MMED686 Choral Conducting for Music Educators

PRE-ASSIGNMENT:

Included in this PDF are the two PDFs referred to in Nally’s Syllabus.

1. NALLY Dissertation (Chapter 8 to the end)
   Sure on this shining night, Chapter 8

   To be sung on the water, Donald Nally.

2. HERFORD Dissertation excerpt (pages 53 - 70)
   Julius Herford: His Life, Teaching, an Influence on the Choral Arts in the United States,
   (Diss. University of North Colorado): “Method of Score Study” and “Classroom Teaching,” pp53-70
Arnold Schönberg probably would not have considered Barber a "progressive," though he may have admired his work. He offers a very astute assessment of American composers in a letter of 1949:

Technically, they all suffer from a lack of education. We in Europe had to study at least one year of harmony, two years of counterpoint, at least three years of a thorough formal study—if not longer. Here, they believe they can do it in three years, which is untrue. There are great talents among them and much skill, and they learn fast. They learn more from theories and from lectures than from master models.

One of the influences which is a great obstacle to richer development is the models which they imitate. It would not be so bad to imitate Stravinsky, or Bartok, or Hindemith, but worse is that they have been taught by a woman of Russian-French descent, who is a reactionary and has had much influence on many composers. One can only wish that this influence might be broken and the real talents of the Americans be allowed to develop freely.\(^\text{219}\)

Among the students of Nadia Boulanger, the woman Schönberg mentions above, were Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson, Walter Piston, and Roger Sessions, but not Barber or Menotti. Instead, Barber spent nine years under Scalero, learning composition as a contrapuntal art. Barber and Menotti exhibit a characteristic which is lacking in some American composers from their era: an honest search for a personal language and a fresh approach to the music which they had inherited from the nineteenth century. This is very much how Schönberg viewed himself, which explains in part his attraction to Brahms as a topic.

For his part, Barber does not seem to have been bothered by criticism of his music as conservative and too Romantic; critics were, after all, unpredictable and often demanded more Romantic characteristics. Of *Antony and Cleopatra*, Harold Schonberg wrote: “instead of lyric rapture we get well-placed prose . . . lacking ardor and eloquence . . . stingy with arresting melodic ideas.” Barber was comfortable with his language, worked to solve problems of composition and not necessarily innovation, and was painfully concerned with truth in art:

. . . I think that what's been holding composers back a great deal is that they feel they must have a new style every year. This, in my case, would be hopeless . . . I just go on doing, as they say, my thing. I believe this takes a certain courage.  

Barber's musical language, especially in his choral works, is one of economy; Romantic sonorities are used sparingly in a tight and precise construction. Predominantly syllabic, exploring a limited harmonic vocabulary, and utilizing clear and recognizable forms, the choral works are his response to poetry that is itself economical even when Romantic. "Brahms the progressive," Schönberg's discussion of style, can be read as an unintended defense of Barber:

. . . it seems that the progress in which Brahms was operative should have stimulated composers to write music for adults. Mature people think in complexes, and the higher their intelligence the greater is the number of units with which they are familiar. It is inconceivable that composers should call "serious music" what they write in an obsolete style, with a prolixity not conforming to the contents—repeating three to seven times what is understandable at once. Why should it not be possible in music to say in whole complexes in a condensed form what, in the preceding epochs, had at first to be said several times with slight variations before it could be elaborated? Is it not as if a writer who wanted to tell of "somebody who lives in a house near the river," should have to explain what a house is, what it is made for, and of what material, and, after that, explain the river in the same way?

Some people speak of the "dying romanticism" of music. Do they really believe that


making music, playing with tones, is something realistic, or what? Or is it that romanticism has to resign in favour of senseless prolixity?\textsuperscript{222}

In setting Bogan's "To be Sung on the Water," Barber did exactly what he told Eugene Ormandy that he desired to do; he wrote a work simply because he wanted to write it, using his own language and his own choice of text. The style is simple; this is Barber's only choral work that is completely diatonic from beginning to end. In fact, Barber discards many characteristics of earlier settings in order to write a simple, romantic response to the poem—with good reason: the poem is the epitome of nostalgia, a sentimental lyric verse. Yet the work is truthful, due to the honesty of both poet and composer in approaching the subject.

At the close of her biography, \textit{Louise Bogan: A Portrait} (1985), Elizabeth Frank writes:

\begin{quote}
A photograph of Mozart's birthplace hung in every apartment she lived from 1933 until her death. She wanted to use up her energy and talent to the last drop, but was terrified of being consumed in the process, and nearly was consumed, not once, but many times. Powerful feeling, developed intuition, and the hunger for pure form have rarely sought out a more fragile and yet a more enduring vessel. It was not enough to survive; her spirit demanded that she prevail and triumph, and she did.\textsuperscript{223}
\end{quote}

Frank's biography required extensive research. Unlike Laurie Lee and Stephen Spender, both of whom wrote autobiographical volumes, Bogan avoided revealing her private life or inner self other than in her work. She explained her antipathy towards personal accounts in a response to a standard research questionnaire (a response which is curiously \textit{apropos} to the present study):

\begin{quote}
My dislike of telling future research students anything about myself is intense and profound. If they know everything to begin with, how in hell can they go on eating up their tidy little fellowships researching? And I believe the less authentic records are, the more
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{222}\textit{Schönberg, Style and Idea}, p. 408.

"interesting" they automatically become.\textsuperscript{224}

Louise Bogan was born 11 August 1897 in Livermore Falls, Maine, a busy paper-mill town. Her father, Daniel Bogan, rose through the ranks of the mill from clerk to superintendent. When Louise was four, he moved his family to Milton, New Hampshire, on the Salmon River Falls. Life at home was often tumultuous. Louise's mother was the gossipy adopted daughter of a well-to-do Portland family who felt she had married beneath herself. She had many lovers, occasionally taking Louise along to her affairs. Vicious family fights occurred regularly, with Louise's brother, thirteen years her elder, siding against her father. In later life, Louise was to battle against encounters with malice, cliques, and gossip; Carol Schloss remarks that May Bogan's affairs and her husband's reaction to them guided Louise's "predominant emotional constellations in both life and art: the belief that love was inextricably bound with rage, guilt and betrayal."\textsuperscript{225} Demonstrating what Eda Lou Walton described as Bogan's examination of "the warfare of mind and heart,"\textsuperscript{226} is the First Voice in Bogan's dialogue "Summer Wish" (1928):

\begin{quote}
Not memory, and not the renewed conjecture
Of passion that opens the breast, the unguarded look
Flaying clean the raped defense of the body,
Breast, bowels, throat, now pulled to the use of the eyes
That see and are taken. The body that works and sleeps,
Made vulnerable, night and day, to delight that changes
Upon the lips that taste it, to the lash of jealousy
Struck on the face, so the betraying bed
Is gashed clear, cold on the mind, together with
Every embrace that agony dreads but sees
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{225}Carol Schloss, \textit{DLB} vol. 45, p. 53.

Open as the love dogs.\textsuperscript{227}

Schloss believes that Bogan was destined to repeat her mother's uneven life of lust and betrayal:

\dots It was as if she were drawn to recapitulate her position as a helpless, violated child until, with the help of psychoanalysis, she broke through the cycle of damage to a superior awareness.\textsuperscript{228}

Evidence supporting this is hidden in her mature poetry:

My mother remembers the agony of her womb
And long years that seemed to promise more than this.
She says, "You do not love me,
You do not want me,
You will go away."\textsuperscript{229}

Having excelled in her primary studies, at age thirteen Louise entered Girl's Latin School, which offered the best classical education available to girls at the time. One year later, Louise was writing poetry every day, influenced by George Herbert, A. E. Housman, and the poets of Harriet Moore's \textit{Poetry: A Magazine of Verse}, which she read from its inaugural issue. Like most poets of her time, Bogan was initially influenced by Swinburne and Morris. Frank writes that, though she soon tired of their words, she "never lost the pre-Raphaelite penchant for the filled-out line, in which every vowel, consonant, and syllable receives its complete, unhurried value."\textsuperscript{230} Such sonorous richness characterizes the poem Barber chose, "To be Sung on the Water":

\begin{quote}
Beautiful, pass and be
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{228} Schloss, p. 53.

