma related to Dragone that Boulanger strictly emphasized harmonic movement and voice-leading, and that her goal for her students was that they use their talent and inspiration to make the finest musical statement possible. The first movement of *Piano Sonata No. 1* provides an excellent example of Talma's early compositional style with its contrapuntal and tonal processes, techniques that were indisputably the result of her studies with Boulanger.⁶

⁴ Aaron Copland, *Copland on Music* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1960), p. 90.

⁵ Dragone, "Interview with Louise Talma," *IAWM Journal*, accessed February, 1998.

⁶ Ibid.

Chapter 4

THEA MUSGRAVE: *A SUITE O BAIRNSANGS*

Thea Musgrave's *A Suite O Bairnsangs* for voice and piano was the fulfillment of her first commission, received in 1953 from the Scottish Festival at Braemar.¹

A Suite O Bairnsangs is a cycle of five miniature songs with texts provided in Scottish dialect and English by the poet Maurice Lindsay specifically for Musgrave's composition.² Composed near the end of her four-year study with Nadia Boulanger, this music reflects Boulanger's teaching in its economy and careful attention to detail. The harmonic language is primarily modal, and melodic lines move predominantly in conjunct motion, thereby making the music accessible to the vocalist.³ An intrinsic motive of dual modality links each of the songs, thereby illustrating Boulanger's emphasis upon a systematic study of the modes. It may also be possible to distinguish a duality of tonal structure based upon major and minor keys, a viewpoint proffered by Karin Pendle.⁴

Selected examples from each song are found in Appendix B. The complete score is available from Carl Fischer, Inc., 62 Cooper Square, New York, NY 10003.

¹ Karin Pendle, *Women & Music* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana U. Press, 1991), p. 182.

² *Ibid.*, p. 182.

³ Catherine Roma, "The Choral Music of Thea Musgrave," *American Choral Review* XXXI/1 (1989), p. 6.

⁴ Karin Pendle, "Thea Musgrave: The Singer and the Song," *NATS Bulletin* XLIII/2 (1986), pp. 5-13.

The Man-in-the-Mune

“The Man-in-the-Mune” is the first song of the suite. For this, and all of the songs in the cycle, no key signature is provided. The opening measures of “The Man-in-the-Mune” are centered on F Phrygian with particular emphasis on its dominant, C.

Ascending and descending stepwise movement between D^b and F forms an ostinato bass that supports much of the song. While this ostinato outlines the interval of the major third, the vocal line makes almost exclusive use of minor thirds, and has F Dorian, minus the A^b, as its focus (Ex. 1). Although these Phrygian and Dorian scales share five invariant pitches, two of which, F and C, are particularly exploited in this passage, Musgrave highlights the bimodality of the music by superimposing D against D^b, pitches that are not common to both modes, as shown in m. 6.

After a varied repetition of the opening bars, the song modulates without preparation in m. 16 to a G tonal center, which, like the F center of the opening, supports transpositions of Phrygian and Dorian modes through m. 27. Further reinforcement of this harmonic shift is provided by the extension of cadences to the G-to-D open fifths. The piano again provides support with an ostinato bass that moves between a major third, now A^b and C, and in a similar manner, the E against E^b in m. 25 draws attention to the bimodal nature of the music (Ex. 2).

Measures 27-32 then stand in contrast to earlier material by briefly abandoning the major third pattern of the ostinato, replacing it with a series of harmonic seconds that, upon closer investigation, nonetheless contain embedded thirds from G to E^b and F to D (Ex. 3).

Modulation back to the opening F Phrygian/Dorian modalities is accomplished by sequential open-fifth sonorities between mm. 33-42 (Ex. 4). Root movement of the second chord of each sequential unit is by descending thirds from C to A^b to F, scale degrees 5, 3 and 1 of both of the F modes. This long-range descending motion leads to the reprise, a slightly altered repetition of the first fifteen measures of the song.

Daffins

Song no. 2 of the suite, “Daffins,” opens with a two-measure piano introduction of alternating A-minor seventh and G[#]-major arpeggios (Ex. 5). As with “The Man-in-the-Mune,” two shifting harmonic centers permeate this song. While there are no invariant pitches between the A-minor seventh and G[#]-major tones of these opening arpeggios, as early as m. 6 the two figures begin to borrow pitches from one another. Several new notes are introduced, F[#] /A[#] in m. 6 and C[#]/E[#] in m. 7, and as the line ascends and descends, the delineation of tonality between the chords becomes increasingly obscured (Ex. 6).

