ALAN HOVHANESS AND THE CREATION OF THE "MODERN FREE NOH PLAY"

by

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American composer Alan Hovhaness (1911–2000) published twelve operatic works during his career. Eight of these staged productions were written between the years 1959 and 1969. During these ten years Hovhaness immersed himself in the music and theatre of Japan. The composer traveled to Japan twice, once in 1960 and again in 1962, where he frequently attended Noh plays. As composer-in-residence at the University of Hawaii in 1961, Hovhaness took private lessons on and composed freely for the instruments of Gagaku, the ancient court music of Japan.

My study investigates the degree to which Hovhaness was exposed to Gagaku and Noh, and what elements of these Japanese arts the composer manifests in his staged works between 1959 and 1969. I compare Hovhaness' treatment of Japanese elements to that of other twentieth-century Western composers interested in East Asian music. Through this study we gain greater knowledge of Hovhaness' operatic style.

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INTRODUCTION

> The Noh Theatre is something I love very much. When I was in Japan I used to go every week, for a period of almost one year—while I was studying there. I have been influenced especially in my operas. Almost all my operas are, in a way, my own kind of Noh Theatre.[1]

Alan Hovhaness (1911–2000) spoke these words to Julia Michaelyan during an interview in 1971.[2] By this point the composer had written ten operatic works, eight of which were composed between the years 1959 and 1969.[3] The 1960s are significant in that during

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[1] Julia Michaelyan, "An Interview with Alan Hovhaness," *Ararat* 12. no. 1 (Winter, 1971), 25.

[2] The title of my thesis was drawn from the program notes for the 1969 premiere of Hovhaness's dance-drama, *The Leper King*. The composer wrote:

> "The idea or rumor of a mysterious Leper King Legend of Angkor inspired me to write a short poem in January 1966. The text gradually enlarged to a kind of modern free non-play using techniques of a solo singer who sings, intones, recites, and narrates like a new oriental sprech-stimme, imitating voices of men, women, crowds, sounds, noises, and screams." (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Archives Department, Box 4, Folder 23)

In the notes, "Noh-play" reads as "non-play." This is plausibly a typo, given that in correspondence to Myron Howard Nadel, director of the 1969 premiere of *The Leper King*, Hovhaness references Noh theatre as influencing his conception of stage works.

[3] *Etcmiadzin* (op. 62, 1946), *Afton Water* (op. 248, 1951), *Blue Flame* (op. 172, 1959), *The Burning House* (op. 182, 1959, revised 1962), *Wind Drum* (op. 183, 1962), *Spirit of the Avalanche* (op. 197, 1962), *Pilate* (op. 196, 1963), *The Travellers* (op. 215, 1965), *The Leper King* (op. 219, 1965), *Lady of Light* (op. 227, 1969). Catalogues label Hovhaness's stage works differently, including such categories as "opera," "chamber opera," "operetta," and "dance-drama." This inconsistent categorization will be addressed later in this thesis.

this decade Hovhaness's style was influenced most strongly by Japanese music and culture. Hovhaness had been attracted to East Asia since childhood, yet it was not until the early 1960s that he began studying Japanese music seriously. Hovhaness made two trips to Japan—first in 1960 and later in 1962—that would have a lasting impression on his musical style.

Hovhaness consistently spoke of Far Eastern music as a fundamental influence on his stage works. In the following two letters Hovhaness mentions his esteem for the ancient court music of Japan, Gagaku, and the stylized theatrical form known as Noh:

> (1) March 6, 1961 letter to Walter Simmons: "As to my favorite music I can only say the operas and oratorios and other choral works of George Frederick Handel, and for music today, the music of South Indian masters, and music still living in Japanese theatres such as Noh Drama, Bunraku, Gagaku, also two young composers, Toro Takemitsu and Toshiro Mayazumi, of Japan."[4]
>
> (2) July 12, 1966 letter to A.A. Suppan: "The Nō play of Japan has had a great influence on my concept for a total theatre in which music, words and dance are all equally important. I feel that from this concept many new forms for the theatre can arise."[5]

Hovhaness's synthesis of Japanese and Western elements during the 1960s has long been recognized. No serious study, however, has addressed the specific influence of Gagaku

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[4] Alan Hovhaness Collection at the University of Washington (UW) Ethnomusicology Archives, accessed November 24–25, 2008.

[5] University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Archives Department, Box 4, Folder 17.

and Noh on the composer's music, and Hovhaness's stage works remain to be researched in depth.

Furthermore, Hovhaness has received little attention by academics. Reason for this neglect is complex. Twentieth-century composers that hold weight in the classical music canon often demonstrate a style of greater sophistication than their predecessors. To some, a composer is seen as inheriting a tradition. Hence, Hovhaness's attraction to the musical resources of both non-Western cultures and earlier periods in the classical music history, the accessibility of his music, both to the performer and listener, the lack of stylistic variability among numerous works by the composer, and the purely tonal quality of much of his music are likely factors in Hovhaness's lack of acceptance among twentieth-century academics.

Despite Hovhaness's success as a composer—the extraordinary opus count is in part representative of the number of commissions accepted during his lifetime—his music has only on occasion been the subject of scholarly research. Numerous music history texts, including Mark Evan Bonds' *A History of Music in Western Culture*, Peter Burkholder's *A History of Western Music*, and Richard Taruskin's *The Oxford History of Western Music*, make no reference to Hovhaness. Those that do discuss the composer, such as Robert Morgan's *Twentieth Century Music* and Richard Crawford's *America's Musical Life: A History*, mention him only in passing. Hovhaness is generally listed among composers with shared compositional techniques. Robert Fink, in his chapter "(Post-) minimalism 1970–2000," in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-century Music*, offers perhaps the most personalized description of Hovhaness, referring to him as

"a paleo-Romantic mystic."[6] Discussion of the composer's music in interviews, articles, and encyclopedic sources are also of an introductory nature.

Interestingly, other twentieth-century composers attracted to the Far East, whether for musical or philosophical reasons, have received academic attention. These include, among others, John Cage, Henry Cowell, and Lou Harrison. Hovhaness not only had direct ties to each of these composers, but also looked to the East for reasons similar to Cowell and Harrison: a desire to find new rhythmic and melodic procedures. But as Hovhaness began to establish his style as an American composer, he is said to have associated less with mainstream composers during moments of musical critique. Recalling his time spent with Hovhaness during the 1942 Tanglewood Music Festival, American composer John Cowell (1920–2007) noted Hovhaness's demeanor: "The composers at Tanglewood didn't take anything Hovhaness submitted seriously… [and] Hovhaness didn't mix the way the others did…but that instead Hovhaness mainly hung back and off to one side."[7] Classical music critic for *The Seattle Times*, Melinda Bargreen, offers a different interpretation of Hovhaness's personality:

> He was a very kind and gentle person, a very thoughtful person. I never heard him raise his voice, and I suspect…that would be rare. He tended to be philosophical about downturns, although, he might have [reacted like] anybody about unfavorable reviews, which he often got, particularly in the New York press

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[6] Robert Fink, "(Post-) minimalism 1970–2000," in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-century Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 549.

[7] John Cowell, phone interview with David Badagnani June 10, 2005. UW Hovhaness Collection.

> at that time. Although there were people who championed him, including people of the New York Times, there were always naysayers that said what he wrote…was too C majorish…. Alan never got too exercised by that kind of criticism. He would smile and say that his work would be born out in time, and that he didn't need to worry about what people like that thought.[8]

The purpose of this thesis is to raise awareness of the degree to which Hovhaness integrated elements from Gagaku music and Noh drama into his stage works of the 1960s. I first offer a broad overview of ways in which several twentieth-century composers—Benjamin Britten, John Cage, Henry Cowell, Lou Harrison, Colin McPhee, and Dane Rudhyar—integrated Eastern elements into their music. Then, following an introduction of the basic components of Gagaku music and Noh theatre, I investigate Hovhaness's application of elements from these Japanese arts in his stage productions of the 1960s. Some of the Noh traits we will see in Hovhaness's works include extremely short, sparse libretti, similar character roles, the use of masks, and the placement of the orchestra on stage with the performers. From Gagaku, Hovhaness integrates rhythmic and melodic procedures, imitates Gagaku instruments on Western instruments, and adheres to the formal concept known as *Jo-ha-kyū*. Following an analysis of the composer's use of Gagaku and Noh elements in his 1960s stage works I compare Hovhaness's transcultural style to that of other twentieth-century Western composers influenced by non-Western music. My thesis explores some of the issues known to have damaged Hovhaness's image among academics, which I argue is due in part to his use of

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[8] Melinda Bargreen, phone interview by author, November 3, 2008.

non-Western elements in his music. It is not my intent to pinpoint the reasons for Hovhaness's poor reception by academics; rather, I seek both to provide new insight into one stylistic period of Hovhaness's compositional career—that is, his "Japanese" period, through a study of the composer's 1960s stage works—and also to stimulate new discourse regarding the composer's current status among composers of Western music in the twentieth century.

CHAPTER II

PREVIOUS WORK ON HOVHANESS

The most substantial study of Hovhaness's music to-date is Arnold Rosner's 1972 dissertation, "An Analytical Survey of the Music of Alan Hovhaness." Rosner categorizes Hovhaness's music into four periods based on stylistic changes:

1. Music up to 1943: reflection of Renaissance and late-Romantic traits
2. 1943–50: prominence of Armenian character
3. Middle to late 1950s: integration of Indian elements
4. 1960s: influence of Japan and Korea

After supplying a brief biography, Rosner evaluates each of these four periods in terms of "Modality and Melody," "Harmony and Harmonic Progressions," "Counterpoint and Polyphony," "Rhythm, Meter and Cycle," and "Scoring." Rosner recognizes Hovhaness's blending of Eastern and Western elements, but goes into limited detail on the composer's integration of Eastern elements. His dissertation includes analysis of four works—*String Quartet no. 1* (op. 8), *Symphony no. 3* "Arjuna," (op. 179), *The Flowering Peach*

(op. 125), and *Fra Angelico* (op. 220). Hovhaness's stage works, when discussed, are used to exemplify a stylistic feature shared among the majority of works from a particular period, rather than recognized for their own traits. As we will soon see, some of the

compositional elements in these stage productions are not found in orchestral works from the same time.

Subsequent to the completion of his dissertation, Rosner wrote entries on Hovhaness for *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*. Rosner recognizes a fifth period in the composer's style, music written after 1971, and distinguishes this music based on its "return to Western influences."[9] From the 1970s on Hovhaness makes greater use of Western forms, and more conventional titles. The composer also reuses techniques from previous periods, including pre-1943 practices.[10]

Wayne David Johnson, in his 1986 thesis, "A Study of the Piano Works of Alan Hovhaness," is the first to depart from Rosner's revised categorization of Hovhaness's music. Johnson categorizes Hovhaness's music based on the composer's rate of output for the piano rather than his change in style. Given that approximately twenty piano works were written from the years 1952 to 1972, a small number in relation to the composer's entire output for this instrument, Johnson compresses Hovhaness's fourth period (1960s) into his third (1950s), and proposes a new fourth period: music after 1970. Furthermore, Johnson's study traces the development of the composer's musical technique in piano works through 1986, and investigates Hovhaness's imitation of

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[9] Arnold Rosner, "Hovhaness, Alan," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edition, ed. Stanley Sadie, vol. 11 (New York: Macmillan, 2001), 762.

[10] Rosner, "Hovhaness, Alan," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 762.