\textsuperscript{229} Louise Bogan, "Betrothed," in Ibid., p. 7.

\textsuperscript{230} Frank, p. 28.
Less than the guiltless shade
To which our vows were said;
Less than the sound of the oar
To which our vows were made. — 231

At the time Bogan began writing, American poets were trying to find a voice, searching for a leader. T. S. Eliot recalls:

Certainly I cannot remember any English poet alive (from 1900-14) who contributed to my own education. . . The only recourse was to poetry of another language. Browning was more of a hindrance than a help, for he had gone some way, but not far enough, in discovering a new contemporary idiom. And at that stage, Poe and Whitman had to be seen through French eyes. The question was still: Where do we go from Swinburne? And the answer appeared to be, nowhere. 232

By 1912, Bogan “had struck her note, the pure lyric note, as she often put it, of ‘memory and desire,’“ 233 which was influenced by her study of Mallarmé, Verlaine, Rimbaud, and Maeterlinck (who was to become one of her favorites, along with Donne, Rossetti, Meynell, and Louise Imogen Guiney). She excelled in high school and after a year at Boston College won a scholarship to Radcliffe. Over her parents’ protestations, she never took advantage of the award. Instead, at nineteen, she married Curt Alexander, a young German immigrant, and began a pattern of attempted and failed relationships that would vex her next twenty-five years. While living in Panama with her husband, a professional Army man, she gave birth to a daughter in October 1918. The following year was a difficult one; her brother Charles was killed in battle in France, and she left her husband. Bogan took up residency in New York City (while her parents cared for her daughter) where she quickly became part of a circle of successful writers which included William Carlos Williams, Rolf

231 Bogan, “To be Sung on the Water,” in Ibid., p. 105.


233 Frank, p. 28.
Humphries, Edmund Wilson, and Margaret Mead. An affair with John Coffey was cut short when he was sent to an insane asylum for shoplifting as part of a plot to publicize the needs of the poor.

Bogan's pattern of tragic disappointments, professional successes, and extreme emotional behavior continued. In 1920, Bogan's estranged husband died. The following year Harriet Monroe selected five of Bogan's poems for publication in Poems. Bogan included only one of these poems for her first book of verse, Body of this Death (1923), applying even then the stringent criteria with which she evaluated her own work throughout her life. Between these two publications, she spent six months in Vienna, where she studied the piano. A relationship with Raymond Holden, a facile and successful writer himself, culminated in their marriage in July 1925. In 1928, the couple fulfilled their dream of owning a farmhouse in Hillsdale, New York, though this was in part to calm Louise's fits of jealousy and rage. At the farmhouse, Bogan, her daughter, and her husband lived her ideal life, celebrated here in "The Crossed Apple":

Within are five black pips as big as peas,
As you will find,
Potent to breed you five great apple trees
Of varying kind:

To breed you wood for fire, leaves for shade,
Apples for sauce.
Oh, this is a good apple for a maid.
It is a cross,

Fine on the finer, so the flesh is tight,
And grained like silk.
Sweet burning gave the red side, and the white
Is Meadow Milk. 234

Bogan's second book of verse, Dark Summers, dedicated to her husband, was published in

September 1929. On 26 December of that same year, the Holden's house burnt to the ground and, with it, nearly every manuscript, book, and belonging of the two authors. Bogan never fully recovered from this tragedy; after several self-imposed rests at New York hospitals, she separated from Holden while travelling in Europe on a Guggenheim Fellowship. They divorced in 1939. The following year, she began a short relationship with Theodore Roethke, who was to be very generous and helpful to her in the future, procuring various teaching assignments. In 1937, she finished her unexpired Guggenheim term with a trip to Ireland, meeting a man who was to become her lover for the next eight years. Their meeting is recounted in a letter of the time:

\ldots I *did* get down on my knees, in the Carlton Mansions, in Bedford Place, W. C. I, and I \textit{did ask the Author of the Universe} please, if the disaster was going to happen, to make it happen right away \ldots "but please God, wait for the final blow until I get back to America!" And there must be a God \ldots for on the Southampton boat-train, there appeared a tall thin man who preceded to take care of me like a baby \ldots day after day, while the continued exterior rumors and my own obsessions rumbled and grew \ldots But for that touch of human understanding, I should certainly have started gibbering.\textsuperscript{235}

Having declared in a notebook in 1934 that "there can be no new love at 37, in a woman," Bogan surprised herself by falling in love with an electrician from Inwood, near the Bronx. ("O, why didn't I know about the trades, years ago? I wasted a lot of time on the professions.")\textsuperscript{236} A few months after their relationship began, Louise tried to break it off in a postcard. The man, whose identity remains unknown even now, would not allow her to end it. Bogan was delighted by his response.

The success of this relationship, and the many prestigious awards and teaching invitations that she received during this period, gave Bogan a renewed self-confidence and energy; the pattern

\textsuperscript{235} 11 June, 1937, Letter to Morton Zabel, quoted in Frank, p. 284.

\textsuperscript{236} 16 June 1937, Letter to Theodore Roethke, quoted in Frank, p. 285.
of instability ceased. She spent time as Consultant in Poetry at the Library of Congress (1945-6), received the Harriet Monroe award, reviewed regularly for the New Yorker (for whom she wrote steadily from 1931-69), and taught in Seattle, Ann Arbor, and Chicago. Even after the relationship ended in 1945, Bogan remained notably more stable than in her earlier years; she continued to write prolifically, publishing several reference works—including Achievement in American Poetry, 1900-1950—visiting the MacDowell Colony regularly from 1957, translating Goethe and Valéry, and teaching at Brandeis University. Her engagement at Brandeis was followed by another rest (1965) at a New York hospital, where she battled depression.

In her last years, Bogan was celebrated by the artistic community through a monetary award from the National Endowment for the Arts (1967) and election to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In 1968 was published her final verse collection, The Blue Estuaries: Poems 1923-1968, dedicated "To the memory of my father, mother and brother." On 4 February 1970 Bogan died alone in her apartment on 169th Street in New York, where she had lived for thirty-three years.

"To Be Sung on the Water" is a masterful mixture of melancholy and joy. Written in July 1937, the poem was proof that Bogan could love again—and, in fact, that she was in love again—after many sad endings. It recalls in subject and rhythm the circumstances of her first encounter with the man who had helped her on the boat-train back to America. Frank writes:

Just three days before the poem arrived on Wheelock's desk, she had tried to break off the affair . . . The poem must have been written during or just after she had said goodbye, for its mood is elegiac as well as exquisitely tender, its movement all toward renunciation. In its texture the poem is the very epitome of Louise Bogan's art. She believed that the basis for all poetry is rhythm, and that rhythm as we first experience it lives within the heartbeat, pulse, and breath. 277

277Frank, p. 310.
In its subject and character the poem recalls James Joyce's *Chamber Music* and Franz Schubert's song "Auf dem Wasser zu Singen," on a text of Friedrich Leopold, Graf zu Stolberg. Bogan's own words, recalling her early childhood, describe the nostalgic sources for her poem:

Music, in those days, belonged to its own time and place. No one today can remember with the same nostalgia (my generation is the last to remember) the sound of music on the water (voices and mandolin or guitar); of band-concerts in town squares... in the twilight or early evening, with a string of lights in the distance marking the line of the bay; or under trees in what was actually, then, a romantic "gloaming."

The verse demonstrates Bogan's extraordinary economy and simplicity, capturing the sound and rhythm of the leisurely rowing in a minimum of words and a few, highly-concentrated images. The subtlety of rhyme and half-rhyme, as well as the gentle metric flow, expresses the intense serenity of the lovers' intimacy. The experience of time, slowed to a soft lulling, is summarized by the word "pass," the repetition of which gives the poem its elegiac character: pass, the poets says.

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234 Bid. The text evokes the same atmosphere as Bogan's poem:

*Mitten im Schimmer der spiegelnden Wellen*
*Gleitet, wie Schwäne, der wankende Dahn;*
*Ach, auf der Freude sanftschimmernden Wellen*
*Gleitet die Seele dahin wie der Kahn;*
*Denn von dem Himmel hurab auf die Wellen*
*Tanzt das Abendrot rund um den Kahn.*

Amid the shimmer of the mirroring waves,
glides, like swans, the rocking boat;
ah, on the soft shimmering waves of joy
the soul glides away like the boat;
for down from the heavens upon the waves
the evening light dances around the boat.