Musgrave’s use of pedal effectively creates a muted blend of sound that also prevents aural recognition of distinct harmonic areas. Pedal markings indicate the uninterrupted use of the damper pedal for as long as five measures, as at the opening, and the *una corda* pedal is specified for all but two measures of the song.

In contrast to the blurred dual modalities of the piano accompaniment, the vocal line begins in the key of A minor, and remains there until m. 21. The raised fourth scale degree, D[#], is the only chromatically altered pitch of these bars, providing the invariant note between this passage and the later one in G[#] Mixolydian, to which the vocal line

shifts in mm. 23-24 (Ex. 7). Moreover, the A-minor seventh arpeggio of the opening bars may also be linked to the later G[#] Mixolydian in its similar employment of the lowered seventh scale degree.

While the vocal line remains in A minor, the piano accompaniment effects a transitional passage in mm. 18-21. A series of overlapping A[#]-diminished and F-major triads ascends until beat 2 of m. 21, creating a pattern of recurring C/C[#] and A/A[#] cross-relations which, as with the entire song, undermines the aural recognition of a tonal center within the framework of dual modality.

The G[#] Mixolydian passage, whose pitches are introduced in the left hand of the piano in m. 21 and continue in that part through m. 26, is juxtaposed against A-major triads in the right hand. As in the opening measures, two tonal centers with roots a semitone apart alternate in the accompanimental line. The A-major sonority is a modification of the motivic A-minor seventh arpeggio, with the raised third anticipating the C[#] of the vocal line in m. 24. A shift away from Mixolydian mode begins with the B-natural in m. 25, leading to the cadence on E in the voice and the coda of the song (Ex. 8).

The coda of “Daffins” is similar to the final section of “The Man-in-the-Mune” in that the piano accompaniment in mm. 27-30 is a reprise of the opening. The arpeggios have reverted to the original A-minor seventh/G[#]-major harmonies. These chords overlap in stretto with increasing frequency until, in the final measure, they are played simultaneously, effectively blurring any sense of tonal independence there may have been between them at the beginning of the piece.

Willie Wabster

“Willie Wabster” is the third and longest of the five songs in the cycle. In the opening section Musgrave employs two separate modes, Phrygian and Aeolian (or natural minor) rooted on the tonic A. The Phrygian mode is suggested by B^b, which is superimposed against B in the initial chord, a technique similarly employed between D^b and D-natural in the opening section of “The Man-in-the-Mune.” This chord and the A-minor seventh that follows (no doubt a link to “Daffins”) function both as opening punctuation and closing cadence throughout the piece, creating a frame that delineates the first phrase of each strophe (Ex. 9).

With the exception of the initial chord and its return in m. 5, the piano accompaniment and the vocal line utilize exclusively the pitches of the Aeolian mode for the first nineteen measures. An abundance of the filled-in major and minor thirds found in “The Man-in-the-Mune” occur again in the voice, now outlining scale degrees 1, 3 and 5 of the A-minor triad (Ex. 10).

At m. 20 the piano line begins a descending sequential passage, an interlude between strophes which is no longer centered on A minor but incorporates extensive chromaticism as the bass descends the third from B^b to G^b (Ex. 11). The music of mm. 16-19 is restated in mm. 25-29, and the second strophe begins with the previously discussed punctuation/cadential chords. These chords function in elision, closing the first strophe as they introduce the second.

The second strophe of “Willie Wabster” continues in the same manner as the first, with the exception of a fermata in m. 55 and the final punctuation chords of the song. The second of these two chords is surprisingly changed by the substitution of C[#] for C natural,

creating a Picardy third. The concluding A-major sonority complements the light-hearted nature of both the music and the text, and brings the tonality into sharper focus by resolving the dissonant A-minor seventh of preceding, similar punctuation chords.

A Bairn's Prayer at Nicht

Following the relatively lengthy "Willie Wabster," "A Bairn's Prayer at Nicht" is the shortest song of the cycle. As with the preceding songs, Musgrave superimposes two pitch collections, in this case G Phrygian and G minor. The recitative-style vocal line draws upon scale degrees 1-5 of G minor, anchoring itself predominantly on the tonic, while the alto voice of the piano slowly descends through the Phrygian scale. In the meantime, the upper voice of the piano provides pedal tones on the tonic and dominant pitches, suspending g^1 over mm. 1-6, d^1 in mm. 7-10, then dropping the fifth to g for the final measures (Ex. 12).