Eastern and mid-Eastern instruments on the piano (such as the *oud*, *kanoon*, and the *jhaltarang*).[11]

In her 1997 master's thesis, "The Ethnomusicological Influences on the Performance and Teaching of Selected Piano Works of Alan Hovhaness," Dorothy Winnard, like Johnson, investigates Hovhaness's piano works. Winnard reevaluates Johnson's classification of Hovhaness's stylistic periods by distinguishing the 1950s from the 1960s, and categorizing his music after 1970 as a fifth period. Winnard's methodology, like Rosner's, considers Hovhaness's style on the basis of a culture he found interesting at the time, rather than his output within a specific genre. Pertinent to my study are the threads Winnard weaves between Hovhaness's piano works and the music of other cultures (India, Japan, China, and Indonesia).[12]

Lucik Aprahamian also brings to light Eastern traits in Hovhaness's music. In her 2003 master's thesis, "Alan Hovhaness's *Adoration* (1967): An East-West Encounter," Aprahamian provides an overview of some of the elements of various Eastern cultures that Hovhaness integrates into his music. The focus of Aprahamian's study, *Adoration* (op. 221), shares several similarities with the stage works I will be examining, including the use of vocal and orchestral forces, a similar melodic and harmonic vocabulary, and a

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[11] David Wayne Johnson, "A Study of the Piano Works of Alan Hovhaness," Ph.D. thesis (University of Cincinnati, 1986), esp. 157–64.

[12] Dorothy Winnard, "The Ethnomusicological Influences on the Performance and Teaching of Selected Piano Works of Alan Hovhaness," Master's thesis (San Diego State University, 1997), esp. 16–28 and 43–53.

text written by the composer. Aprahaminan analyzes Hovhaness's text, and relates it to Far-Eastern philosophies.[13]

The majority of research done on Hovhaness has adopted two notions: (1) classification of his music into stylistic periods, and (2) the influence of Eastern music on his compositional style. Previous studies have provided valuable information regarding Hovhaness's compositional style. There still remains, however, a scarcity of scholarly research on this composer. Moreover, the majority of post-1972 studies on Hovhaness simply confirms, and to some extent elaborates on, Rosner's earlier observations. My thesis will extend beyond the methods of previous research, providing a more in-depth analysis of the ways in which Hovhaness integrates elements of non-Western music, in this case Gagaku and Noh, into his compositions. Furthermore, I will focus on a genre in which the composer worked (stage works) that has received a dearth of attention by scholars.

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[13] Lucik Aprahamian, "Alan Hovhaness's *Adoration* (1967): An East-West Encounter," Master's Thesis (University of California at Santa Cruz, 2003), esp. 33–36.

CHAPTER III

EARLY EXPOSURE TO EASTERN MUSIC

A. Biographical Background

Hovhaness's father, Haroutiun Hovhaness Chakmakjian, was born on October 20, 1878, in Adana, Turkey.[14] Chakmakjian moved to America at the turn of the century. He began studies at Harvard College during the 1905–1906 academic year. It was in Boston that Chakmakjian met Madeline Scott, a Wellesley graduate of Scottish descent. Their only son, Alan Hovhaness Chakmakjian, was born on March 8, 1911, in Somerville, Massachusetts.[15] At age five, Hovhaness moved with his family to Arlington Heights, Massachusetts, where his father was a chemistry professor at Tufts College, and his mother served as choir director at the First Baptist Church. It was in this environment that Hovhaness spent his formative years. By the time Hovhaness was a teenager he had recognized that Eastern thought fit him better than his mother's Christian practices. Arnold Rosner writes about Hovhaness's early interest in the East after speaking with the composer, "He mentions a strange feeling of oneness with people remote in time and

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[14] This brief biographical overview is approached through a lens emphasizing Hovhaness's exposure to and interest in Eastern music and culture. A majority of writings on the composer includes broader, and more detailed biographical information.

[15] The composer changed his surname to "Hovhaness" partly for greater ease in pronunciation and spelling, but also to avoid persecution as an Armenian. Arnold Rosner, "An Analytical Survey of the Music of Alan Hovhaness," Ph.D. diss. (State University of New York at Buffalo, 1972), 5.

place, and a consciousness of being at once in New England and simultaneously in some distant Asian locale."[16]

Hovhaness wrote his first two operas as a teenager. Both of these works reflect Eastern influence. Hovhaness composed the first, "Daniel," while a student in junior high school. This opera was premiered at Junior High West, in Arlington Heights, Massachusetts, on May 23, 1925. The second opera, "Lotus Blossom," was performed in 1929, his senior year at Arlington High School.[17] The costumes for "Lotus Blossom" were designed with the Middle East in mind (see Figure 1). In a 1975 radio interview with radio producer Charles Amirkhanian, Hovhaness recalls his early operas:

> [T]here was an opera we did in junior high school; that was called Daniel...it was Daniel in the lion's den—based on that.... Daniel in the Lion's Den was quite Oriental. Then I had a kind of a Mozart period—a neo-Mozart period, you might say. And that was represented by an opera where the librettist, who was also in the school, made a libretto thinking I'd write an Oriental opera, called Lotus Blossom, and it turned out to be a Mozart opera, in a sort of neo-Mozart style.[18]

Following his early visions of the East Hovhaness experienced Indian music firsthand starting in the 1930s. Perhaps his earliest and most memorable encounter was

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[16] Rosner, "An Analytical Survey of the Music of Alan Hovhaness," 5.

[17] "Lotus Blossom" was presented by the Glee Club in conjunction with the Art Department. Hovhaness's class friend, Edgar Desmond Hegh, wrote the libretto. The musical director was Grace Piercer, and the dramatic director was Helen Matthews. The scenery, costumes, lighting effects and stage properties were all designed and primarily made by the school's art department under the direction of Marion Ford. Arlington High School Yearbook for the Class of 1929, UW Alan Hovhaness Collection.

[18] UW Alan Hovhaness Collection.

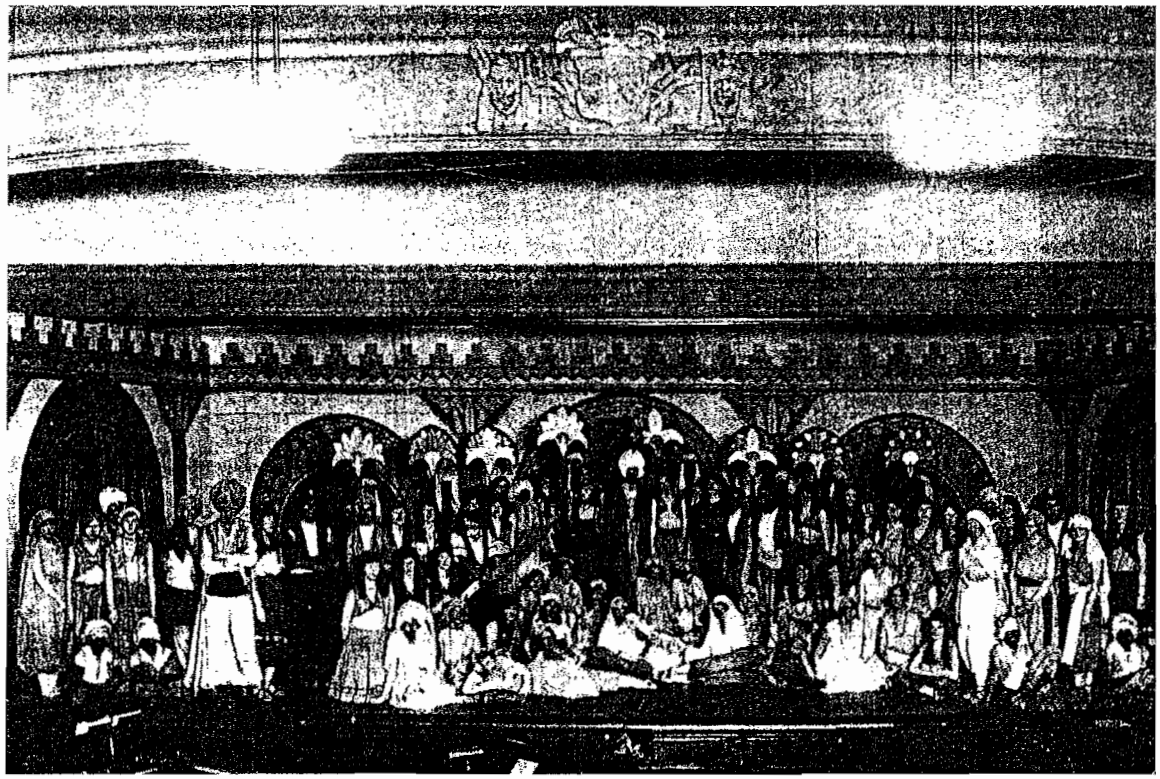

Figure 1: Hovhaness's second opera, *Lotus Blossom*, presented March 8 and 9, 1929, at Arlington High School, Arlington, Massachusetts. UW Alan Hovhaness Collection.

in 1936, when he saw the dancer Uday Shankar and the musician Vishnu Shirali with his orchestra perform in Boston. Thereafter, Hovhaness informally studied Indian instruments with several amateur musicians. Around this time, Hovhaness was also exposed to Cantonese Opera—a form of theatre known for its integration of speech, mime, song, dance, and acrobatics. Lynn Johnston recalls from a 1984 interview with the composer that, "Hovhaness would go every night with artist friends…when [the opera company] visited Boston each June."[19] Subsequent to writing two operas as a teenager, it

[19] Lynn Johnston, "Interview with Dr. Alan Hovhaness," March 13, 1984. Quoted in Lynn Johnston's "Arlington's Hovhaness: Composer Virtuoso," unpublished, 10. UW Hovhaness Collection. For more on Cantonese Opera I recommend Bell Yung's *Cantonese Opera: Performance as Creative Process* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

was not until 1946 that Hovhaness composed another stage work. This was likely due to the difficulty of assembling a stage production as a result of high technical and monetary demands.

From 1940 to 1947 Hovhaness lived in an apartment in Boston, where he composed, taught, and worked as an accompanist for approximately forty dollars per day. During these years, he served as organist at St. James Armenian Church in Watertown, Massachusetts. With this position he was exposed to ancient Armenian liturgical music. During services Hovhaness would improvise in Eastern modes. In his own compositions he began mixing Armenian elements with traditional Western techniques.

From his childhood through his thirties, Hovhaness gradually looked more towards the East for compositional ideas. In 1942, when Hovhaness was thirty-one, a discouraging experience took place at the Tanglewood Music Festival. This served as a turning point in the composer's career. (This event will be explored in greater detail later in this thesis.) The frustration experienced at Tanglewood motivated Hovhaness to reassess and question his musical style. Consequently, the composer burned over 1,000 original compositions. For guidance during this difficult time, Hovhanesss turned to a close friend, Hermon diGiovanni, a visual artist and mystic. DiGiovanni's advice was twofold: first, he urged the composer to handle his disappointment with the Tanglewood community by freeing himself from his ego;[20] second, diGiovanni advised Hovhaness to reconnect with his Armenian heritage. Although the composer had integrated Armenian

[20] Composer Arnold Rosner suggests "DiGiovanni's ideal of self-denial required a test…[and Hovhaness's] destruction of his music was such a trial." Rosner, "An Analytic Survey of the Music of Alan Hovhaness," 9.

elements into his music prior to this event, the Tanglewood encounter served as a turning point for the composer's future outlook on music. The event also inspired him to reinvent his musical identity. From 1942 onward the composer veered from Western musical practices, choosing rather to associate with the music of other cultures, including India, Japan, and Korea.