239 Bogan, *Journey Around My Room*, p. 121.
as all things must. There is a certain ecstasy, however, in this thought, as if to say that beauty has been experienced, and it is enough. The irregular rhyme pattern helps to lead the reader to the acceptance of finality; while the first stanza follows a strict ababa rhyme scheme, the second wanders from this, employing a half-rhyme within an expanded structure—cdd\'edde—which concludes with a softer vowel (o). The rhymes highlight the unvoiced consonants, with s and t scattered throughout to punctuate the soft, round vowels as an oar breaks the calm on the surface of the water. The poem thus captures in both content and sound the moment experienced.

To be Sung on the Water

Beautiful, my delight,
Pass, as we pass the wave.
Pass, as the mottled night
Leaves what it cannot save,
Scattering dark and bright.

Beautiful, pass and be
Less than the guiltless shade
To which our vows were said;
Less than the sound of its oar
To which our vows were made,—
Less than the sound of its blade
Dipping the stream once more.\(^{240}\)

Barber's setting of Bogan's "To be Sung on the Water" was dedicated to Florence Kimball, Leontyne Price's\(^{241}\) voice teacher and a friend of the composer. It was composed on 14 December 1968 and may have been considered for inclusion in the revisions of Antony and Cleopatra, though

\(^{240}\)Bogan, "To be Sung on the Water," in The Blue Estuaries, p. 105.

\(^{241}\)Price was also a friend and champion of Barber's music. Introduced to Barber by Kimball as the voice for the premiere of his Hermit Songs, Barber was to write for her the role of Cleopatra, the soprano solo in Prayers of Kierkegaard, and the song cycle Despite and Still.
if so it was rejected. The setting has little to do with "Twelfth Night"; their grouping as an opus seems to result more from chronology than anything else. As a set, however, the motets address two essential aspects of Barber's life which were the focus of considerable anxiety during this time: personal fulfillment through a love relationship (or the loss of such) and spiritual fulfillment (through artistic means).

The work is in C minor, marked "with a steady motion, rather fast," with an ostinato pattern that emphasizes a semitone fluctuation between the fifth and lowered sixth degree of the scale:

Example VIII.1, "To be Sung on the Water," measures 1-2, tenor/bass

The tenor and bass voices are paired throughout, as are the soprano and alto. The ostinato always sets three syllables and occurs on the second beat of the measure. Though the pattern assumes varying motivic shapes, it always returns to the semitone resolution to the dominant:

342Heyman, p. 474. The revision of *Antony and Cleopatra*, a collaboration of Barber and Menotti undertaken between 1973 and 1975, has proved to be a success in several productions.
Example VIII.2. "To be Sung on the Water," measures 9-14, tenor/bass

When the pattern is transferred to the women’s voices, the semitone resolution becomes more urgent, as the longer note values extend the mild tension caused by the unresolved sixth:

Example VIII.3. "To be Sung on the Water," measures 15-16, soprano/alto

By now it seems irrefutable that resolutions by means of descending semitones permeate works in which Barber is expressing melancholy and longing. The texts of most of the choral works have exactly this character, no more clearly demonstrated than in the setting of the word "longing" in
exactly this character, no more clearly demonstrated than in the setting of the word “longing” in *Prayers of Kierkegaard*:

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The ostinato pattern of "To be Sung on the Water" is all the more mesmerizing due to Barber's manipulation of the poem's metric organization. "Beautiful" is dactylic, while "my delight" is an anapest. However, both are set to the same rhythm, which is perfectly designed to give the effect of calm waves. Each short phrase of two measures moves from a stressed syllable to a longer note that is unstressed but a point of harmonic tension; this is resolved through unstressed short notes to a long stressed syllable.

The ostinato, bound without exception to the natural form of the minor mode on C, is another example of a relentless pattern used for atmospheric effect in Barber's music, such as that of the timpani heard in "A Stopwatch and an Ordnance Map." Here, it has the effect of capturing a moment in time; the moment seems to be locked in time as the music is locked in a mode and as the text suggests:

Pass, as the mottled night  
Leaves what it cannot save.

Yet in this still moment is one constant rolling motion, as a boat lists lazily on the water.

The harmonic vocabulary is so economic that only a few chordal sonorities are used, and these actually result from the counterpoint:
Example VIII.5. "To be Sung on the Water," measures 3-14, harmonic progression

The counterpoint is produced by combining the ostinato with a simple lyric melody, in duet, above:

Example VIII.6. "To be Sung on the Water," measures 3-6, soprano/alto

The work is in three parts, "ABA": the two stanzas of the poem are set, then the first stanza is repeated. However, the melodic material is essentially the same for all three "verses" and variety results only from the change of the text and the arrangement of the voices. In the second verse the melodic duet shifts back and forth between the men's and women's voices to achieve a climax:
Example VIII.7, "To be Sung on the Water," measures 23-27

The verse then ends with a codetta which sounds as if the work is drawing to a close, both because of the extended G in the soprano (as in the cadential points of "The Virgin Martyrs"), and because of the resolution of the semitone tension in the tenor (measure 35). The repetition in the alto of a motive from the opening melody (measure 3) enhances the effect:

Example VIII.8, "To be Sung on the Water," measures 33-35

Barber could not end here; as we have seen in his previous works, he requires that short
forms refer to their opening either by directly quoting the opening line or by recapitulating the opening section. Here the latter occurs but with the soprano and alto voices reversed, so that the range of the previous two sections is expanded. The voices begin high, reach up to the G that has been the climax of the preceding verses, then slowly drop to repeat the codetta material (measures 30-35). The entire section is marked *pianissimo*, "like an echo" and reinforces the nostalgic atmosphere of the text. It is as if the listener is overhearing a memory in the mind of both author and composer.

The work's melancholy character is unrelieved as the ostinato relentlessly marks the passing of time. The short phrases of two measures each surge and release like waves, though Barber heightens the tension by extending phrases through Bogan's enjamed lines, always releasing the tension at the next endstop:

Example VIII.9, "To be Sung on the Water," measures 15-20, tenor/bass

The resulting climax, in which both duets reach higher and grow louder, focuses on the central theme: vows. Now gone, they were once made here in the boat. For both author and composer,
there remains only the sound of the water:

Example VIII.10, "To be Sung on the Water," measures 25-29

The bass figure in measure 29 signals the close of each section of this motet (see measure 33, Example VIII.8). It constitutes a "melodic cadence" which is clearly of considerable importance to Barber. In the choral works, it appears in various forms and guises, most obviously in the main theme of "A Stopwatch and an Ordnance Map," fragmented at the final bars:

Example VIII.11. "A Stopwatch and an Ordnance Map," measures 100-end
It appears in the soprano, slightly altered, just before the recapitulation in "Let down the bars, O Death":

\[ \text{Example VIII.12, "To be Sung on the Water," measures 19-21, soprano} \]

An additional variant occurs at another moment of mystery, at the close of the first large section in "Twelfth Night":

\[ \text{Example VIII.13, "Twelfth Night," measures 24-25, soprano} \]

The motive permeates Prayers of Kierkegaard, where it is introduced as the first texted theme, which the solo soprano sings about the suffering Christ:

\[ \text{Example VIII.14, Prayers of Kierkegaard, Rehearsal No. 8, measures 1-2, soprano solo} \]
This theme is developed and finally summarized at the end of the work, just before the final chorale:

*Example VIII.15, Prayers of Kierkegaard, 3 measures leading to Rehearsal No. 29*

The theme spans Barber's entire output and is not limited to choral works. It appears at the climax in his *Second Essay for Orchestra*, Op. 17 (1942):
Example VIII.16, Second Essay for Orchestra, final 8 measures
The same theme, in the same key, is heard at the climax to *Antony and Cleopatra*, Op. 40 (1966):

*Example VIII.17, Antony and Cleopatra, three measures before and including the measure of Rehearsal No. 63*
In Barber’s final large work, *The Lovers*, Op. 43 (1971), perhaps his most melancholy, desolate, and despairing work, the same theme is of central importance, appearing in various guises throughout. It introduces the entire work, with notes rearranged and chromatically altered to emphasize Barber’s penchant for the lowered sixth scale degree:

*Example VIII.18, The Lovers, I, measures 1-5, Flute and Clarinet*

The theme is then reassembled into its most basic form in an oboe cadenza:

*Example VIII.19, The Lovers, I, measures 7-9, Oboe*

After the introduction, the theme is heard with the first two notes reversed (the result is also a near-inversion). Out of this motive is drawn the central theme of the entire work, heard first in the oboe in measure 18:
Example VIII.20, The Lovers, I, measures 13-18

In the final bars of the work, at the end of the "Song of Despair," the theme is heard as in the beginning. The text may perhaps indicate the extent of Barber's personal identification with the theme:
Example VIII.21, The Lovers, IX, final 7 measures, reduction
The Lovers carries to an extreme the spirit of "To be Sung on the Water": it is a curious and forceful mixture of joyful memory and desolate reality, of celebration and isolation. Barber's response to Bogan's text seems to be not a "response" at all; far more organic, it sounds as if the words had originally sprung forth with the music, as in Wagner or Schönberg. The result is a simple, dramatic, and mature motet built on a motive which seems to symbolize in his life's work a quiet, resigned acceptance of isolation.
Conclusion

In *The Lovers*, Barber quotes his own "A Stopwatch and an Ordnance Map," using the earlier work’s main theme intermittently throughout the large cycle; it is heard in the prelude and serves as the material for the climax of the entire cycle in Movement IX: "Love is so short. Forgetting so long." The quoted theme is drawn from the moment that the soldier is split by the bullet "from his comrade," remaining forever isolated through death. In the final movement of *The Lovers*, the text is the closing stanza of Pablo Neruda's "Song of Despair," renamed by Barber "Cemetery of Kisses":

Cemetery of kisses, there is still fire in your tombs,
still the fruited boughs burn, pecked at by birds.
Oh the bitten mouth, oh the kissed limbs,
oh the hungering teeth, oh the entwined bodies.
Oh the mad coupling of hope and force
in which we merged and despaired.
This was our destiny and it was the voyage of our longing,
and in it all our longing fell, in us all was shipwreck!
It is the hour of departure, the hard cold
that night enforces on all timetables.
Forsaken like the wharves at dawn.
Oh farther than everything!
It is the hour of departure. Forsaken! 240

In setting "Oh farther than everything" Barber recalls the bleak environment of "A Stopwatch and an Ordnance Map": a descending motive, the solo voices, and a lamenting, descending semitone characterize the final cadence of *The Lovers*:

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Example IX.1, The Lovers, IX, Rehearsal No. 4, measure 4, to Rehearsal No. 5, reduction

The work ends with a stark sonority, with melodic material based on the aforementioned "Barber motive" overwhelmed by the open fifths in the orchestra (the high A-natural which hovers above
in violin I and antique cymbal seems like no more than an overtone in the atmosphere created by the rich orchestration of the open sonority below):
Example IX.2. The Lovers, IX, final 10 measures

The open fifth at the end of The Lovers is an expansion of the fourths which are heard in varying harmonic relationships and contents, with and without alteration, throughout the cycle. These strive for and eventually reach the fifth. The evolution of the materials mirrors the love relationship described in the poetry cycle, which goes through a sensuous and enlightening beginning, experiences a tumultuous expansion, and ends in separation and isolation. Having reached this hollow sonority at the close of The Lovers (with the chorus singing a unison F), the major second heard in the final chord might seem out of place were one to disregard Barber's other works. But it is this sonority—stacked fifths—which is heard at the end of "Twelfth Night," written
just three years earlier, and the earlier work helps define and explain the closing sonority of *The Lovers*. In both works, the ambiguous chords hold meaning and mystery; it is as if the composer is saying that isolation is inherent, inevitable, and omnipresent, but not final. A composer whose work is rooted in functional harmony has found a way to express functionally what he has learned in his life: in resolution there is no resolution, only a continuation. As the poet says, "There is still fire in your tombs..."

*The Lovers* was composed at a time of great anxiety in Barber's life. The sale of Capricorn, the home which he owned with Menotti and where they had spent many of their earlier years together composing and entertaining, was imminent. He had avoided the sale for years, seeing it as the final closure of his relationship with Menotti. In addition, he had suffered the failure of *Antony and Cleopatra*, and saw no hope yet of its revival. The choice of Neruda's poems, his rearrangement of those poems into a clearly-calculated journey, and the overtly melancholy quality of the music all attest to his translation of life into art.

Despite the clearly biographical source for works such as *The Lovers*, there is little justification for associating personal references or "states of mind" to the various elements which recur throughout Barber's works, and the present study has not attempted to do this.\(^{241}\) Rather it has sought simply to discover connections and common elements in the works discussed, placing them in the broad context of the composer's own life and work. Yet, it is surely the case that certain of the recurring materials which run through these works arise from the composer's profoundly

\(^{241}\) In a response to John H. Fahey's inquiry about Virgil Thomson's impressions of Barber's text settings, Thomson wrote: "I seriously question the validity of your texts-and-music investigating, as well as its intrinsic interest for either literature or music, unless, of course, you may have access to some psychiatric technique of inquiry that might apply to both poets and musicians." Letter of 29 November 1982, in Fahey, Appendix.
emotional responses to the texts set; thus, for instance, both the "Barber motive" examined in Chapter VIII and the distinctive harmonic language discussed above are clearly responses to moments of longing and isolation depicted in texts. Other connections and common elements only confirm the consistency of Barber’s responses.

In his choral works, Barber clearly favors certain styles of poetry, certain poetic subjects, and certain compositional techniques. In his thesis, *Samuel Barber: A Portrait in Poetic Voice*, John Fahey notes that seventy-five percent of all texts set by Barber (for both solo voice and choral ensembles) were written by modern, English-speaking poets, and that three-quarters of these texts are written in the first person. Barber’s affection for poets from England and Ireland is clear. In fact, of the poems discussed above, those by Americans (Agee and Bogan), while more lyric in quality than the others, have a nostalgic air and, especially for Agee, rely on metric and rhyme schemes which are English in character. The evidence is overwhelming that Barber preferred texts which are formal, lyric, and nostalgic. In her study of Barber’s songs, Krieling writes:

... Yet if family background initially led Barber to explore Irish and English texts, his choice to set so many of them can most accurately be traced not to familial or national loyalty, but to the composer’s preferences for particular themes and techniques in poetry. Like many of his other song texts, these poems share formal outlines that can be characterized as regular but not predictable; stylistic practices remain conventional, yet imaginative. Moreover, these poems address themes already seen to be close to Barber’s heart, including nostalgia, the beauty of nature, and the power of love.

Barber himself commented on poetic form in a conversation with Phillip Ramey. Referring to the poetry of Robert Graves, he stated: “there’s a real structure and a taut quality that I find

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242 Ibid., p. 58.

243 Krieling, p. 224.
formally inviting.\textsuperscript{244} This statement probably applies to every poem discussed in this thesis. However, not every poem necessarily lends itself to a musical structure which also maintains a "taut quality." Barber is consistent in his desire for such a structure, however, imposing one on the poetry if necessary. This is particularly evident in "The Virgin Martyrs," in which the opening theme returns to provide closure in a three-part form, even though the poem is through composed. Other instances occur in "Let down the bars, O Death," in which the opening statement is repeated literally to conclude the work and to compensate for the absence of any obvious formal musical unity between the two stanzas of the poem, and in "To be Sung on the Water," in which the entire first verse is repeated, again to conclude the motet. "Mary Hynes" provides perhaps the most sophisticated example, Barber uncharacteristically allows a dramatic change from the beginning to the end and does not return to the opening music (thus following the two distinct parts of the poem). Yet, in the end, it is revealed that the theme of the second part is drawn directly from that of the first.