Measures 11-12 of "A Bairn's Prayer" introduce the non-diatonic pitches D^b and G^b for the first time in the piece. The G^b serves as an octave-displaced, chromatic lower neighbor to the g in the right hand, which shifts from the original tonic to scale degree 5 of the final C-major chord. D^b functions as a chromatic upper neighbor to the closing tonic and is sustained, with only a brief interruption, until its resolution in the final measure. The Picardy third of the closing harmony is reminiscent of the final chord of the previous song.

As in "Daffins," Musgrave utilizes the sostenuto pedal for extended periods of time; however, in "A Bairn's Prayer," the pedal is not intended to obscure the tonality. Markings indicate that the pedal is to be lifted at m. 5, allowing the open-fifth sonority to

sound clearly. In the antepenultimate measure, the pedal is again lifted when the chromatic neighbor tones are introduced, separating them from the passages based on G and giving clear definition to the sonorities in the concluding bars.

Musgrave indicates that the left-hand arpeggios of mm. 1 and 7 are to be treated “as appoggiaturas, but to be played slowly,” thereby allowing each pitch to be distinctly heard. Two pitches in particular are clearly distinguished between the first and second arpeggios, D and E^b, effecting a 5-6 motion above the bass. Rather than returning to D and completing a standard 5-6-5 neighbor motion, the line descends to the chromatically altered D^b, which then may be interpreted as a pivot between G Phrygian and C major. Examination of the large-scale structure of “A Bairn’s Prayer” and its use of sostenuto pedal provides evidence that the G-minor design of the vocal line, the sustained G in the bass, the G-D fifths, and the underlying G Phrygian scale of mm. 1-10 combine to create a prolonged, modified dominant harmony which ultimately resolves to the C-major chord of the final measure.

The Gean

As with all of the previous songs, the final selection, “The Gean,” utilizes dual modalities. In mm. 1-16, both the vocal line and piano accompaniment are comprised of the pitches of the C harmonic minor scale, anchored on the dominant pedal (Ex. 13). The 4-3 linear movement over the G pedal creates a particularly strong dominant effect, making possible the aural recognition of C minor as the initial tonal center.

At m. 17, a transitional passage begins in which the vocal and piano lines shift down by a whole step and begin to employ the pitches of the B^b-minor scale. Two pitches

common to both this and the earlier tonal center, C and F, are emphasized in the bass of the accompaniment during mm. 17-20, the first unit of an eight-bar modified sequence. In mm. 21-24 the accompaniment forms the second stage of the sequence, shifting down another whole step, but its combination with the vocal line creates a much less stable tonal area (Ex. 14).

Throughout mm. 17-24, the vocal line gradually ascends from d^{b2} to g^2 , the first climax of the song, then cadences on c^2 in m. 24. The underlying unstable harmonies, however, undermine the tonal implication of this G-C cadential motion. Although the vocal line of “The Gean” is significantly more disjunct than that of earlier songs, structural harmonic motion throughout the transition is, by comparison, primarily conjunct, moving by descending step through the sequential passages mentioned above.

Following the repetition of the opening refrain in mm. 25-37, a vocally embellished transitional passage proceeds to the second climax in mm. 45-46, which this time elides with the return of C minor and leads to the final reprise of the refrain. Although the 4-3 motion over the dominant pedal that permeates the refrains creates an expectation of ultimately hearing the C minor tonality, Musgrave chooses not to provide this resolution but finishes the song with a seventh chord rooted on the dominant, the tonic C merely suspended from the preceding bars (Ex. 15).

Despite the obscuring of tonality to varying degrees in each of the songs of *A Suite O Bairnsangs*, Thea Musgrave has made no attempt to create music that is atonal. Laurence Rosenthal, a student of Boulanger for two years, states that their teacher was

frequently concerned with the clarity of harmonic and melodic goals in his compositions.⁵ Musgrave successfully achieves these goals by combining tonality in new and refreshing ways.

⁵ Rosenthal, "Confronting the Next Impossible." p. 80.