B. The Impact of Travel on Hovhaness's Compositional Style

As previous research informs us, changes in Hovhaness's compositional style routinely correspond to biographical events in his life. While scholars have categorized the music of Hovhaness according to his consistent integration of musical elements from particular Eastern cultures, it must be noted that the composer maintained an open-mindedness and curiosity towards a multitude of non-Western cultures. As a result, we see less than a clear-cut delineation of transcultural influences; that is, while the classification of his style into periods suggest the influence of a specific culture, the composer often integrated Eastern elements outside the recognized cultural boundaries. For example, although *Wind Drum* is classified as a work of the composer's "Japanese Period," the piece is based entirely on a single South Indian raga, a collection of notes used as the basis for improvisation, and frequently contains a tala, a repeating metric pattern.

Proof of the fast rate at which Hovhaness developed techniques of non-Western cultures lie in the changes in his employment records for the Voice of America. It is believed that Hovhaness was employed as "Director of Music, Composer, and Musical

Consultant for the Near East and Trans-Caucasian section" from 1951 to 1953.[21] His 1952 performance rating form reads as follows:

> Mr. Hovhaness's basic assignment is the Armenian Desk, for which he has served in supplying his own original music and arranging musical programs of other composers. His ability, however, is of such high level that most of the desks of the Near and Middle East have availed themselves of his talents and all of them clamor for more. There does not exist a greater wealth of such music as appeals to the esoteric languages of the above geographic categories. This very high standard of material performed by this employee has been and will continue to be of inestimable value in supplying musical values to the peoples of these areas in their own terms.[22]

By 1953 Hovhaness's demonstration of his competency in composing Eastern and mid-Eastern styles expanded his job requirements beyond the "Armenian Desk":

> [Hovhaness] is required to create original instrumental music in the idioms of the Arab world, Iran, Greece, Turkey, the Sudan, Pakistan, India and the minority regions of the Soviet Union. Adapts for western and eastern instruments the folk songs of the same regions. Orchestrates for ensembles, small orchestras and symphonic orchestras the familiar music and the national anthems of the region.[23]

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[21] Correspondence from David Badagnani to the U.S. National Personnel Records Center, September 20, 2006. UW Hovhaness Collection.

[22] "Performance rating form for 29 December 1951 to 28 June 1952," UW Hovhaness Collection.

[23] "Performance rating form for 28 June 1952 to 27 June 1953," UW Hovhaness Collection.

Hovhaness's command of writing in the styles of nations beyond that which he was currently "specialized" is apparent. Assuming the supervisor was also competent in distinguishing music of these nearby nations, it is safe to say the rate at which Hovhaness learned to compose in the various styles of these cultures is nothing short of remarkable.

Hovhaness did not travel to East Asia until 1959. The composer applied for a Guggenheim Fellowship eight times during his life, and was successful in 1953 and 1954. He was unsuccessful in 1937, 1941, 1942, 1949, 1950, and 1952. These applications suggest that the composer did not request financial support for travel outside the United States. Hence, it remains unknown how the composer became exposed to such location-specific Middle Eastern musical styles as the Sudan, except perhaps through artistic circles in New York.

C. Interest in and Exposure to East Asian Music

In 1959 Hovhaness traveled to India on a Fulbright Scholarship to study the Carnatic music of Southern India.[24] On the return trip in February 1960 Hovhaness visited Japan. He conducted several new works with the Japanese Philharmonic and the Tokyo Symphony orchestras, and experienced firsthand Gagaku and Kubuki music, and Bunraku and Noh Theatre during his stay.[25] Hovhaness had been interested in Japanese music for several years preceding the performances he saw in Japan. The composer's

[24] For greater detail on Hovhaness's study in India and the cultivation of Indian elements in his music see Brian Silver's article, "Henry Cowell and Alan Hovhaness: Responses to the Music of India," in *Contributions to Asian Studies: Part One, Music of India*, ed. K. Ishwaran (Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1978), 54–79.

earliest reference to Noh is in a September 15, 1952, letter to the Guggenheim Memorial Foundation: "Dear Sirs: This is my application for a Guggenheim Grant in Musical Composition. I request the grant for the composition of a 'No' Drama, libretto by M. Hamma."[26] It is plausible that this 1959/1968 visit to India and Japan served as the cross-cultural link necessary to ignite his interest in seriously studying the music of East Asia. It would be two years before Hovhaness returned to Japan.

Hawaii

During the 1961–1962 academic year Hovhaness served as composer-in-residence at the University of Hawaii. It was here that he began studying Gagaku, with Masatoshi Shamoto. Since Shamoto did not speak English at the time, Judy Shamoto, a Japanese language and literature major at the institute, served as interpreter during Hovhaness's weekly lessons. A June 29, 1962 letter to Walter Simmons from Hovhaness provides details of the composer's studies. "[I am] studying 6 Japanese instruments. Already playing shō and hichiriki in public and composing for all these instruments of Asia. This part of my work is a glorious experience. My wife and I play ancient Japanese Gagaku music every night."[27] In addition to the shō and hichiriki, pictures reveal that Hovhaness played the *biwa*, *ryūteki*, and the Javanese *rebab*. Furthermore Hovhaness writes in a 1962 letter to his ex-wife and life-long friend Serafina Ferrante that he was also

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[25] Material regarding when or where Hovhaness first learned of Noh, or which productions he saw in Japan were unavailable.

[26] UW Hovhaness Collection.

"study[ing] *shamisen* for the Kubuki and Bunraku."[28] The *shamisen* is a three-stringed instrument played with a plectrum. (Hovhaness and his wife at the time, Elizabeth Whittington Hovhaness, whom Hovhaness referred to as "Naru," are pictured with Gagaku instruments in Figure 2.) By mentioning that he was "composing for all these instruments of Asia" Hovhaness was likely referring to *Wind Drum*, a music-dance-drama commissioned by the East-West Center. (*Wind Drum* and the six instruments referred to in the previous quote will be discussed in greater detail later.)

Figure 2: Alan Hovhaness, with *shō*, and wife "Naru" Hovhaness, with *ryūteki*. Spring, 1962. Photo taken in their apartment at the University of Hawaii. UW Alan Hovhaness Collection.

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid. Pictures of Hovhaness playing the *ryūteki*, and the Javanese *rebab* are found at www.hovhaness.com under "Gallery," "Hawaii '62."

In addition to taking Gagaku lessons, Hovhaness also played in a Gagaku ensemble, and taught introductory Gagaku theory (see Figures 3 and 4). Since no scores in Western notation for Gagaku existed at the time, Hovhaness transcribed what Shamoto played during lessons, and also wrote down the music the Gagaku ensemble rehearsed. From absorbing the musical tendencies of Gagaku, Hovhaness compiled a book of original Gagaku pieces (see Figure 5). It was copyrighted in 1965 by C.F. Peters Corporation, but remains unpublished.

Japan

In May 1962 Hovhaness received a Rockefeller Grant for musical research in Japan and Korea.[29] He arrived in Japan on July 1, 1962. Here the composer studied and performed the music and instruments of Gagaku with Masataro Togi, a chief musician of the imperial court.[30] Unfortunately, little information exists regarding Hovhaness's time in Japan in 1962.

[29] Since my study focuses on the influence of Japanese music, I will mention in passing that while Hovhaness was in Korea he studied Aak, the country's ancient court music, and was commissioned to write his *Symphony No. 16* for string orchestra with Korean instruments.

[30] Judy Shamoto notes in a March 16, 2006, letter to ethnomusicologist David Badagnani that her husband "was indebted to Hovhaness for introducing him to Togi because it opened the door to the imperial court music department that would have remained closed to a Japanese national without the appropriate credentials." UW Hovhaness Collection. Furthermore, Hovhaness had a role in starting Gagaku classes at the University of Hawaii, which to date is an integral part of the University's music department.

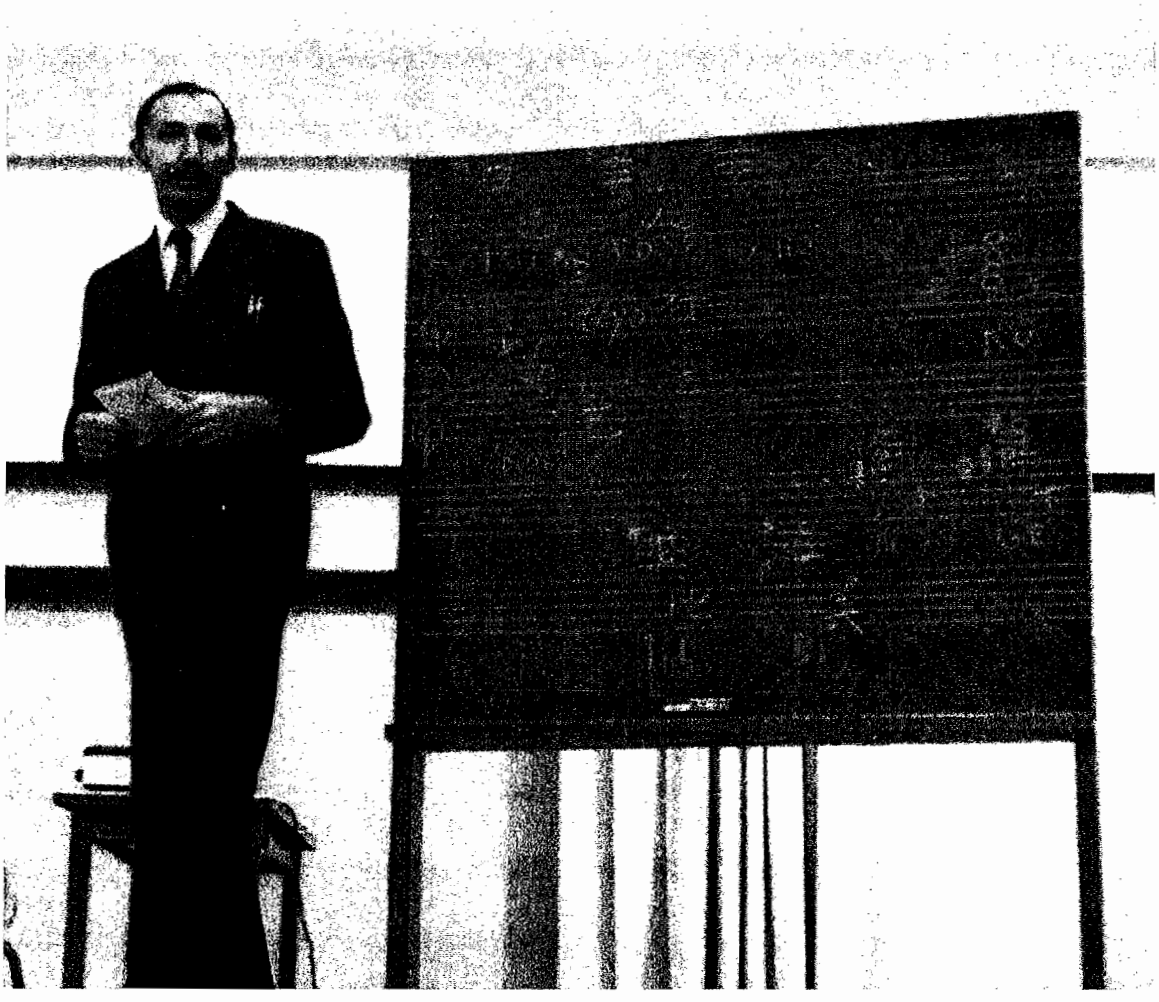

Figure 3: Hovhaness lecturing on Gagaku at Hawaii's East-West Center, 1962. The standard chords of the *shō* are drawn on the chalkboard. Hovhaness may have been one of the first Western composers to notate Gagaku. Used by permission of the Francis Haar Estate and Marco Shirodkar. "Hawaii 1962," www.hovhaness.com, Marco Shirodkar, webmaster (accessed March 3, 2009).