A comparison of the two song arrangements of Opus 13 with the other choral works discussed makes it evident that many stylistic features apply to both genres. While the melodic material of "Sure on this shining night" is by far the most rhapsodic of any of the works discussed here, its strict three-part form is wholly consistent with the structural procedures discussed above. So too is the strictly strophic "Heaven-Haven," though the melody setting this quasi-religious text is appropriately more conservative. The choral works suggest several different styles: some resemble madrigals ("The Virgin Martyrs," "A Stopwatch and an Ordnance Map"); some resemble motets ("Let down the bars, O Death," "The Coolin," To be Sung on the Water"); some resemble a mixture

\textsuperscript{244}Phillip Ramey. "Samuel Barber at Seventy: The Composer Talks About His Vocal Music." p. 19.
of idioms when the text inspires dramatic changes ("Mary Hynes," "Twelfth Night"). Barber even uses a funeral dirge ("Anthony O Daly") when the text suits such a lament. Interestingly, purely nostalgic texts about love are treated almost reverently in motet form, whereas Waddell's poem about the saints, a more conventionally "religious" topic, evokes images of wandering and flower-gathering and receives a lighter, more madrigalian treatment. Barber certainly chose the two Opus 13 songs for choral arrangements because their conservative character made them easily adapted, but the smoothness of the arrangements also indicates how similarly he approached the two forms (songs and choruses). In each case his primary attention is to the expressive flexibility of the voice appropriate to the circumstances. Thus, although the solo writing may employ a greater variety of melodic techniques, formal and stylistic elements remain consistent throughout the choruses and the solo songs.

The relationship between reverent songs of love and reverential hymns also is typical of Barber's two larger works, Prayers of Kierkegaard and The Lovers, in which most of the strictly choral sections evoke the motet, evolving to a mixed genre (as in "Twelfth Night") at particularly dramatic moments. The Lovers is unique among Barber's choral settings in applying to choral writing some techniques taken from solo vocal idioms. Still, Barber is careful to make the writing motet-like. In the following example, he first presents the themes in an imitative motet style, before allowing the upper voice to become more rhapsodic:
Clouds shift: white rags

in the hot depth of this

Supers poco agitato, cresc. poco a poco

waving good-bye.

Shaken by the frantic wind

summer, in the hot depth of this

cresc. poco a poco

as it goes.

And as it goes

summer.

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Example IX.3, The Lovers, III, Rehearsal No. 1 - Rehearsal No. 3

Such choral sections are made possible in part by the extreme liberties taken in the solo writing, which, because of its often improvisatory style, makes the choral writing appear relatively conservative:
As a result the choral sections, where the text often worships and praises the lover and her body, maintain the motet-like feeling because of the contrast with the solo writing. Prayers of
Kierkegaard is a much more conservative work in its melodic idioms; it offers many examples of Barber’s application of musical forms to loosely-formed or prose texts.

In addition to style and form, most of the poems discussed in this study share certain recurring images to which Barber was evidently consciously or unconsciously drawn. "Twelfth Night," "Sure on this shining night," "The Coolin," and "Let down the bars, O Death" all speak specifically of "night" and recall similar images in Knoxville: Summer of 1915 and the songs "O boundless, boundless evening" (Op. 45, No. 3) and "Nocturne" (Op. 13, No. 4). Likewise, images built around time occur in "Sure on this shining night" ("The late year lies down the north"), "Twelfth Night" ("The year seems defeated"), "To be Sung on the Water" ("Pass, as the mottled night"), and, much more directly, in "A Stopwatch and an Ordnance Map" ("At five a man fell to the ground"). Other metaphors involving flowers, the sun, the stars, the moon, and the sea recur throughout the works, confirming Barber’s attraction to nature and to images typical of the poetry selected by nineteenth-century composers.

This attraction can be ascribed directly to the importance of song in Barber’s life, and particularly to his knowledge and love (as a singer) of nineteenth-century chansons, lieder, and song. Song permeated everything that Barber composed; among his first three known compositions was a song ("Sometime," 1917), and songs were among his last works (Despite and Still, 1968). In fact, his final composition was appropriately entitled Canzonetta for Oboe and String Orchestra, Op. 48 (1977-78). It is clear from the texts he chose for songs and choral works that Barber had a wide knowledge of literature. Although he generally avoided poems which are celebrated or monumental (Dover Beach is a notable exception), he assembled an oeuvre of vocal works based on very sophisticated poetry. Undoubtedly this came from a life-long search for the perfect text for
music—perhaps the most musical text, in language if not in form—be it for solo voice, chorus, or opera. Melody, rooted in the human voice, born out of rhetorical instincts, was an innate and essential part of his style and being and he searched for words which would inspire the greatest melodies. His notebooks contain many notations concerning possible texts for musical settings, and there is a large body of texted works which he began and never completed or which he completed but rejected for publication. The songs may be more melodically inventive than the choral works, but the choral works nevertheless clearly demonstrate Barber’s understanding of the vocal instrument, its natural response to text in melody, and the possible colors and sonorities produced by voices in consort. All of the choral works also reflect the melodic possibilities of each voice, due to the composer’s insistence that melody spring directly from the natural inflection of the spoken words.

Barber’s dedication to poetry and vocal music was cultivated during his study with Rosario Scalero and reflects a keen understanding and knowledge of Brahms’ similar study of, and intuition for, words. Beginning with the Opus 16 choral works, Barber exercised a style that was clearly influenced by the pensive and formally calculated approach which was characteristic of Brahms’ music.\textsuperscript{245} The \textit{Reincarnations} show a great confidence in handling text, even to the point of displacing textual stress. Chromatic alterations of the tonality produce sudden, yet logical, references to other keys while remaining firmly oriented towards the tonic. Ostinati or pulsing

\textsuperscript{245}In Curtis Institute recitals of Spring 1928, Barber played no less than five substantial works of Brahms for piano. That summer, while studying with Scalero in Europe, he purchased Brahms’ complete works, as well as an autograph manuscript. His \textit{Two Interludes for Piano} (1931-32) use Brahms’ intermezzi as models. Early performances of his Cello Sonata and Overture to \textit{The School for Scandal} brought criticism from both Curtis faculty and (later) the press, that the compositions were too like those of Brahms. Heyman, p. 56-7, 62, 92.
rhythms propel a work forward and counter-balance the weight of a richly lyric melody. All these characteristics reflect Barber's study of Brahms, which is seen even more subtly in Barber's skill in gradually developing themes within a small structure, as is found most clearly in "Mary Hynes" and most elaborately in The Lovers.

It was remarked in our discussion of "To be Sung on the Water," that Schönberg would not have considered Barber "progressive" in the same sense in which he viewed Brahms. In view of Brahms' enormous influence on Barber's style and technique, that remark requires further amplification. Barber was certainly educated in the European tradition, more so than the group of composers whom Schönberg berated for studying with Boulanger. But education alone does not distinguish the "progressive" composer. Schönberg writes:

Repeatedly hearing things which one likes is pleasant and need not be ridiculed. There is a subconscious desire to understand better and realize more details of the beauty. But an alert and well-trained mind will demand to be told the more remote matters, the more remote consequences of the simple matters that he has already comprehended . . . Progress in music consists in the development of methods of presentations which correspond to the conditions just discussed.346

In comparison with the other composers of his era, then, did Barber truly develop "methods of presentation" which offered his audience an understanding of "more remote matters," "more remote consequences?" A representative list of works which were written in the two years following Arturo Toscanini's performance of Barber's Adagio for Strings (1938)—an event which created an atmosphere of confidence, fame, and success for the young composer—includes the following:

Barber: Violin Concerto, A Stopwatch and an Ordnance Map
Bartok: Violin Concerto No. 2, String Quartet No. 6
Britten: Violin Concerto in D minor, Paul Bunyon
Cage: Imaginary Landscape No. 1

346 Schönberg, p. 401.
Dallapiccola: *Canti di prigionia*
Hindemith: *Violin Concerto*
Honegger: *Jeanne d'arc*
Lutoslawski: *Symphonic Dances*
Martinu: *Concerto grosso for orchestra*
Menotti: *The Old Maid and the Thief*
Milhaud: *Concerto for Two Pianos*
Orff: *Die Kluge*
Piston: *Violin Concerto No. 1*
Prokofiev: *Alexander Nevsky, Symphony No. 6*
Poulenc: *Concerto for orchestra, strings and timpani*
Rachmaninoff: *Three Symphonic Dances*
Schönberg: *Kol Nidrei*
Sessions: *Montezuma*
Shostakovich: *String Quartet No. 1, King Lear*
R. Strauss: *Capriccio*
Stravinsky: *Symphony in C*
Tippett: *A Child of Our Time*
Webern: *Cantata No. 1, Variations for Orchestra*
Wolf-Ferrari: *Dama Boba*