Chapter 5

JULIA PERRY: *PASTORAL*

Pastoral, written for solo flute and pairs of violins, violas, and cellos, was composed by Julia Perry in 1959. This single-movement work was written subsequent to Perry's return to the United States from Europe, where she studied with Luigi Dallapiccola and Nadia Boulanger.¹

Although particular motives, such as neighbor motion and the intervals of the tritone and seventh, connect the piece from beginning to end, Perry's composition is nonetheless divided into three distinct sections. Section A' (mm. 51-75) is an extended recapitulation of section A (mm. 1-15), both of which juxtapose elements from two tonal areas, A minor and C major. Together they provide a frame for the middle section (B), an extended fugue that is distinguished by an increased use of chromaticism and avoidance of tonal centers. The sophisticated fugal techniques of section B substantiate the extensive contrapuntal training provided by Boulanger.

Selected musical examples are included in Appendix C. However, to best follow the analysis, the reader is encouraged to obtain a copy of the complete score from Peermusic Classical, 810 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10019.

Section A of *Pastoral* begins with a chord constructed from the complete collection of pitches of the A harmonic-minor scale. While the simultaneous presentation of these notes offers no harmonic implications, they are vertically

arranged so as to reveal the motivic tritone between two pairs of pitches, d^1 - $g^\sharp^1$ and f - b ; both will return in different registers during the piece (Ex. 1). The opening flute solo is derived from this same pitch collection, as are the chords in m. 8 and mm. 14-15. Together with the opening chord, they create a frame around the two phrases of the flute solo and punctuate the beginning and end of this section (a technique similarly used by Musgrave in “Willie Wabster” from *A Suite O Bairnsangs*).

The tritone between the violins in the opening chord is directly incorporated into the solo line, appearing as the a^{b2} - d^2 descent in the third bar of the piece. Immediately afterward the second important melodic motive of the work appears, a repeating pattern of neighbor motion initiated between b^2 - c^3 that continues through m. 6 (Ex. 2).

When the strings reenter in m. 8 with an incomplete version of the opening chord, the C that had originally served as the bass note in m. 1 is now transferred to the flute, while the $G^\sharp$ -D tritone permeates more of the texture (Ex. 3). Given the prominence of the C in the first bar, the e^2 in the flute in mm. 1-2, the repeated B-C motion in mm. 4-6, and the flute’s cadence on c^3 in m. 8, the music seems to suggest a tonal area based on C. However, elements of A minor, such as the $G^\sharp$ of the tritone and the pitch collection of the punctuating chords, undermine any clear sense of tonality in this passage.

A rhythmically altered repetition of m. 7 is played by the flute in m. 9, here leading into a new motivic pattern of neighbor motion that culminates in yet another form of the D- $G^\sharp$ tritone at the end of the phrase. This ascending tritone, a respelled

¹ Green, *Black Women Composers*, p. 72.

inversion of the descending tritone in m. 3, creates a long-range motivic connection between the first and last bars of the solo in this section.

The first chord of mm. 10 and 11, with its d^2 - $g^{\#2}$ tritone and “dominant seventh” quality, suggests a possible resolution to A minor; however, the “deceptive” motion to the subsequent harmony undermines such an expectation and leaves the tonality vague. As in other measures of this section, elements of C major and A minor are freely combined but neither tonal center predominates.

Another motivic interval, the melodic seventh, is introduced in m. 13 by the violins and violas (Ex. 4). This major seventh has been anticipated by the use of the A- $G^{\#}$ interval in the chords of mm. 1 and 8 and returns in the chords that follow in mm. 14-15. The accents over the seventh in m. 13 highlight this interval in preparation for the B section of the piece, where major, minor, and diminished sevenths play a significant role.

In the transformation of the opening harmony in mm. 14-15, most of the pitches have returned to their original octave. In particular, the e^2 that is played by the flute in m. 1, then shifted to e^3 in mm. 9-11, is now transferred back to its original octave (played by the first violin) in mm. 14-15. This long-range rising and falling motion is dramatically mirrored by the opening C of the cello, which is transferred up four octaves from the lowest note of the texture to the flute in m. 8, and ultimately returns to its original register at the close of section A.

The middle section of *Pastoral*, mm. 16-50, is an extended fugal exposition. Through Perry’s inclusion of this procedure in her composition, the strict contrapuntal training provided by Nadia Boulanger becomes unmistakably evident. The highly

chromatic design of the subject, combined with the entrances of other fugal lines at various transposition levels, creates a more sharply dissonant harmonic foundation for this section than that found in section A, where chromaticism was limited to $G^\sharp/A^b$.