Figure 4: Hovhaness playing the *hichiriki* with a Gagaku ensemble, Hawaii, 1962. Used by permission of the Francis Haar Estate and Marco Shirodkar. "Hawaii 1962," www.hovhaness.com, Marco Shirodkar, webmaster (accessed March 3, 2009).

JAPANESE GAGAKU

6 CHŌSHI
KOGAKU RANJŌ
6 NETORI

[*13 ancient Japanese contrapuntal pieces*]

SHŌ TE UTSURI
[*Fingering of chord changes in the shō*]

Translated into approximate modern notation and edited
by

Alan Hovhaness

C. F. PETERS CORPORATION
NEW YORK – LONDON – FRANKFURT

Figure 5: Cover page to Hovhaness's unpublished book of Gagaku pieces. *Kogaku Ranjō* is a Gagaku piece in canon form with no meter. *Chōshi* (also known as *Ichōshi*) is a non-metrical prelude played before the main part of a Komagaku piece. *Netori* is a short introductory phrase that establishes the melodic mode in which the named Gagaku piece is written. "World Arbiter 2009: Japanese Traditional Music," Naoko Terauchi, http://www.arbiterrecords.com/notes/2009notes.html (accessed March 17, 2009). Used by permission of Martin Berkofsky. Alan Hovhaness, "Japanese Gagaku," unpublished book scanned to CD-ROM. Private collection of Martin Berkofsky. Accessed February 21, 2009.

D. The Importance of Melody

Unlike Western music, which is based on the relationship of simultaneous pitches, the essence of individual pitches defines music of the East. Melody grows out from a sequence of these tones. For this reason, Eastern music has often been compared to a string of beads. Hovhaness had been interested in the power of melody since the earliest days of his career, and it was this interest that drove him to turn to the East in the 1930s. Hovhaness once remarked: "There is a center in everything that exists. The planets have the sun, the moon the earth. The reason I like Oriental music is that everything has a firm center. All music with a center is tonal. Music without a center is fine for a minute or two, but it soon sounds all the same." By adopting the *principles* of this Eastern aesthetic, Hovhaness naturally created an Eastern sound.[31] Hovhaness's belief that music must have a center directed him toward the East. He believed that contemporary music, particularly atonal music, sounded artificial, and lacked both substance and beauty.

Hovhaness viewed harmony as a set of distant, yet related, pitches that encircle a central tone. This is perhaps analogous to the relationship of the planets to the sun. The harmony in Hovhaness's music is slow moving, and sometimes static. The composer's use of harmony in the stage works during his Japanese period is predominantly achieved through the imitation of the *shō*.

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[31] In multiple sources Hovhaness states that his Eastern sounding melodies were all written by himself. See for example the Alan Hovhaness lecture titled "Giant Melody in Nature and Art" February 14, 1967, Emerson Auditorium, Elmira College, Elmira, New York. UW Alan Hovhaness Collection.

CHAPTER IV

OTHER TWENTIETH-CENTURY COMPOSERS AND ASIAN MUSIC

Around the turn of the twentieth century composers of Western music showed a revitalized interest in the East. For some it was a desire for innovation, while for others a need for reinvention. Although intentions differed among composers, the motivation was that Western music had reached a cul-de-sac. Colin McPhee (1900–1964) and Henry Eichheim (1870–1942) juxtaposed elements of the Indonesian gamelan with Western musical practices. Dane Rudhyar (1895–1985) and John Cage (1912–1992) were primarily drawn to philosophical and spiritual ideas of the Far East. Lou Harrison's (1917–2003), Benjamin Britten's (1913–1976), Henry Cowell's (1897–1965), and Hovhaness's treatment of East Asian music was one of adaptation: each studied the music of various Eastern cultures—among the three these included India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Korea, Russia, and Taiwan—and integrated a variety of non-Western elements into their works, creating a transcultural style.

A. Dane Rudhyar

Dane Rudhyar, born Daniel Chennevière, March 23, 1895, in Paris, was one of the earliest modern figures to 'commit' himself to the East. At the age of sixteen, influenced largely by the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche, Rudhyar made two assertions: (1) that time is cyclic, and cyclicity governs civilizations as well as all aspects of

existence, and (2) that Western civilization is nearing the peak phase of its cycle of existence.[32]

Out of necessity (World War I), but likely influenced by personal ambition, Rudhyar moved to New York in 1916. In the U.S. Rudhyar found similar advocates that believed music of the European tradition was the truest form of art. This biased viewpoint reshaped the philosophy Rudhyar had proclaimed as a teenager. He now came to believe that rather than Western civilization nearing the peak phase of its cycle, this favoritism towards European tradition had offset the intended course of Western art. Discouraged by his encounters with supporters of Western elitism, Rudhyar spent the summer of 1917 in the New York Public Library searching for alternatives. It was here that he met the painter Kawashima and Sensaki, a Japanese Zen teacher, both of whom led him to study Oriental philosophy. Rudhyar's education in Eastern thought led him to search for a way to realign Western music with its cyclic path. Rudhyar's means to accomplish this task was by tracing the musical traditions of both the East and the West back to a time when the two were aligned aesthetically. Rudhyar believed the answer was to be found in the theories of Pythagoras. As a result Rudhyar's music reflects tonal, proportional, and spatial conceptions that bridge the East and West.[33]

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[32] Michael R. Meyer, "Dane Rudhyar: An Illustrated Biographic Sketch," http://www.khaldea.com/rudhyar/bio1.shtml (accessed February 28, 2009). See also Michelle Hakanson, "The Seed Ideas of Dane Rudhyar: Sources, Influence, and Reception," PhD diss., University of Oregon, 2006.

B. Colin McPhee

Canadian composer Colin McPhee is best known for his exposure of Indonesian music, namely that of the Balinese gamelan, to Western audiences. This was manifested through books on Balinese gamelan, and several compositions in which Western and Balinese sounds are blended. Before McPhee engaged with Balinese music, first traveling there in 1931, he engaged in a similar self-evaluation of style that Hovhaness had experienced. As a result, McPhee destroyed the majority of his works composed before the age of twenty-five. Following what may be interpreted as a rebirth, McPhee spent nearly a decade in Bali studying gamelan angklung. This was during a time when few Westerners had heard gamelan music in the West. After his absorption of the tendencies of Balinese music, McPhee began mixing gamelan elements into his Western compositions. The first work exhibiting this union of Bali and the West is his 1936 toccata for orchestra and two pianos, *Tabuh-Tabuha.* McPhee was responsible for introducing Balinese music to Benjamin Britten. His texts on gamelan are still regarded as authoritative resources on the subject.[34]

C. Henry Cowell

As a child in Menlo Park, California, in the early 1900s, Henry Cowell made frequent trips to the Chinatown district of San Francisco. Here, he was exposed to

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[33] Meyer, http://www.khaldea.com/rudhyar/bio1.shtml. Hakanson, 215–230.

[34] Carol J. Oja, *Colin McPhee: Composer in Two Worlds* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), xi–xvi.

Chinese opera and Japanese instruments at an early age. Cowell describes the role Eastern music plays in his music in his article, "The Composer's World":

> When I first began to write music, around 1908, the romantic harmonies of the 19th century seemed to me thoroughly tiresome and old-fashioned, and I thought I should find out what new possibilities there might be for rhythm and melody, instead. I found great numbers of such new possibilities in natural acoustic phenomena, but this interest soon carried my music far beyond any possibility of performance in those pre-electronic days. So I turned to explore rhythm and melody in actual musical traditions, and was surprised to discover that these aspects of music were not given the same orderly historical study in the West that polyphony and harmony were. Eventually I learned that to train myself in handling rhythmic and melodic possibilities systematically, I must go to Oriental teachers, and this I did.[35]

Cowell's first extended study of Eastern music began in 1928 with sitar player Sarat Lahiri, in New York. For approximately ten years, Lahari taught Cowell Hindustani music. From 1931 to 1933 Cowell lived in Berlin, with the support of a Guggenheim Fellowship, where he studied comparative musicology with Erich von Hornbostel, instruments of the Javanese gamelan with Curt Sachs, and Carnatic music theory with P. Sambamorthy. This exposure to a multitude of world cultures fueled Cowell's desire to make non-Western music better known to the American public.

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[35] Henry Cowell, "The Composer's World," in William Kay Archer, ed., *The Preservation of Traditional Forms of the Learned Music of the Orient and the Occident* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964), 101–02.

Cowell promoted frequent concerts at the New School for Social Research in New York, but was disappointed with poor turnout.[36]

As suggested by his comments quoted above, Cowell's main attractions to Eastern music were melodic and rhythmic patterns that were unknown to Western musicians. In 1956 the composer received an invitation from the government of Iran to spend the winter in Tehran. From his experience of Iranian sounds few Americans had heard, Cowell composed *Persian Set* (1957) to create a meeting ground between Western and Iranian music. "I made no attempt to shed my years of Western symphonic experience; nor have I used actual Iranian melodies or rhythms, nor have I imitated them exactly. Instead I have tried to develop some of the kinds of musical behavior that the two cultures have in common."[37] This viewpoint that a common thread connects music of the East and West is not unlike the viewpoints of Rudhyar and Hovhaness.

Given the rich musical and rhythmic traditions of India, it was perhaps this culture that most consistently attracted Cowell. As stated earlier, Cowell formally began studying North Indian music in 1928, and South Indian music in the early 1930s, though it was not until 1959 that Cowell wrote *Symphony No. 16*, "Madras." The instrumentation includes both Western and non-Western instruments—two of the following: flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, and horns; one harp and one celesta; strings;

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[36] Cowell's advocacy for new music led to his founding of *New Music Editions*, a journal that published new Western music, including the music of Charles Ives and Arnold Schoenberg.

[37] From program notes supplied by Cowell at a performance of *Persian Set* in Tokyo, May 1957. Quoted in liner notes to *Henry Cowell: Persian Set*, Manhattan Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Richard Auldon Clark, liner notes by Dana Paul Perna, Koch International Classics 3-7220-2 H1 (CD), 1993.

percussion (xylophone, glockenspiel, two gongs, and three timpani); *tablatarang* (multiple tablas tuned to different notes of a scale); and *jalatarang* (a group of porcelain bowls filled with water to acquire a similar series of pitches as the *tablatarang*). Thomas Scherman and the Little Symphony of New York premiered the "Madras" Symphony on March 3, 1959.[38]

D. John Cage

John Cage first studied non-Western music with Cowell at the New Center for Social Research in New York in 1933. Although composition lessons were enriching, Cage was drawn to the Far East primarily in a philosophical way. In 1946, he met the Indian musician, Gita Sarabhai, from whom he learned Indian philosophy and music. By the late 1940s Cage's affinity for East Asian philosophy and music had expanded to Japanese culture. Through the study of Zen Buddhism Cage developed a greater appreciation for silence. He not only practiced silence in daily life, but approached composition similarly. In much of Cage's music, silence is represented by structures measured by time. Cage believed silence in itself had meaning, and whether or not the composer "spoke"; that is, inserted sound into a temporal structure, was irrelevant. As a result, the composer's works are free from traditional formal restrictions of Western music.[39]

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[38] Silver, 54–79.

[39] James Pritchett, "Cage, John," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie, vol. 4 (New York: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1992).