In the context of the increasing serialism of Webern, the atonality of Schönberg, the complicated polyphony of Dallapiccola, the harsh sound of Prokofiev, and the radical inventiveness of Cage, it is hard to imagine Barber as anything but conservative. Yet, considering the virtual menagerie of composing styles represented by this list, comparisons by which one could discover a true "progressive" (by Schönberg's definition) seem impossible. Webern's intricate formality was eventually converted into a style composed by and for a small groups of specialists; how can this be compared with the very accessible Barber? Nor is it reasonable to compare Barber with composers whose music was substantially reactionary, or with those who had previously written in progressive styles and then consciously changed to a more historically conservative language. A more plausible comparison might be with the composers from Berg forward who contributed to the heavy swing back toward tonality which is strongly manifest in the music of the present generation; in this context Barber may qualify as "progressive."
Indeed, the refusal of the compositional world to completely reject functional tonality at anytime during this century does put Barber in a slightly different—and more modern—light than he may have seemed in the 1940s. "A Stopwatch and an Ordnance Map," for example, which appears on the list above, is a fresh and creative approach to a compositional problem, even though it remains within the bounds of a recognizable and widely understood tonality. Barber's setting of Spender's poem is in some ways more basically inventive than, say, one of Webern's cantatas, in that it did not follow from the kind of logically evolving technique on which Webern could draw; however, that is certainly not how the two works are heard.

Nevertheless, if music is indeed a language of pure aural sensation and cognitive/emotional response, then Barber's inventive and personal language, apparent in all of the works discussed, remains conservative because it fails to expand music formally. Schönberg writes of Brahms:

A contemporary composer connects phrases irrespective of their size and shape, only vigilant of harmonic progress, of rhythmic and motival contents, fluency and logic... . Merits of contemporary compositions may consist of formal finesses of a different kind. It may be the variety and the multitude of the ideas, the manner in which they develop and grow out of germinating units, how they are contrasted and how they complement one another; it may also be their emotional quality, romantic or unromantic, subjective or objective, their expression of moods and characters and illustration.

Contemporary compositional technique has not yet arrived at a freedom of construction comparable to that of a language.²⁴⁷

Schönberg saw Brahms' ability to expand the boundaries of this freedom of construction as his greatest progressive achievement and viewed the goal of the contemporary composer to be the creation of a musical language with the freedom of verbal language. Barber, however, for all his inventiveness, relied primarily on forms and elements of music which he inherited (and the boundaries of which he maintained), inflecting these with a personal sense of color and harmony but

²⁴⁷Ibid., p. 429.
not expanding the formal possibilities. Thus, Barber's choice of texts which are often quite formal, with regular repetitions of words, meter patterns, or rhyme schemes, allowed him to focus his attention on the personal expression of a word, phrase, or section, without attempting an expansion of the musical language which could be *itself* expressive of the text. In this sense, Barber is not necessarily contemporary at all, since his compositions spring from a reaction to the text, or directly from his emotional state, and do not entail a self-conscious reconsideration of the nature of musical languages or techniques.

This assessment may be finally corroborated by Barber's predilection for the plagal area in harmonic progressions. Because the tonic is embedded or implied in plagal sonorities, their use allows a composer to prolong the tonic for an extended period, creating interest by methods other than the contrast which movement "away" from the tonic normally provides. This is demonstrated with great clarity in "Twelfth Night," in which the entire first half of the work presents the plagal area in a false role as the tonic. While this technique throws attention to the melodic motives setting the text, it also requires that those motives be strong, relatively conservative and able to define large-scale forms through their repetition and variation; it is they, rather than the harmony, which provide the structure. This is also the case in "A Stopwatch and an Ordnance Map" where, again, the plagal area (and preparation for that area) serves as a large-scale variation of the tonic, while the motivic ideas are made responsible for joining the large formal divisions, providing interest through polyphonic development, and—above all—expressing the text.

On a similar scale, Barber relies on inner plagal cadences to maintain the ambiguous quality of so much of this music. In "Let down the bars, O Death" and "Sure on this shining night," for example, the melancholy spirit is prolonged and enhanced through the avoidance of any definitive
movement away from tonic. Even "Heaven-Haven," which contains the most ambiguous harmonic progressions to be found in the works studied, relies on chromatically altered plagal motion to avoid establishing a clear-cut alternative to the tonic. In fact, chromatic movement is Barber's favorite manner of elaborating the tonic; the introduction of such alterations allow both for an easy return and for the suggestion of a new contrasting tonal center which actually entails little or no movement away from the tonic. This is the case in "Mary Hynes," The Virgin Martyrs," and "A Stopwatch and an Ordnance Map." In all of these works, motivic repetition is the essential formal element; Barber relies on fairly regular phrase structures and motivic familiarity to provide audible formal unity.

A "progressive" composer in Schönberg's sense would require greater flexibility in order to work toward a musical language which was less bound by formal conventions and more organically rhetorical and spontaneously conceived. Barber consistently used a musical language which fully embraced the system of functional harmony, disguised that system with recurring personally expressive ambiguous sonorities, made no attempt to expand the system (or devise a new one) and, indeed, avoided true modulation except in works of considerable length and dramatic content. By choosing that course he limited himself primarily to expressing in music his own responses to words, rather than his responses to the state of music itself. But by the same token he maximized his opportunity to manifest his expressive urge and inventive mind in the polyphonic interplay of motivic ideas, freshness of melodic invention, and an innately vocal approach to composition.

This is not to say that Barber's music is not honest, creative, or unique—or for that matter, great. Indeed, in the end, it is its melancholy character which is uniquely personal to Barber's music; this character guided his compositional style, melodic preferences, textual choices, and form. Barber's choral works offer an honest and direct approach to both the meter and the spirit of the text.
the works reflect his pleasure and skill in seeking and exploiting the poetic devices particular to each poem and poet. Barber knew his texts thoroughly and responded with great emotional precision and intensity. He wrote only to express feelings and sought above all to communicate openly with the listener in order that the composer, performer, and audience might approach a common understanding. Finally, Barber sought out texts which addressed his own conditions of isolation and melancholia, allowing the words to evoke in music his emotional responses to his own life:

I suppose if I'm writing music for words, then I immerse myself in those words, and I let the music flow out of them. When I write an abstract piano sonata or a concerto, I write what I feel. I'm not a self-conscious composer.  

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24 Gruen, p. 15.
Bibliography

James Agee


Samuel Barber


**Louise Bogan**


**Emily Dickinson**


Gerard Manley Hopkins


Laurie Lee


Stephen Spender


**Helen Waddell**


James Stephens


**General**


and have you explore the text or the way the contrapun-
tal lines worked and the way the lines dovetailed. He
could communicate that part of the structure per-
factly.55

Herford would also play Baroque bass lines,
searching out their melodic content. Harrington found this
concern with the linear melodic expressive content of these
lines to be unique in his experience.

Although Herford insisted that his students make
analytical charts (he called them structural memorization
charts), he did not confuse the chart-making with music-
making.

He would despair over people who could make good
charts and give boring performances; he would say that
if you're performing the analysis, you're not
necessarily doing the music.56

But the analytical work and the chart had to be
done. "It is unthinkable that one would perform without
having done [the analysis]."57 It was simply the beginning
of the conductor's work. The music still had to be worked
into the ear.

Method of Score Study

There is some disagreement among Herford's students
as to whether or not his teaching should be described as a
"method." A dictionary definition of the word is: "A means

55 Harrington, Ibid.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
or manner of procedure: a regular and systematic way of accomplishing anything."\textsuperscript{58} There were certain procedures in the process of analyzing a score that Herford felt were important, and those procedures appear throughout his work and teaching. But Herford's own written analyses vary somewhat depending on the nature of the music itself. His analyses come both from a procedure and an attitude toward study, or, as he himself referred to it, "a way of thinking" about music.