After a smooth transition effected by the overlapping of e^1 between viola and first violin in m. 16, the violin and flute present the subject in unison, a melodic line that contains each of the three motives introduced in the opening section of the work (Ex. 5). Measures 16-18 are constructed almost entirely from sevenths (here minor and diminished), m. 19 reintroduces the A^b -D tritone (filled in with an intervening B-natural), and the last sixteenth note of m. 19 begins a new cycle of neighbor motion that revolves around $f^{\sharp 2}$. This motive then evolves into the countersubject in m. 20, which continues over the fugal answer played by the first viola.

The answer, a fifth below the subject and metrically displaced by one beat, is slightly altered in m. 22 with the substitution of g^1 for the expected $g^{\sharp 1}$. This creates, as in m. 21, a vertical $F^\sharp$ -G interval between the two voices that complements the $F^\sharp$ -G neighbor motion of the countersubject. In m. 24, the final pitch of the answer is overlapped with the entrance of the second violin, which begins an inverted form of the subject. Unlike the answer, the inverted subject contains no chromatically altered pitches; however, dissonance continues to increase as the texture thickens throughout this section.

In mm. 25-27, the first viola adds a layer of free counterpoint that incorporates the motivic tritone (here e - b^b and e^b - a), moving in m. 28 to an inverted statement of the countersubject's neighbor motion. Above this oscillating figure, the second violin introduces a modified countersubject that, like the subject itself, contains motivic

material from the A section: the tritone in m. 29, the major seventh in mm. 31-32, and neighbor motion in mm. 34-36. These contrapuntal layers create a repeated superimposition of C/C[#] in mm. 29-31, which with the other pitches in the texture further enhances the sharply dissonant nature of this fugue.

The answer played by the first cello in mm. 29-32 transposes the subject down a major sixth, continuing the pattern of shifting pitch levels for each entrance. In m. 32 the second viola enters in *stretto* with an inverted statement of the subject, creating an increasingly dense contrapuntal and chromatic texture punctuated by a more audible C/C[#] superimposition on the final beat of that measure. While the first viola continues the now familiar countersubject of upper and lower neighbor motion, in m. 33 the first violin joins the second violin in a primarily ascending melodic line that underpins a minor-ninth transposition of the subject in the flute and leads to the *fortissimo* climax, which begins in m. 40.

Beginning with the third beat of m. 40, the cellos underscore the climactic phrase with final, modified restatements of the subject while the flute and remaining strings simultaneously present the countersubject at four different pitch levels (Ex. 6). A six-measure coda of imitated fragments from the head of the subject concludes this extended fugal section in mm. 46-51. Long-range coherence in section B is effected by the varying pitch levels of these imitative entrances; with the sole exception of the second viola in m. 46, each of the opening pitches in these bars corresponds to the opening pitch of either a subject or answer in the preceding fugue.

In a manner reminiscent of the transition from section A into the fugue (m. 16), in m. 51 the shift into the closing section (A') of *Pastoral* is again effected through

overlap on the pitch E (now an octave higher, on e^2 between first violin and flute).

The flute plays a varied restatement of the initial melody, accompanied by a gradually thinning complement of strings. In m. 57, the return of the *pizzicato* chord, slightly modified from m. 8, again punctuates the harmonic texture.

At this point, the flute solo concludes the phrase with a descending, disjunct line that is similar to the melody played by the violins and violas in mm. 12-13. The flute then begins its final phrase in mm. 61-62 with two tritones derived from the opening chord, $g^{\#1}-d^2$ and b^2-f^3 , creating another motivic connection between the outer, related sections of the piece. As an additional link, the final pitches played by the flute, c^3-b^2 , are the same notes utilized as upper and lower neighbors in mm. 4-6. In these closing measures, however, this motive does not oscillate as before, but each of the two pitches is sustained to blend in with the string texture.

Over the A pedal in the second cello, the strings sustain a final sonority that begins on the third beat of m. 68, derived from four of the pitches of m. 1 (A, d^2 , e^1 , and b^1 , two of which appear in different octaves in the concluding bars). Although these pitches are diatonic to A minor, the establishment of this tonality is again avoided due to the quartal structure inherent in this chord and the omission of the important third scale degree, the C pitch that was so prominent in the preceding bars and in the opening section of the work.