Cage was involved with some of the same artistic circles as both Hovhaness and Harrison. Cage and Hovhaness became acquainted in Boston in 1943. (In Figure 6, Cage and Hovhaness are pictured among other American-Armenian music supporters at the home of the Ajemian family, where the group known as The Friends of Armenian Music gathered in Boston during the 1940s.) Around the time Cage was gaining interest in Eastern philosophy, Hovhaness began integrating free-rhythm sections into his works. *Lousadzak* was the first of Hovhaness's compositions to exclude moments free of metric parameters. Hovhaness was drawn to Cage's employment of prepared piano, particularly his *Concerto for Prepared Piano and Orchestra* (1951). Hovhaness remarks that Cage's style changed when he met Pierre Boulez, who Hovhaness characterized in 1951 as someone who is "a tremendous intellect and...has his place." Cage and Hovhaness soon lost interest in each other's music.[40]

In 1964, following Hovhaness (1962) and Harrison's (1963) residencies in Hawaii, Cage served as composer-in-residence at the East-West Center, along with Toru Takemitsu. Cage's published works of this time do not include non-Western instruments as found in pieces by Hovhaness and Harrison. Furthermore, Cage does not integrate the Japanese musical elements as the two other composers do; rather, he exhibits an aesthetic similar to that of Japanese music through his attraction to the power of subtlety and simplicity.[41]

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[40] Richard Howard, "Hovhaness Interview: Seattle, 1983." Reprinted by Marco Shirodkar at "The Alan Hovhaness Website," www.hovhaness.com (accessed March 3, 2009).

[41] Information regarding what activities Cage was involved in and what compositions he worked on during his stay in Hawaii were unavailable.

Figure 6: Hovhaness with circle of friends, Boston, 1946. Back row, left to right: unknown, Merce Cunningham, John Cage, Alan Hovhaness, Dr. Ajemian, William Masselos, William Russell, Hoosag Gregory; Center, left to right: Anne Parker Wigglesworth, Frank Wigglesworth, Maro Ajemian, Carol Saroyan, Hermine Haroutian, likely the Aunt of the Ajemian sisters; Front, left to right: Khoren Haroutian, Anahaid Ajemian, Dr. Elizabeth Gregory, William Saroyan, George Avakian; Seated on floor: Mrs. Ajemian, Serafina Ferrante Hovhaness, Mary Avakian and her husband. UW Alan Hovhaness Collection.

Cage has received far more recognition for his contributions to music than other American composers who turned to the Far East for creative renewal. It is likely that it is Cage's incorporation of Eastern philosophy into music making, rather than the integration of Eastern musical elements into pre-existing Western parameters, that has gained him lasting recognition. A second possible reason for the acceptance of Cage's avant-garde

contributions was his association with Cowell, Schoenberg, and Boulez, all of who had ties to the reigning contemporary music circles.

E. Benjamin Britten

Benjamin Britten encountered non-Western music early in his career, when between the years 1933 and 1940 the composer experienced music of Indonesia, Japan, and India while remaining in the West.[42] The music of these three cultures would serve as a wellspring for the composer later in his career. In November 1955, Britten and his partner, Peter Pears, departed England for a five-month world concert tour, including stops in Asia.

Britten arrived in Tokyo on February 8, 1956. It was here that he saw two performances of *Sumidagawa*, a Noh play by Juro Motomasa (1395-1431). The composer also experienced Gagaku, when he twice visited the music department of the Imperial Household Agency. During a three-day trip to Kyoto, Britten purchased a *shō*. He took lessons on the *shō* at the Agency upon arriving back in Tokyo (see Figure 7). Britten shared his fascination with Noh and Gagaku with librettist William Plomer.[43] Following Britten's return to England, the composer began discussing with Plomer ideas to adapt *Sumidagawa* for the Western stage. This project took eight years to complete,

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[42] On May 6, 1933 Britten attended a concert of Indian music at the Ambassador Theatre in London. In 1938 he was active in Ezra Pound's creation of a Noh play. Thereafter, from 1930–42 he studied Balinese gamelan music with Colin McPhee. Mervyn Cooke, "Distant Horizons," in *The Cambridge Companion to Benjamin Britten*. Mervyn Cooke, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 167-68.

[43] Plomer had lived in Japan in the 1920s and was the one that recommend Britten to see a Noh play while there.

with many adaptations. The work was presented in its final form in 1964 as *Curlew River*.

Figure 7: Britten playing the *shō*, Tokyo, February 1956. Used by permission of Mervyn Cooke. Cooke, *Britten and the Far East*, 127.

Plomer transformed the setting of the original play into the context of a Christian parable. The opera is set in early medieval times. Like many of Britten's operas, *Curlew River* centers on an exceptional character, in this case the Madwoman (tenor). The supporting characters include Abbot (bass), the Ferryman (baritone), and the Traveller (baritone). In addition to the Madwoman, both the Traveller and the Ferryman

wear masks. At the premiere, on June 13, 1964, at Orford Church in Suffolk, England, the entire cast was male. *Curlew River* adopts the same character roles as *Sumidagawa*:

Shite: Madwoman

Waki: Abbot

Shite-tsure: Ferryman

Shite-tsure: Traveller

Aspects of Britten's orchestration intentionally imitate Gagaku and Nohgaku (the music of Noh), namely the use of Eastern percussion (five small drums, five small bells, and gong), chamber organ (playing *shō* chords), and an all-male chorus (three tenors, three baritones, and two basses). At the start of the opera the instrumentalists enter in procession with the actors, and are placed on the right side of the stage. The work is performed without a conductor.

Curlew River includes several Noh and Gagaku traits. The music is sung largely in a speech-song style (excluding the standard notation of *Sprechstimme*). Britten avoids triadic harmonies, preferring a modal language. The texture is largely heterophonic, emphasizing preference for a linear rather than vertical vocabulary. There are sliding pitches throughout the score. Britten uses accelerating rhythmic patterns in the percussion similar to patterns played by the *kakko* (a double-headed drum, that is placed on a stand and struck with two sticks) in Gagaku pieces. Also, there are several free-rhythm passages. (Britten notates these as "own tempo," where different tempos happen simultaneously.) There are other unfamiliar notational markings in the score, which may be a reflection of Britten's attempt to notate music in a non-Western style. These include

a tremolo with a gradual, unmeasured accelerando, and a sign (known as the 'curlew' sign) to notify a performer to listen and wait until the other performers finish their music. The absence of a conductor is a plausible reason for these markings. This same sense of communication is fundamental in the performance of Noh and Gagaku.

One of Britten's most obvious references to Gagaku is his imitation of the *shō*. The chamber organ has this responsibility. In his publication *Britten and the East*, Mervyn Cooke points out:

> Britten's version of *shō* technique is disconcertingly authentic: the timbre of the chamber organ used in the original recording of the Church Parables is uncannily close to the sonority of the original instrument, and several of the chords in Britten's harmonic vocabulary are identical with *aitake* [the eleven basic chords of the *shō*] patterns.[44]

The majority of Britten's chords are a series of stacked seconds. The way Britten notates the change from one chord to another is also representative of authentic *shō* performance practice. The pitches of the chords are played so as to prevent a break in sound; that is, several pipes continue to sound during a chord change:

Britten's use of Noh and Gagaku elements is more conservative than that of Hovhaness. Both composers apply non-Western instrumental techniques to Western instruments. Britten, however, designates the chords of the *shō* to be played solely by the chamber organ. Many of these chords are from the collection of *aitake*. Also in contrast to Hovhaness's approach is Britten and Plomer's extensive investment in creating precise

production notes for *Curlew River*. Lighting, costumes, masks, and stage directions are all polished in their design. Britten has characters other than the *shite* wear masks, which is a departure from traditional Noh practice. The stage design reflects that of Noh in that there is an absence of elaborate set design, a long bridge-way for actors, and space on stage left for the instrumentalists and chorus to sit.

Hovhaness often entrusted the process of staging to the interpretation of the commissioner. Although the two composers differed in their use of Noh and Gagaku elements, both Britten and Hovhaness chose to integrate traits of these Japanese arts into their own music for similar reasons. Neither composer was concerned with recreating a Noh or Gagaku piece, rather they were interested in reinvigorating Western music with Eastern techniques.

F. Lou Harrison

Like Britten and Cowell, Lou Harrison also drew inspiration from East Asian arts early in his career. As a student in San Francisco, Harrison frequently visited Chinatown for musical enrichment. "You could walk along the street and hear a flute or a viol played by street vendors or a merchant in his lair. Then I discovered Chinese [Cantonese] opera. And that became a more or less steady entertainment."[45] Harrison's

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[44] Mervyn Cooke, *Britten and the Far East* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: The Boydell Press, 1998), 183.

[45] Harrison interview 5/16/94. Quote published in Leta Miller and Fredric Lieberman, *Composing a World: Lou Harrison, Musical Wayfarer* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 141.

exposure to Chinese music tapped into a culture he would draw inspiration from for the rest of his career.

Harrison made several trips to the Far East, including Japan (1961), Korea (1961 and 1962), and Taiwan (1962). His first trip to Korea was made possible through a Rockefeller Grant. (Hovhaness had been awarded a Rockefeller Grant the previous year to study Asian music in Japan and Korea.) Of these East Asian countries, Harrison was most attracted to the music of Korea. During his time in Seoul, Harrison studied the traditional court music of Korea, with Maestro Kim T'aesòp. Harrison became an expert in playing the *p'iri*, a double reed instrument whose counterpart in Japanese music is the *hichiriki*. The composer also studied Japanese music, finding Gagaku music particularly appealing. Ultimately, Harrison took less from Japanese musical styles than he did from those of Taiwan and Korea. Leta Miller and Fredric Lieberman state this was due to the "four-square rhythmic quality of the most common styles of [traditional music]."[46]

A work that represents Harrison's mixture of East Asian and Western styles is *Pacifika Rondo*. This piece was commissioned by the East-West Center and the University of Hawaii, and was composed in the spring of 1963 while Harrison was composer-in-residence at the University. *Pacifika Rondo* premiered May 26, 1963, at the "Festival of Music and Art of this Century." The seven-movement work combines elements of Gagaku, Aak, and Mexican music. The work's diverse orchestration is a reflection of the Asian instruments available to Harrison in Hawaii. *Pacifika Rondo* is

[46] Miller and Lieberman, 152.

scored for flute, trombone, organ, celesta, vibraphone, percussion, strings, *p'iris*, *sheng*, psalteries, *cheng*, *kayangùm*, *pak*, and *jalatarangam*.

As the title suggests, *Pacifika Rondo* is reflective of rondo form. The odd-numbered movements, one ("The Family of the Court"), three ("Lotus"), five ("Netzahualcoyotl Builds a Pyramid"), and seven ("From the Dragon Pool"), combine elements of Japanese and Korean court music. Shared stylistic traits that distinguish the odd-numbered movements from the even-numbered ones include *shō*-like chords, ornamental flute lines, chiming bells, and percussive accents. The first movement introduces the entire ensemble. The second movement, "A Play of Dolphins," is suggestive of the ocean, where the psalteries depict the movement of waves and the dancing of dolphins.[47] The third movement is mystical and somber in sound. Heterophonic textures carry the music forward. At one point a double canon begins at the fifth. Both styles are similar to the role of woodwinds in Gagaku; however, Gagaku canons are typically in three parts and at the unison or octave. Movement four ("In Sequoia's Shade") presents a tuneful melody over ostinato figures. Movement five ("Netzahualcoyotl Builds a Pyramid") is representative of the revered Aztec emperor of the same name. This movement integrates perhaps the most wide-ranging combination of non-Western musical elements. Traits of Mexico—the use of maracas and tin whistles (imitating the clay flute native to Mexico)—and East Asia—*shō*-like chords, imitation in the flutes—are heard. In the sixth movement ("A Hatred of the Filthy Bomb") Harrison

[47] Keep in mind the similar allusion to the movement of the ocean in Hovhaness's *Wind Drum*. Both works were composed for the East-West Center in Hawaii, approximately one year apart. The works are similar in duration: *Pacifika Rondo* lasts 24 minutes, and *Wind Drum* 26.

applies twelve-tone techniques. The final movement is similar to the first in texture, bringing the work full circle.[48] The composer regards this movement as a protest piece.