All of Herford's students who were interviewed for this study have commented that the essence of his teaching was to be found in the private lesson and, to a lesser extent, the group seminar wherein Herford would take his student(s) through the score slowly and in great detail. The insights gained in this manner are difficult to transcribe and put words on the printed page. As Robert Shaw said about Herford: "Taking notes from his lectures would have been like sticking pins in Sunbeams.\textsuperscript{59} Herford's insights and the interaction between him, the student(s) and the score cannot be codified and written as a series of simple fail-safe rules for all persons to follow. One cannot


reduce a human personality and level of consciousness to a set of simple rules.

Also, practically speaking, Herford did not leave a written outline of his procedures for score study. The closest thing to an exegesis of his approach to analysis is to be found in the chapter he wrote for the book *Choral Conducting: A Symposium*, hereafter referred to as the Decker-Herford book. From this chapter, from interviews with former students and colleagues, from listening to cassette tapes of Herford's classes at Indiana University, and by using three documents written by his doctoral students, we will construct as clear a procedure for analysis as is possible in hopes that it may help the reader in his or her own studies.

We will begin with some general statements.

(1) Herford's analyses were intended to help bring about an effective and convincing performance. "At all times study with Julius Herford was associated with performance." Donald Neuen also remarked on Herford's "... uncanny understanding of what a conductor needed to

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know for both the rehearsal process and for the success of the performance." 62

(2) Herford's process of analysis was ultimately codified in a structural memorization chart, an example of which may be found in appendix A, 63 as well as in his chapter on score study in the Decker-Herford book. This chart was a type of shorthand whereby the conductor, after having thoroughly studied the work and translated it into the graph, would be able to look at the graph and hear the work in his mind.

(3) We believe that Herford would have said that the unique structure of a work would influence or prescribe how it might best be analyzed. Therefore, one has to approach each score with a receptive attitude towards what is there, and how best it might be understood. The compositional process and therefore, the structure of a choral work by Josquin is profoundly different than that of one by Webern or Penderecki.

(4) Herford acknowledges his indebtedness to Heinrich Schenker, and there are similarities in the musical philosophies of both men, including belief in the concepts of organic growth within a musical composition, a search for

62 Donald Neuen, telephone interview, June 9, 1986.

63 Structural memorization graph of the first movement of J. S. Bach's Magnificat in D Major, BWV 243. This graph was prepared for Julius Herford by Gerald Sousa and is used with his kind permission.
the vision which gives birth to a musical work, and a focus on masterworks, especially those from J. S. Bach through Johannes Brahms. Both Herford and Schenker were trained as pianists and both became well known as musical analysts. Herford's approach to structural analysis was certainly influenced by, and grounded in, the theoretical concepts of Schenker (and Kurth). Herford was able to take those concepts and translate them into a practical guide for conductors. It is significant that, unlike Schenker's graphs, Herford's were designed as a means to help the conductor memorize the music. By learning and memorizing music in such a manner, the conductor is much more likely to understand the structure of the score and manifest it in his conducting gesture. One important difference between Herford and Schenker is that Herford recognized "genius" both in the music of pre-baroque as well as twentieth century composers whereas Schenker considered music written earlier than the Baroque and later than the late Romantic period to be decidedly inferior.

(5) As mentioned earlier, Herford insisted that historical study be done for each work to be performed, including a thorough study of the composer's œuvre. From a practical standpoint, this takes less time the more it is done, for one develops a storehouse of knowledge about the given period and composer and is able to recognize unique musical notation which may only be understood with a thorough knowledge of the composer's musical language.
When beginning the analysis of a score, the process was always to start with the whole and work down to the smallest detail; during the process there would come a time "when we have a feeling for the whole, but do not yet know each single detail."  

Look first for the macrostructure. And when dealing with choral music, begin with the text.

I am convinced that the performer must study the text deeply. He must put himself into the position of the composer reading the text before he has begun to write the music.  

For Herford, the text was important not only as a thing unto itself to be studied and understood; its very choice serves to give insight into the mind of the composer. "In choosing a text, the composer indicates his way of thinking. Once he has found his text, he lives it; it is the essence of his expression to have found it."  

Herford believed, through his years of study, that there was a "very close relationship of Bach's musical structure to the structure of the text," in which "a miraculous oneness is felt."  

In discussing the Bach Passion

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64 Julius Herford.
67 Ibid.
According to St. John, Herford suggested a search into the relationship between text and music, and that it be based on a study of verse meter, the number and length of lines, and the rhyme scheme and its relationship to musical metrics.

"There is an important relationship between structures of text-phrases and the large sectional divisions of the music, a structural relationship of music and text."68

Whether dealing with the choral music of Bach, or of another composer, the text may be of primary importance in influencing the structure of the music. And Herford was concerned with the structure of the text, not just with its translation. He was, depending upon the work, interested in the number of syllables in each line, in rhyme schemes, in the scansion of the verse, that is, the poetic meter and rhythm patterns. Often, he would spend much time working on an expressive delivery of the text, based on the natural word accentuation, having his students pronounce it again and again until they were able to speak it to his satisfaction.

A complete understanding of the structure of the text was important, in order to perceive the attitude of the composer toward it as he set it to music. If, for example, one was dealing with a setting of the Requiem text, then it was important to understand why the composer did or did not set the entire text and if not what did he leave out and

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68 Ibid.
why? Faure’s attitude toward the Requiem text was fundamentally different than that of other Romantic composers such as Berlioz and Verdi, and an important clue may be found in the fact that he left out the Dies irae. This attitude toward the text is mirrored in his music.

The degree to which [the composer] goes with the form of the text and the way he manipulates the form of the poetry might provide the clue to the creative process shaping the piece or help define its artistic merit.69

It was important for the conductor simply to speak the text while analyzing the musical structure. In one of Herford’s classes, he asks the conductors to speak the text of the first movement of Igor Stravinsky’s Symphony of Psalms and hear in their heads the music associated with the words.70 In this way, they were encouraged to learn the musical structure in relation to the text.

Language was studied as meaning, as sound, and as meaning motivated by sound.

Herford believed that the composer must have a close relationship to his text, and that there must be an organic, symbiotic relationship between text and music. This manifested itself in a concern for text settings in which the natural stress of the words was as literal as possible.

69 Jan Harrington, interview.

70 Julius Herford, cassette of undated classroom lecture, Indiana University School of Music, Bloomington, Indiana.
He had great aesthetic difficulties with music which did not seem to follow that rule... Poulenc mainly I would say, and Ockeghem. He never really accepted the fact that Ockeghem would have written music which [paid] so little attention to the scansion of the text and to its nuance. That wasn't an aesthetic he understood.71

Herford expected the conductor to have thoroughly assimilated the text before going to the music. John Nelson explains that when he first met Herford, he was preparing the Bach Passion According to Saint John for performance at the Aspen Music Festival and Herford had been invited as part of the faculty for the Choral Institute. The first thing Herford said as they began work on the Passion was "Quote me the text." When Nelson picked up his score to do so, Herford said, "Put the score down." Herford assumed that Nelson had memorized the entire text. When Nelson explained that such was not the case, Herford, somewhat disappointed, allowed Nelson to use the score. During the next week Nelson estimates he and Herford spent "easily twenty to thirty hours talking about the Saint John and mostly about the text."72

The process of analysis would continue with the next smallest division within the large subdivisions. Herford did not write down specific ways to deal with the elements of music such as phrase structure, harmony, rhythm,

71 Harrington, interview.

counterpoint, cadences and the way in which they were approached, and so forth. But all of these elements were to be considered within Herford's approach to analysis. And he insisted that the student not force the music into a preconceived frame or textbook idea of what the form should be, but to see and understand what was actually there.

He warned people not to do that. He didn't think you should try to force anything to make it neat... great art tends to be great because there is something in it that isn't neat, isn't conforming.\textsuperscript{73}

Herford used the words "timings and spacings" again and again, and they represent the essence of what he was teaching. The complete understanding of the proportions of a piece of music as it unfolds in time, the space between cadences and the relative strength of same, the length of time taken by phrases and harmonic progressions, all of the elements of music were to be understood in terms of their effect upon one another and how they all interrelate as the music is brought to life in sound. The proportions, timings and spacings define exactly how the composer organizes and structures time.