Nadia Boulanger said to her students: "You must give each note life, your life. You must sacrifice, you must learn to give yourself to music. Then you will make it live. Then you will be able to make other people understand music."² It would seem

² Campbell, *Master Teacher*, p. 84.

that Louise Talma, Thea Musgrave and Julia Perry learned well the lessons of their teacher. Each woman committed her professional career to composition, and the musical insights gained while working under the tutelage of Nadia Boulanger are markedly evident in each of the works analyzed in this thesis. Talma's *Piano Sonata No. 1* exhibits the principles of *la grande ligne* by developing its rhythmic energy through the use of changing meters, and by utilizing tonal centers as framing devices for individual sections of music and for the entire work. *A Suite O Bairnsangs* exploits bimodality, thereby demonstrating the benefits gained from Boulanger's systematic approach to the study of the modes. Finally, the sophisticated fugal techniques of *Pastoral* attest to the strict contrapuntal training and mastery required by Boulanger of all of her students.

"Nothing is better than music. When it takes us out of time, it has done more for us than we have the right to hope for. It has broadened the limits of our sorrowful lives; it has lit up the sweetness of our hours of happiness by effacing the pettinesses that diminish us, bringing us back pure and new to what was, what will be and what music has created for us."³ These words, spoken by Nadia Boulanger, give testimony to her passion for music. The compositions analyzed in this thesis give equal credence to her remarkable skill and dedication to musical pedagogy, reflected in the inspired works of three truly remarkable women.

³ Ibid., p. 63.

APPENDIX A

EXAMPLE LIST
TALMA, *PIANO SONATA NO. 1*, FIRST MOVEMENT

Examples are reprinted by permission of Carl Fischer, Inc.

- Ex. 1: mm. 1-2
- Ex. 2: mm. 5-6
- Ex. 3: m. 8-downbeat of m. 16
- Ex. 4: mm. 20-21
- Ex. 5: mm. 34-36
- Ex. 6: mm. 45-48
- Ex. 7: mm. 54-56
- Ex. 8: mm. 69-72
- Ex. 9: mm. 74-75
- Ex. 10: mm. 94-97
- Ex. 11: mm. 136-137
- Ex. 12: mm. 196-203

APPENDIX A

1. Ex. 1

025 027 027 025

5. Ex. 2

025

very long p molto

8. Ex. 3

027 025

12.

025 027 025 025 025 027

p sf *mp*

Ex. 4

027

long

Ex. 5

027 027 027 027 027

Ex. 6

45 025 025

54 Ex. 7

027 025 025

Ex. 8

69 027 025 025 027 027

sf mf

72 025 027 025

Ex. 9

74 025

sub. p

75

Ex. 10

94 025 025

sf

95 025 025 025

Ex. 11

136 025 027

p luringando

137 027

196 Ex. 12

grazioso

025 027 025 027

025 025 027 027

APPENDIX B

EXAMPLE LIST
MUSGRAVE, *A SUITE O BAIRNSANGS*

Examples are reprinted by permission of Carl Fischer, Inc.

“The Man-in-the-Mune”

Ex. 1: mm. 1-8

Ex. 2: mm. 17-27

Ex. 3: mm. 28-32

Ex. 4: m. 33-downbeat of m. 42

“Daffins”

Ex. 5: mm. 1-4

Ex. 6: mm. 5-7

Ex. 7: mm. 22-25

Ex. 8: mm. 27-30

“Willie Wabster”

Ex. 9: mm. 1-5

Ex. 10: mm. 12-19

Ex. 11: mm. 20-23

“A Bairn’s Prayer at Nicht”

Ex. 12: mm. 1-13

“The Gean”

Ex. 13: mm. 1-16

Ex. 14: mm. 17-24

Ex. 15: mm. 51-56

APPENDIX B

1. Ex. 1 *1. cte*

VOICE *ritmico*

PIANO *pp*

The man-in-the-moon's got
The man in the moon's got a

cleik - i-the - back
crick in his back

17 Ex. 2

He
He

19

sits by him-sel on a shimm - er o heav-en, An
sits by him-self on a * shin - mer of heav-en, And

24

gliss. *psubito*

hears what the star - nics say, But his
hears what the stars say, But his

Ex. 3

28

sheeks gas black, he pulls his broo, an his auldheid shaks wi'
sheeks go black, he pulls his brow, and his auldheid shaks wi' a'

Ex. 4

33

rage, Thru the reen-gan clouds, that jos-ile the yirth, when
rage, Through the bust-ling clouds, that jos-ile the earth, when

39

God's on the ram-page.
God's on the ram-page.