Harrison likely met Hovhaness in New York City on June 17, 1945, at the premiere of Hovhaness's piano concerto, *Lousadzak*, op. 48 (1944). Harrison wrote a review of the concert for the *New York Tribune*. Hovhaness stated, "Lou gave me the first good review I ever had."[49] Later, Hovhaness remarked that Harrison was one of the few music critics that truly understood his music. Perhaps this mutual admiration was created by the composers' shared interest in the East. Leta Miller states in her book, *Composing a World: Lou Harrison, Musical Wayfarer*, that Harrison particularly praised Hovhaness's ability to write expansive melodies. Melody is perhaps equally important in Harrison's music, but the length of his linear ideas is generally more conservative than that of Hovhaness's.[50]

Both Harrison and Hovhaness composed a considerable amount of music for the stage. Starting in the 1930s Harrison began playing piano and percussion for dance studios. His improvisatory accompaniment for dance exercises served as a laboratory for experimenting with new ideas well into the 1960s.[51] From 1951 to 1952, Harrison taught and composed at Black Mountain College in Black Mountain, North Carolina.
In addition to writing improvisatory music for modern dancer Katherine Litz, Harrison collaborated with theatre instructor Wes Huss. During August 1953 the two staged *The*

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[48] For more information on *Pacifika Rondo* see Miller and Lieberman, 153–155.

[49] Hovhaness Interview. Ibid., 28.

[50] Ibid., 28.

Pool of Sacrifice, an adaptation of a Noh play by Seami Motokiyo (1363–1443). The score for this play includes chorus, soloists, and a child's toy xylophone tuned to a scale in Just Intonation. (Unfortunately, the music has been lost.) Huss states his conception for writing the play involved "experimenting with basic economy of movement." Regarding Harrison's accompaniment, Huss noted "that Lou was trying to place in Western history an equivalent to what the Noh period was in Eastern lore." Although the use of chant and metallophone allude to the economy of Noh orchestration, the instruments themselves in no way suggest the desire to reproduce authentic Noh theatre. Like Hovhaness, Harrison was interested in revitalizing Western art by integrating established East Asian artistic practices.

G. Concluding Remarks

Of the composers briefly discussed in this chapter, John Cage has received the greatest recognition for his use of Eastern elements. Only recently has Lou Harrison, Henry Cowell, Colin McPhee, and Dane Rudhyar received biographies.[52]

Twentieth-century composers have addressed the East for a multitude of reasons, often driven by the desire to renew or reinvent Western practices. Rudhyar searched for ancient roots, when East and West were not disparate; that is, when according to Rudhyar

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[51] Ibid., 79–101.

[52] See Leta Miller and Fredric Lieberman, *Composing a World: Lou Harrison, Musical Wayfarer* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004); Michael Hicks, *Henry Cowell: Bohemian* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002); Carol J. Oja, *Colin McPhee: Composer in Two Worlds* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990); and Michelle Hakanson, "The Seed Ideas of Dane Rudhyar: Sources, Influence, and Reception," PhD diss., University of Oregon, 2006.

there was one primordial culture. Cage looked to Indian philosophy and Zen Buddhism to reinvent his approach to life, and in turn to composing music. Other composers, including McPhee, Britten, Harrison, Cowell, and Hovhaness found enrichment in applying Asian elements, including the application of non-Western instrumental techniques, and rhythmic and melodic procedures to their works. Each treated Eastern instrumental practices differently.

CHAPTER V

GAGAKU

Before investigating the integration of Gagaku and Noh elements into Hovhaness's stage works, it is necessary to provide the reader with some introductory information regarding these Japanese art forms. Gagaku, meaning elegant or refined music, is the ancient court music of Japan. This genre has three primary sources of origin:

(1) Togaku: music for concert and dance from the Chinese Tang Dynasty (CE 600–1000), (2) Komagaku: music for dance from Korea, and (3) Shinto rituals of Japan. Komagaku differs from other forms of Gagaku in that it uses only winds and percussion, no stringed instruments. Furthermore, there is rarely the use of *shō* in the Komagaku repertoire. The instrumental portion of Gagaku is referred to as Kangen. The dance portion is called Bugaku. In his book *Gagaku*, Robert Garfias defines the aesthetic parameters of a Gagaku composition:

> Each composition is, in essence, a melody which is interpreted simultaneously by several instruments. The main focus of aesthetic concentration should lie in the melody which the entire ensemble is playing and on which even the percussion instrument players are concentrating.... In Gagaku ensemble performance each

> instrument adds not only its own tone color but also its own special treatment of the melody.[53]

As mentioned earlier Hovhaness began composing melody-driven music as early as the 1940s. Hence, his exposure to the ancient court music of Japan both confirmed his interest and expanded his techniques for composing melodies.[54]

A. Instruments

The modern ensemble consists of eight instruments: three winds, two strings, and three percussion instruments. Certain instruments are substituted for others depending on the type of Gagaku, whether it is oriented more toward dance or music. The wind instruments play the main melody. These include the *hichiriki*, a nine-holed bamboo pipe with a double reed; *ryūteki*, a seven-holed flute; and *shō*, a mouth organ consisting of seventeen bamboo pipes, though only fifteen of the pipes create sound. The *hichiriki* is the most powerful of the winds. The piercing sound of this wind instrument makes it the lead melodic voice of Gagaku. The *ryūteki* shares a heterophonic relationship with the *hichiriki*.

In addition to playing a basic form of the main melody, the *shō* also establishes the harmonic palate of a Gagaku piece by adding five- or six-note clusters of sound to the melody. When there are multiple *shō*, each part will often play two tones or a single tone, creating a larger, polyphonic web of sustained pitches. In his lecture, "Giant

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[53] Robert Garfias, *Gagaku* (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1959), 10.

Melody in Nature and Art," Hovhaness states that the difficulty in playing the *shō* is moving from one chord to another. In his book, *Japanese Music and Musical Instruments*, William Malm describes the harmonic function of the *shō* and its effect on melody:

> They are like a vein of amber in which a butterfly has been preserved. We see the beauty of the creature within but at the same time are aware of a transparent solid between us and the object, a solid of such a texture that it shows that object off in a very special way. It is the solidifying effect of the *shō* which to a great extent gives Gagaku its rather transcendental quality.[55]

The string instruments include the *gaku-so* (*so*), a thirteen-stringed predecessor of the *koto*. A second instrument is the *biwa*, a four-stringed pear-shaped lute. Both the *so* and the *biwa* play a variation of the main melody, the *so* adding short repeating melodic patterns, the *biwa* playing a combination of four-note harmonies, including arpeggios and sustained single tones. Depending on the style of music played, sometimes the *wagon*, a six-stringed lute-like instrument, is used. The *wagon* is tuned similarly to the modern-day guitar, with wide intervals. However, the tones do not progress in the regular order from low to high, rather, they form two separate broken chords.

The percussion instruments consist of the enormous *da-daiko* drum (four feet in diameter hanging in a wooden frame), the *kakko*, a small double-headed drum on a stand beaten with two sticks, and the *shoko*, a suspended metal bell struck with two sticks. The

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[54] William P. Malm, *Japanese Music and Musical Instruments* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1959), 77–104. Bonnie Wade, *Music in Japan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 23–44.

da-daiko announces the main accent of each phrase. The *kakko* is played by the leader of an ensemble, directs tempo changes and signals the closing of a piece. Throughout a composition, the *kakko* and *shoko* fill in rhythmic patterns.[56]

B. Theory

Gagaku modes are based on twelve chromatic pitches. Before the Japanese codified Gagaku in the ninth century there existed eighty-four modes. Today six remain.[57] These modes serve the purpose of transposing compositions when necessary. When a Gagaku piece is transposed it is regarded as a new work.

Rhythmically, Gagaku is divided into eight, four, or two-beat units. The *kakko* often plays complex subdivisions within this metric division, including triplet, quintuplet, and sextuplet patterns. These patterns are at times combined to form augmentative rhythmic patterns. The formal design of a Gagaku piece is based on the aesthetic concept of *jo-ha-kyū*. This theoretical idea is also found in Noh Drama. *Jo-ha-kyū* will be discussed in the next chapter.

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[55] Malm, 99.

[56] Ibid., 77–104.

[57] See Malm, 101 for a diagram listing the twelve pitches and six modes.

CHAPTER VI

JAPANESE NOH DRAMA

Noh is masked theatre with dance and song. The repertoire of Noh is classified into five categories according to the role of the principal character or *shite*: a deity, hero, heroine, mad person, or demon. Before discussing the characters of Noh, the background and aesthetic of this Japanese art is worth introducing. Secondary sources differ in where the roots of Noh lie; some say in eleventh-century Shinto ceremonies while others speak of the traditions of the Tang Dynasty in China. Kan-nami Kiyotsugu (1333–84) is credited with reforming Noh so as to make the art more appealing to the general public. In doing so Kan-nami revised texts and introduced contemporary songs and dance. One of the most unusual, and perhaps admirable, traits of Noh is the degree to which it has remained unchanged since its refinement by Kan-nami's son, Zeami Motokiyo (1363–1443). Zeami wrote extensively on Noh, codifying its design and performance practice.[58]

Zeami argued the soul of Noh was in its "hidden appeal," or *yūgen.* An aesthetic trait of Noh that blankets this deeper attraction is its simplicity. Noh plays have a simple text and plot (generally no more than three hundred lines) that is always focused on a unifying theme. There is not only sparse action, but action is often suggested and not

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[58] Chifumi Shimazaki, *The Noh*, vol. 1 (Japan: Hinoki Book Store, 1972), 1–3.

acted out. Emotions, too, are suggested, represented by a pattern of formalized gestures. Speech and song are presented with the aim of elevating the theme of a play. Other aspects of Noh that reflect this simplicity include limited stage sets and properties, simple choreography, and highly stylized masks. In essence, each part has its purpose and there are no non-essentials.

A. Characters

There are typically few characters that appear in Noh, and at times only two: a protagonist, who embodies the theme of the work, and a supporting role. The former is the *shite* and the latter is the *waki*. When the *shite* appears first as a human and then as a ghost, the first role is known as the *maeshite* and the latter as the *nochishite*. Frequently the *waki* is a traveler that encounters the *shite*. The *shite* may be male, female, or a nonhuman. The *waki* is always male. The *shite* wears a mask when playing male roles representing youth and old age, and all female and nonhuman roles (i.e., when playing any roles other than those representing the age and sex of the traditionally middle-aged male actor, in which case the actor's own face becomes the mask). Some Noh plays call for smaller character roles. These include the *shite-tsure*, a figure in some way connected to the *shite*, such as a wife, friend, or servant, and the *waki-tsure*, who is the *waki*'s attendant. The *waki-tsure* may also be affiliated with the *shite* or *shite-tsure*, for instance a master, servant, or enemy. The *shite-tsure* may be either a male or a female, but the *waki-tsure* is always male. What follows are some examples of *shite, shite-tsure*, *waki,* and *waki-tsure* roles in two well-known Noh plays:

Ashikari

Shite: A man whose wife has left him

Shite-tsure: The wife

Waki: The servant of the wife

Tsuchi-gumo

Shite: A monster spider

Shite-tsure: A general who is attacked by the spider

Waki: His servant

Waki-tsure: Other servants[59]

B. Musicians and Chorus

The music of Noh is called *nohgaku.* At the start of a Noh performance the musicians and the chorus are the first to enter. The musicians seat themselves along the back of the stage, facing the audience, and the chorus is seated along stage left. The musical accompaniment is called *hayashi.* This ensemble is comprised of four instruments: the *nôkan* (a seven-holed flute closely related to the *ryūteki*) and three different types of drums (*ko-tsuzumi*, *kawa*, and *taiko*). The *nôkan* has no definite pitch, but when played produces an expansive range of microtonal gradations. The music for this instrument consists of a series of stock patterns used only for specific sections of a drama. Like the *nôkan*, the drums of Noh also perform a series of stereotyped patterns

[59] Shimazaki, 3–7.

according to certain moments in a play. Each drum produces between three and five unique tones.[60]

The chorus is referred to as *ji-utai*. This group consists of usually eight to ten singers, themselves *shite* performers, who sit on stage in two rows. Unlike the role of the chorus in Greek theatre, the *ji-utai* never takes part in the action. Furthermore, they never speak; they chant in unison, either alone or in alternation with a character (never in unison with the character).[61]

C. Singing Style and Rhythm

The text of a Noh play is presented in one of two ways: *kotoba*, a heightened speech style used for recitative-like purposes, or *utai*, a sung melodic style comparable to a Western aria. The melodic style is further subdivided into *yowagin* (melodic mode) or *tuyogin* (dynamic mode). The melodic mode consists of several stereotyped patterns, all of which contain a high, middle, and low tone. The range between the high and low tones is a perfect fourth. When moving from one tone to the other, auxiliary notes are added in between, achieving a sliding effect. In contrast, the dynamic mode progression between pitches is less expansive and supplemental notes are absent. The unique singing style of Nohgaku is created in the vocalist's abdomen. When a tone is projected the singer constricts his glottis and holds his breath.