The next step in the analytic process would be to understand just how the time is organized. This would change with the individual work studied. Sometimes the rhythm would be the primary organizing force. And always within the harmonic framework of common practice harmony,  

\textsuperscript{73}Harrington, Ibid.
the cadential points and the way in which the composer ar-
rowed at then was important. The various parameters of
musical structure, including rhythm, harmony, melody, tex-
ture; all were considered.

The simplest thing had to be articulated: it
wasn't unintelligent to say "This is a deceptive
cadence," or "We're in C major." That is the essence of
the music, and anything else you say about the music be-
fore you say that isn't right.\textsuperscript{74}

In summary, as Julius Herford taught it, the process
of learning a given work starts with silent score study.
Beginning with the entire score, the analytical process is
applied to all parameters of music down to the smallest
structural element. Once the conductor knows the score in
detail, then the music is reduced to a structural memoriza-
tion graph. By looking at the graph the conductor should be
able to hear the music in his inner ear, and memorize it.
By using this analytical method, one should be able to find
the unique form, or gestalt, of a musical work. This
gestalt consists of the organic relationships between the
smallest detail and the whole; between the composer's first
vision and the completed work. And it includes all the in-
ner relationships to be found within the work. This was
what Herford searched for in every work he studied. It was
also what he expected his students to search for. And he
wished to hear it come to life in musical performance. Don
Moses, a longtime student and colleague of Herford explained

\textsuperscript{74}Ibid.
that to Julius Herford, the single most important thing for
a conductor to do was to "conduct through an understanding
of form." 75

Classroom Teaching

In a graduation speech at Westminster Choir College,
Herford elucidated his beliefs regarding teaching:

I consider the task of teaching not the presentation
of accomplished knowledge but rather the conveyance of a
way of learning, reading, and thinking. . . . The only
justification to teach - it seems to me - is to be a
student oneself. 76

Jan Harrington observed Herford teach at Indiana
University, first as a student and then as a colleague, from
1966 to 1969 and again from 1973 until Herford's death in
1981.

He was by nature a very demanding teacher. He was
the most unselfish person in terms of the use of his
time and his willingness to teach, [but] he was very
dogmatic. As long as you . . . could work under the
condition that the person who was your mentor was never
satisfied, the process was fine, and he was never satis-

fied. 77

Herford did not teach a traditional graduate seminar
wherein the students were expected to contribute in the
classroom. Students were expected to write on a topic, but
the focus of the classroom was Herford's teaching and
analyses of major works. The students were expected to

77 Harrington, interview.
supply the breadth of knowledge, that is, their historical research into the music being studied, and Herford would lecture in depth on the score.

If there was any philosophy that the degree was patterned on, and I believe that his teaching philosophy was patterned on, it was that great music studied in depth is a better way to spend your time than to study a lot of music superficially. He did not permit surveys.78

The students were expected to do their own surveys outside of class. If a work from the Baroque period was being studied, then the students were expected to outline Manfred Bukofzer’s *Music in the Baroque Era* (then, the most recent survey) on their own and turn it in to Herford before the end of the semester.

The concept of a choral literature seminar consisting of a survey of major composers and their works or lists of short choral works or anthems for practical use was not to be found in Herford’s thinking. Herford believed that if the student was able to deal with the complexities of the Mass in B Minor, then he could perform any lesser work. This was one of the essential points of his teaching philosophy and one which set the choral program at Indiana University apart from those in many other schools.

If the students attending the seminar were secure in themselves and in their own knowledge and wished to listen to Herford lecture, then they could gain a great deal and

78 Ibid.
the seminars would go well. But if there were students who were interested in challenging Herford or trying to prove themselves, then the whole semester might be difficult for all concerned. "In class he didn't like to be distracted by having a student try to impress him with his knowledge. He wanted to tell you what he saw." 79

In private lessons Herford would listen to what the student had to say. There was a much greater chance of a dialogue between teacher and student. But in the classroom this was not the case. The negative aspect to this was that "a lot of students were not listened to, especially in seminar, and their points would be misconstrued." 80

Herford emphasized evaluation reading in his seminar saying that there were many bad books. Herford evaluated every book given as a reading assignment as to its strengths and weaknesses and, more importantly, its point of view.

The seminars dealt only with score analysis. There was no teaching of conducting technique or choral methods. Those subjects were taught by other faculty. The focus of Herford's seminar was the score itself. Ideally, the student would study the score in Herford's seminar, and go from there to conducting class where they could deal with the practical aspects of bringing the music to life in sound.

79 Ibid.
80 Ibid.
Herford discussed the importance of developing musical skills such as the training of the ear, but that was not a part of his responsibility and there was not a systematic curriculum in solfege or other methods of ear training for conductors.

Herford did train the ear in the seminars but not in the way usually found in most aural skills classes. Rather than play a musical example and ask the students to identify the wrong note, he would play a chord and ask the students to listen and think about the balance of that particular sonority within the context of the piece being studied. He tried to motivate the student's inner ear in order to get them to imagine the sound of the score. Herford seemed non-doctrinaire regarding specific methods of ear training for the conductor. Rather than impose a system such as a fixed or movable do solfege upon all students, he was only concerned that the students could sight read and hear. The methodology was unimportant.

There was, however, one thing about which Herford was adamant, and that was that the conductor must not use a recording to learn a score. "To my knowledge, no record was ever played in any class."81

Herford used the piano as a tool to demonstrate how the music sounded in his inner ear and to help students

81 Ibid.
hear. According to several of his students, when Herford would demonstrate a passage on the piano, one could easily imagine the sound of the chorus or orchestra.

One of the most essential aspects of Herford's teaching was that during the process of learning music, the dynamic level was to remain very quiet, almost as if the sound were being imagined. Even the Dies Irae of the Verdi Requiem would be played quietly and under tempo in order that the chords could be heard and thought about.

In choral rehearsals Herford wanted the choir to sing quietly so the conductor and choir members could hear the balances and sonorities, even if the music was ultimately to be loud. The performers were expected to explore the sonorities and the structure together, not just be told what to do by the conductor.

Peace and quiet in music making was absolutely essential. [Herford] would say that the music school is the worst place to learn about music because there's no place that's ever quiet.82

Herford would stop his seminar if he became distracted by students practicing loudly in the adjacent music practice rooms. He would refuse to continue until the teaching assistant left the class, walked across the parking lot and into the music practice rooms in order to ask the student to be quiet. The seminar participants would sit in

82Ibid.
the class until the sound stopped, whereupon Herford would continue the lecture.

It was almost a block across the parking lot and it's three flights up with no elevator [to the music practice rooms]. I can remember one day when the trumpet didn't stop. It was horrible. But he had a real point: music should be sounded into silence.\textsuperscript{83}

The demands Herford made upon students were great. The responsibility for preparing the Mass in B Minor, in itself a monumental undertaking, included a thorough historical knowledge of the German Baroque Era, encyclopedic knowledge of the music of J. S. Bach, comparative knowledge of other important composers of the time, Handel, for instance, and thorough knowledge of the score. And this thoroughness was the same, whether the music to be performed was large or small in score. "He made you feel the study of any little piece was a major undertaking. He didn't let you take things lightly."\textsuperscript{84}

Some would say Herford instilled an exceptional sense of responsibility in his students; others might say it was a sense of guilt, of never being good enough or knowing enough to do justice to great musical works. Some of Herford's students simply stopped conducting because the standard he set was too high and, for them, unattainable.

Although Herford was very serious when teaching, he did have a sense of humor and knew how to use it at the

\textsuperscript{83}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{84}Ibid.
right moment. "He had an impeccable sense of timing when he thought humor was to the right purpose. He knew exactly what kind of story to tell to charm a class or an audience."85

Conclusions

Julius Herford was not a music theoretician nor a musicologist. Rather, he was, like Heinrich Schenker, a musical analyst. His musical philosophy grew out of his contact with the concepts of organicism and Gestalt theory, and his analytical method was focused toward finding the unique or specific form of the work studied and transmitting it in performance. He was most effective as a teacher in one on one sessions, but taught seminars for conducting students and also workshops around the United States. Most importantly, he was an idealist and a man totally devoted to the service of great music, approaching it with an almost religious zeal. Margaret Hillis described him as being not unlike an "Old Testament prophet."86

85 Ibid.

86 Margaret Hillis, interview with the author, Spring, 1985.