Ex. 5

41

Adagio 3/4

p e molto irregulu

The wind that blew yee-treen, Oar's
The wind that blew last night, made

si simile

p e molto irregulu uuu corda

Ex. 6

5
trees as trees their heads, And warble in the dark as sin is
trees rear up their heads, And wrestle as if tried to slay the

molto legato

Ex. 7

22
Cool laugh-an pools o yell-a licht daff - ins
Cool laugh-ing pools of yell-low light Daff - sine

pp molto legato *et simile* *pp* *ff corde*

Ex. 8

23
see. see.

pp molto legato *et simile* *niente* *ff corde*

Ex. 9

1 Allegro deciso 1:100
Have ye seen Will-le Web - ster.
Have ye seen Will-le Web - ster.

ff corde

Will - le Web - ster, Will-le Web - ster? He's.
Will - le Web - ster, Will-le Web - ster? He's.

Ex. 10

12

scans his fin-gers o'ers the li'l, An sets the stars a shog-gin: When
runs his fin-gers through the sky To keep the stars a mov-ing: Were

16

thun-der-clouds-ll hard-ly drift, He gies ilk yin u-jog-gin. An
thun-der clouds go slow-ly by, He gies them each a shov-ing. And

Ex. 11

20

when the muns off-ends his sight, He cools it o'er his
when the moon of-fends his sight, He cools it o'er his

23

shoulder;
shoulder;

Ex. 12

Adagio semplice J. 53

The stars crack the lift lae let licht in, lae let
The stars crack the sky to let light in, to let

licht in, licht in. Sae please. So please.

sae please may the holes, sae please may the
so please may the holes, so please may the

holes let out my sin. holes let out my sin. niente

molto legato *niente*

mp *ppp* *senza ped* *lento ma pp*

*As appoggiaturas, but to be played slowly

Ex. 13

Moderato ♩ = 100

1

leggiere

sensu pedale

5

leggiere e ritmico

As the trees are
All the trees are

si similia

9

dan - san wi the winds of Spring li - ka
danc - ing with the winds of Spring ev - 'ry

13

green leaf glan - cun in a hie - lan fling. A -
green leaf glanc - ing in a high - land fling. Ex.

Ex. 14

17

bles - thond - er guan - tree see led - dy - lik and proud -
 - ept for you - der cher - ry - tree so lo - dy - like and proud -

21 *ritmico*

Toshi up for as the lava - too see wi loss - lie o a cloud.
 Dressed up for all the rest - so see with too - see of a cloud.

Ex. 15

50

li - ka green leaf glan - oan in a hie - lan fling.
 Su - 'ry green leaf glant - ing in a high - land fling.

APPENDIX C

EXAMPLE LIST
PERRY, *PASTORAL*

Examples are reprinted by permission of Peermusic Classical, Inc.

- Ex. 1: mm. 1-2
- Ex. 2: mm. 1- 8
- Ex. 3: m. 8
- Ex. 4: mm. 12-15
- Ex. 5: mm. 16-22
- Ex. 6: mm. 40-45

APPENDIX C

Ex. 1 Lento; (♩.=54)

FLUTE *mp sostenuto*

VIOLIN I *mp sostenuto*

VIOLIN II *mp sostenuto*

VIOLA I *mp sostenuto*

VIOLA II *mp sostenuto*

VIOLONCELLO I *mp sostenuto*

VIOLONCELLO II *mp sostenuto*

Ex. 2 Lento; (♩.=54)

mp sostenuto

Ex. 3

8

pizz.

pizz.

pizz.

pizz.

pizz.

pizz.

Ex. 4

12.

arco

arco

arco

pizz.

Ex. 5

16.

up espress.

20

meno f.

Ex. 49 *al tempo più mosso*

The musical score for Example 49, titled "al tempo più mosso", is presented in two systems of six staves each. The first system includes dynamics markings *ff* and *f* on the first four staves. The second system includes a *ff* marking on the third staff. The music features various melodic lines with slurs and accents, and a bass line with a *ff* marking. The key signature has one flat, and the time signature is 6/8.

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