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[60] For greater detail regarding the organization of Noh music see William P. Malm, "The Rhythmic Orientation of Two Drums in the Japanese No Drama," *Ethnomusicology* 2, no. 3 (September, 1958), 89–95.

[61] Shimazaki, 7–8.

Nohgaku consists of two rhythmic styles: fixed rhythm and unfixed rhythm. Fixed rhythm is divided into three subcategories—most rhythmic, next most rhythmic, and then ordinary—based on the distribution of poetic lines versus rhythmic units.[62]

D. Movement and Dance

The movements associated with Noh are extremely stylized. Every situation has a prescribed posture, gesture, and movement. There are three types of dancing in Noh. *Mai* and *hataraki-goto* are both accompanied by music, but never with singing. *Mai* is a series of poses and gestures, usually long and drawn out, whereas *hataraki-goto* is descriptive and action-oriented. The third type of dance, *shimai*, presents a dancer singing alternately with the chorus. There are many subcategories of these three dance types.[63]

E. Dramatic Effects: Masks and Costumes

In Noh, the mask is used to assure that the actor appears as the character he is impersonating. The only time the actor does not wear a mask is if he is playing an ordinary man. The most common masks include those for deities, demons, old men and women, and young boys. The masks to be used are determined by the characters called for in a given play. Each mask is fixed with a particular facial expression. It is said when a mask is worn on stage it becomes alive.

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[62] Malm, *Japanese Music and Musical Instruments*, 127–129.

[63] Shimazaki, 29–38.

Costumes are perhaps the most elaborate of Noh visual elements. The reason for this is to inform the audience what type of character is being played. For example, a traveler would have no reason to wear an elegant, silk robe.[64]

F. The Role of Nature

The stage actions of Noh always take place against the imaginary backdrop of a natural environment. The natural surroundings intensify the drama when text is recited or songs are sung about nature. For example, if the actor sings of a flower petal falling or the reflection of moonlight on water, the audience is meant to imagine the scene. Some Noh plays are associated with a specific season depending on what is being described in nature. For example, the falling of leaves would suggest autumn, or the rushing of a mountain brook may allude to the melting of snow in spring.[65]

G. The Concept of *Jo-ha-kyū*

A first-time Western viewer of a Noh drama would likely note the slow pace of the action, slow at least according to Western aesthetics. Although there is a solemnity to Noh, the slowness is not stagnant; there is a rhythm to it. This rhythm is achieved through the concept of *jo-ha-kyū*. (As mentioned earlier Gagaku is also structurally governed by this concept.) *Jo-ha-kyū* refers to the overall flow of a work, and translates

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[64] Ibid., 56–66.

[65] Ibid., 21–22.

literally as "slow-breaking-quick." *Jo-ha-kyū* is seen on many levels, from the change in tempo during a song or dance to the pace of the performance from beginning to end.

As mentioned earlier, the action of a Noh play is focused on the *shite*. The unfolding of a play's structure is closely related to the behavior of this main character. There is some debate among Western scholars over how *jo-ha-kyū* is subdivided. I will adopt William Malm's interpretation.[66] Noh production may be classified into five main units, or *dan*. These five *dan* are sorted into two acts: four *dan* in the first and one in the second. The following is a basic outline of a traditional Noh play:

I. *Jo*:

First *dan*: introductory music, appearance of *waki*, setting of scene, and preparation for entrance of *shite*.

II. *Ha*:

a. Second *dan*: entrance of *shite* who sings a song describing himself.

b. Third *dan*: interaction among *shite* and *waki* (this is achieved using recitative style).

c. Fourth *dan*: climax of first act. During this movement the "emotional tension of the plot is revealed."[67] This section is divided into two sections: the *kuri* and the *kuse*. The *kuri* section contains the highest note in a composition. The *kuse* section is a dance in which the full spirit of the *shite* is displayed. The fourth *dan* closes with an exchange between

[66] Malm, *Japanese Music and Musical Instruments*, 110–112.

[67] Ibid., 111.

the *shite* and *waki* in *kotoba* or *utai* style. The *shite* then exits the stage to prepare for the second act. During the character's exit, the chorus normally sings.

d. There is frequently an interlude between the fourth and fifth *dan.* While the *shite* (if playing a *maeshite*) is changing costumes (i.e., transforming into a *nochishite*), a comic actor called the *ai-kyôgen* enters to exchange with the *waki*, explaining greater details of the drama.

III. *Kyū*:

Fifth *dan*: following an introductory song, the *shite* reappears in the *nochishite* role (typically in nonhuman form). The *shite* then performs a dance; this dance is either fast or slow depending on the character (e.g., slow for women and fast for warriors or demons). Following the dance is the recitation of a poem. The play ends with a closing commentary by the chorus.[68]

[68] Ibid., 108–119.

CHAPTER VII

ANALYSIS OF GAGAKU AND NOH ELEMENTS IN HOVHANESS'S STAGE WORKS

A. Clarification of the Term "Operatic"

Hovhaness's stage works are categorized differently among scholars.[69] Arnold Rosner states that only two of Hovhaness's stage works may be classified as full-scale operas: *Echmaidzin* (op. 62, 1945) and *Pericles* (op. 283, 1975). Rosner does not elaborate on his reasoning, but it is plausible that his criteria are based partly on the works' structure and duration. At times Hovhaness refers to the same work by different genre names. *The Leper King*, for example, is labeled in the score as a "music-dance-drama," but in the program notes for the premiere performance the composer refers to it as a "modern free non play" (see Chapter I, footnote 1). Hovhaness's definition of an operatic work is difficult to pinpoint for two reasons: (1) previous attempts to categorize the composer's stage works has been based on pre-existing genre categories, and (2) Hovhaness's stage works, be they chamber operas, large-scale operas, or music-dance-dramas, all demonstrate enough similarities in the score—instrumentation, melodic and

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[69] Compare, for instance, Arnold Rosner's classifications with Nicolas Slonimsky or Neil Butterworth's. Arnold Rosner, "Hovhaness, Alan," *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie, vol. 2 (Macmillan Press Ltd., 1992), 756–57; Nicolas Slonimsky, *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of 20th-Century Classical Musicians*, ed. Laura Kuhn (New York: Schirmer Books, 1997), 591; Neil Butterworth, *Dictionary of American Classical Composers*, 2nd edition (New York: Routledge, 2005), 217.

rhythmic gestures, relationships among characters, moral of plot, syntax of text—to be more similar than dissimilar.

Hovhaness's stage works of the 1960s are classified by the composer as either "Opera in One Act,"[70] or "Music-Dance-Drama."[71] I argue that both classifying terms are applicable when referring to the composer's operatic style. In the following analysis of Hovhaness's integration of Gagaku and Noh elements into his stage works, I will refer to both operas and music-dance-dramas from the 1960s.

B. Hovhaness's Operatic Style

As early at 1941 Hovhaness demonstrated interest in creating a new operatic style. On August 24 of that year he wrote in a letter to William Saroyan stating, "The idea of creating a new kind of opera...will always fascinate me and probably I also will have more time for a large work of that sort in the future."[72] Yet, it was not until the early 1960s that Hovhaness wrote both the music and libretto for a stage work.

Hovhaness's first attempt to create a "new kind of opera" came in 1959 with the commission from Broadcast Music, Inc. to compose *The Burning House*. This opera was originally designed in five acts with a large cast and (possibly) a large orchestra. The personnel and instrumentation were drastically reduced for the final version in 1962.[73]

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[70] *The Burning House*, *Spirit of the Avalanche*, *The Travellers*, and *Lady of Light*.

[71] *Wind Drum* and *The Leper King*.

[72] UW Hovhaness Collection.

In addition to instrumentation, other aspects, such as the number and type of character roles, and the setting of the opera, changed in the 1962 version. Given the timeframe in which Hovhaness composed *The Burning House*, his exposure to Noh drama likely influenced his change in the work's design. As we will soon see, the majority of stylistic elements in the final version of *The Burning House* are present in the composer's future stage works of the 1960s.

C. Subject Matter and Text

Hovhaness wrote the librettos for all his stage works performed in the 1960s. (The texts are provided in Appendix II.) Unlike the plots of many Western stage works, Hovhaness's librettos have little to do with the development of a story. Rather, they focus on a single unifying theme. The themes of Hovhaness's stage works are both philosophical and spiritual in nature. Most librettos aim at providing a message of unconditional love and/or oneness with the universe. The subject matter is not limited to a single geographic or cultural locale. For example, *The Burning House* has a Buddhist theme, whereas *Lady of Light* is roughly based on the Swiss tale of the Pied Piper of Hamelin. Although the subject matter of *Lady of Light* is far removed from Japanese mythology, Hovhaness employs East Asian philosophical messages, particularly concepts

[73] In an early draft Hovhaness calls for seven characters (Sanhedra-Tenor; Desert-Baritone; Death-Bass; Man of Sorrow-Bass; Goddess-Soprano; Life-Baritone; Beggar-King-Baritone), mixed chorus, and four dancers (Dancing Girls-Dancers; Beggar Children-Dancers; Demons-Dancers; Woman in Funereal Robes-Dancers). In its final version, the work was condensed to one act (26 minutes), calling for two characters (Vahaken-Baritone; Death-Baritone), chorus (eight baritones), and one dancer (Demon). Libretto for early draft located at UW Alan Hovhaness Collection. 1962 version published by C.F. Peters Corporation.

found in Buddhism. In the performance notes to *Wind Drum* Hovhaness describes the message of the "music-dance-drama":

> A mountain becomes a symbol of an island universe in an endless ocean of nothingness, space, sleep, Night of Brahma [the Hindu god of creation]. Time swings back and forth, giant pendulum of universe. As time swings forward all things waken out of endless slumber, all things grow, dance, sing. Motion brings storm, whirlwind, tornado, devastation, destruction, annihilation. All things fall into death.
>
> With total despair comes sudden surprise. A command of infinite majesty: "Time turn back." All storms, all motions cease. Only celestial sounds of Azura heavens are heard.
>
> Time swings back, death becomes life, resurrection, all things are reborn, dance, sing. But spirit ocean slumber approaches. All things fall back into sleep, emptiness, endless nothingness symbolized by ocean: Night of Brahma returns.[74]

As mentioned in Chapter II, Buddhist concepts attracted other Western composers of the mid-twentieth century, including John Cage and Dane Rudhyar.

Like the texts of Noh, Hovhaness's librettos are sparse and poetic in style. Syntactically speaking, Hovhaness frequently drops articles and repeats words and phrases. Although the composer evokes the simple, yet philosophical nature of much East Asian writing, he does not adhere to consistent metric patterns. The pacing of each

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[74] Alan Hovhaness, program notes to *Wind Drum* (New York: C.F. Peters Corp., 1962), 1.

libretto, however, adheres to the *jo-ha-kyū* form in that the unifying theme of a work is presented, developed, and brought to a climax.

D. Role of Nature

Many of Hovhaness's stage works of the 1960s take place in a natural environment. *Pilate* and *Spirit of the Avalanche* are set in a mountainous area. In the 1959 version of *The Burning House* the settings are described as follows: Act II/Scene I "mountain with rainbow"; Act II/Scene II "snow-capped mountain"; Act III "graveyard"; Act IV "garden, sunset and mountains, then night and stars"; Act V "lake amid jagged mountains." In Noh, the setting is described through the text, leaving the symbolism of the music to the imagination of the audience. Hovhaness also refers to nature in his librettos. For example, the following lines from *The Leper King*, "My body drowned in green swamp slime. My ruined city sunk, strangled by green snakes" (Rehearsal 73). The audience is meant to imagine a jungle flooded by rain, and the structures of a kingdom covered in vines (i.e., green snakes).

In Noh, the moon is one of the most referenced images. The moon is a symbol of enlightenment. In Hovhaness's stage works, mountains play an equally evocative role. An oft-quoted comment by the composer will explain best his attraction to mountains: "Mountains are symbols, like pyramids, of man's attempt to know God. Mountains are symbolic meeting places between the mundane and spiritual world." Although Hovhaness alludes to mountains in the text of the majority of his stage productions from

the 1960s, more often than not mountains serve as the setting. Hence, this setting itself takes on a symbolic significance.

Not all of Hovhaness's stage works take place in natural landscapes. *The Burning House* and *The Travellers* both take place in outer space. The score to *The Travellers* informs us of the setting for the opera: "Small room in train or space ship with door, window and two seats; also a view of the star-filled galaxy seen at the end."[75]

E. Characters

Another thread Hovhaness's stage works share with Noh is the limited number of actors. Hovhaness's works typically have three characters. In addition to a small cast, the character roles are to some degree comparable to the characters of Noh. There is a protagonist in each of Hovhaness's stage works. In some works the main character stands for good (*Lady of Light*), but in others the character is evil (*The Leper King*). (For a more detailed explanation of the character roles of Hovhaness's stage works see Appendix I.) There are several exceptions to Hovhaness's adaptation of characters. For example, the main character of *Pilate* is a traveler, whereas in Noh, the traveler is typically a secondary character that encounters the *shite*. Furthermore, the secondary character in *The Leper King* is female. In Noh, the *waki* must be a male character. With these ideas in mind, let us apply the titles of Noh characters to those present in *The Burning House*, *Spirit of the Avalanche*, *Pilate*, *The Leper King*, and *Lady of Light*:

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[75] Alan Hovhaness, *The Travellers* (New York: C.F. Peters Corp., 1965), 1.

The Burning House

Maeshite/Nochishite: Vahaken

Waki: Death

Waki-tsure: Demon

Spirit of the Avalanche

Shite: Mountain Climber

Waki: Priest

Waki-tsure: Mad Bird

Pilate

Shite: Pilate

Waki: Sacred Wings (Hovhaness has this character wear a bird mask. In Noh, the *shite* wears a mask, not the *waki.*)

Shite-tsure: Sacred Poverty (Jesus)

Shite-tsure: Murderer (Barabbas)

The Leper King

Maeshite: The Leper King

Nochishite: Alter Ego

Waki: Old Hag (In Noh the *waki* is always male.)

Lady of Light

Maeshite: Mad Dancing Girl

Nochishite: Lady of Light

Waki: War Priest

The main characters in *The Burning House* (Vahaken), *Spirit of the Avalanche* (Mountain Climber), *Pilate* (Pilate), *The Leper King* (Leper King), and *Lady of Light* (Lady of Light) face isolation and endure suffering. Arnold Rosner, in his 1972 dissertation, suggests that the lead role in two of these works, *Pilate* and *The Leper King*, may "in view of the scars of Hovhaness's earlier career...represent somewhat autobiographical conceptions."[76] When applying this autobiographical reading to *The Leper King*, the main character would likely represent someone Hovhaness disliked. Myron Howard Nadel, director and choreographer involved in the work's premiere, recounts that, "it had to do with a very evil, cocky, and powerful king who had hurt many of his followers..."[77] In the end of this music-dance-drama, the Leper King is murdered. In *Pilate* the title role plays the Roman governor of Judea, Pontius Pilate. After reflecting on his decision to have Sacred Poverty killed and Murderer freed, Pilate commits suicide by jumping off a cliff. It is doubtful Hovhaness would perceive himself as either character.

Following the deaths of both lead characters in *The Leper King* and *Pilate* the chorus sings. These closing songs are prayer-like and may be interpreted as holding the moral of the stage work. (The role of the chorus will be discussed later in this thesis.)

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[76] Rosner, *An Analytical Survey of the Music of Alan Hovhaness*, 15.

[77] Hovhaness likely based the title role on Jayavarman VII (r. 1181–1218), ruler of the Khmer people in Cambodia. The king is speculated to have contracted leprosy. It is probable that Hovhaness learned of Jayavarman from his work writing a score for the 1957 NBC film, "Assignment: Southeast Asia." UW Alan Hovhaness Collection. For more information regarding the Leper King see David Chandler, "Folk Memories of the Decline of Angkor in Nineteenth-Century Cambodia: The Legend of The Leper King," *Journal of the Siam Society* 67, no. 1 (January, 1979), 54–62.

This absence of character transformation differs from Noh. However, in several other stage works the main character does face transformation. Near the end of *The Burning House* the main character, Vahaken, turns into a "burning house," a blazing sun in the universe.

F. Hovhaness's Adaptation of Noh Structure

The form of the overture to Hovhaness's 1945 cantata, *Avak, The Healer*, is one of his earliest uses of the *Jo-ha-kyū*. In a recording of this work, Hovhaness's program notes refer to the three sections as "the sorrow" (*jo*), "the mysterious way" (*ha*), and "the blessing" (*kyū*). It becomes apparent in works written after *The Burning House* that Hovhaness is more concerned with the aesthetic effect of *jo-ha-kyū* than in adhering to the exact structure of a Noh play. Although each stage work includes this three-section delineation, not all strictly follow the structure of Noh plays. In many cases the actions, and on occasion the aesthetic intent, of certain *dan* are varied. In short, different plays highlight different structural traits of Noh, some more than others. Before investigating the formal design of Hovhaness's stage works, a brief review of the structure of a Noh drama follows:

I. *Jo* 1. Introductory music, entrance of the second character, *wake*

II. *Ha* 2. Entrance of the main character, *shite*

3. A dialogue between the two characters

III. *Kyū* 4. The story delivered by *shite*

(Interlude)

5. Exit of the *shite*

As mentioned earlier, introductory music is an integral part of the *Jo* section of Noh drama and Gagaku music. The majority of Hovhaness's stage works begin with an overture or prelude; *Lady of Light*, which begins with a song featuring a soloist and chorus, is the sole exception. In several stage works Hovhaness does not present the characters according to the accustomed way they enter in Noh. For example, the main character is the first to enter in *The Burning House*, *The Spirit of the Avalanche*, *The Leper King*, and *Lady of Light*. Hovhaness also adapts the structure of his works to integrate elements from the fourth, and the start of the fifth *dan*. Let us consider Hovhaness's adaptation of the *kyū* section:

The Burning House

Fourth *dan*: Vahaken battles Demon (Scene III). This is depicted by a slow dance with no contact. In Noh, this dance would be the *kuse*. Although it is not a solo dance, like traditional *kuse*, it does feature the full expression of the main character. The fourth *dan* closes with an exchange between Vahaken and Death (Scene IV). Vahaken is singing in *utai* style, while Death is reciting in *kotoba* style.

Interlude: "Burning House Music" (no chorus)

Fifth *dan*: Vahaken transforms into a "burning house."

The Spirit of the Avalanche

Fourth *dan*: Mountain Climber battles Mad Bird (Scene VII). The *kuse* is represented by "[Mad Bird] chasing Mountain Climber through ravines and over snow peaks."[78]

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[78] Alan Hovhaness, *The Spirit of the Avalanche* (New York: C.F. Peters Corp., 1962), 71.

In the score Hovhaness writes that this scene is depicted by appropriate dance movements. This scene is musically represented by sparse rhythmic interjections—mostly triplet and quintuplet patterns. Several instruments repeat material based on the duration of individual talas. Following the dance between Mad Bird and Mountain Climber, the Priest enters in *utai* style. The Chorus echoes the Priest's *katoba* style text. The range at which the Priest sings is a tri-tone (D to A-flat) nearly reproducing, but not exactly, the perfect fourth of the *utai* style of Noh. Unlike Noh theatre, the fourth *dan* of *The Spirit of the Avalanche* has no vocal interaction between the *shite* and the *waki*.

Interlude: "Avalanche Music" (no chorus)

Fifth *dan*: Mountain Climber is crushed by the avalanche.

Lady of Light

Fourth *dan*: War Priest slays dancers, and burns Mad Dancing Girl alive (No. 14). There is no dance between War Priest and Mad Dancing Girl or a musical exchange between these two characters. Rather, No. 15, "Fire is my dance," is a soprano solo with chorus. (It is not clear whether or not a dancer is involved during this scene.) This movement is in ABA form. The chorus begins by singing several repeated melodic patterns on the word "Roar" without measure. This lasts approximately fifty to sixty seconds. Following this section is the soprano solo, which represents Mad Dancing Girl/Lady of Light. The movement closes with the chorus repeating the opening music.

Intermezzo: "Lady of Light enters Heaven" (harp, strings, no chorus)

Fifth *dan*: "Lady of Light dances in Heaven"

Climax Scenes

For the climax of three stage works, *The Burning House, Pilate*, and *The Leper King*, Hovhaness utilizes a multi-voiced canon of the sort found in Gagaku music. In an August 1971 radio interview with musicologist and critic Walter Simmons, Hovhaness discusses the source from which he drew this formal technique:

> [In the] intermezzo—[when] Lady of Light enters heaven—[is] where I use a peculiar aleatoric canon form, which is like a piece called 'Kogaku Ranjō.' This little ancient piece, from Gagaku music in Japan, has influenced many of my compositions. [It is] a free canon with no rhythm, and everybody [is] just playing very freely, but still in canon form. So I've written many of these canons in this form, and I like it very much.[79]

The climax in *Pilate* occurs when Pilate falls from the cliff. Unlike the *colla parte* ("with the soloist") treatment of instruments in *The Burning House* and *The Leper King*, the instrumental parts in *Pilate* are separated from the vocal parts. As seen in Figure 8, the chorus sings a repeating glissando pattern on the word "Death." The voices start *pppp* and crescendo to *ffff* and decrescendo back to *pppp*. This section is to last approximately 30 seconds. Next the glockenspiel, two vibraphones, and chimes play a four-part canon (see Figure 9). Each enters at a different pitch, creating an F# diminished seventh chord.

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[79] Walter Simmons interview with Alan Hovhaness, broadcast on WKCR FM, New York in August 1971. Personal collection of Marco Shirodkar.

Both the chorus section and the instrumental canon are measured by duration, not rhythmic precision.

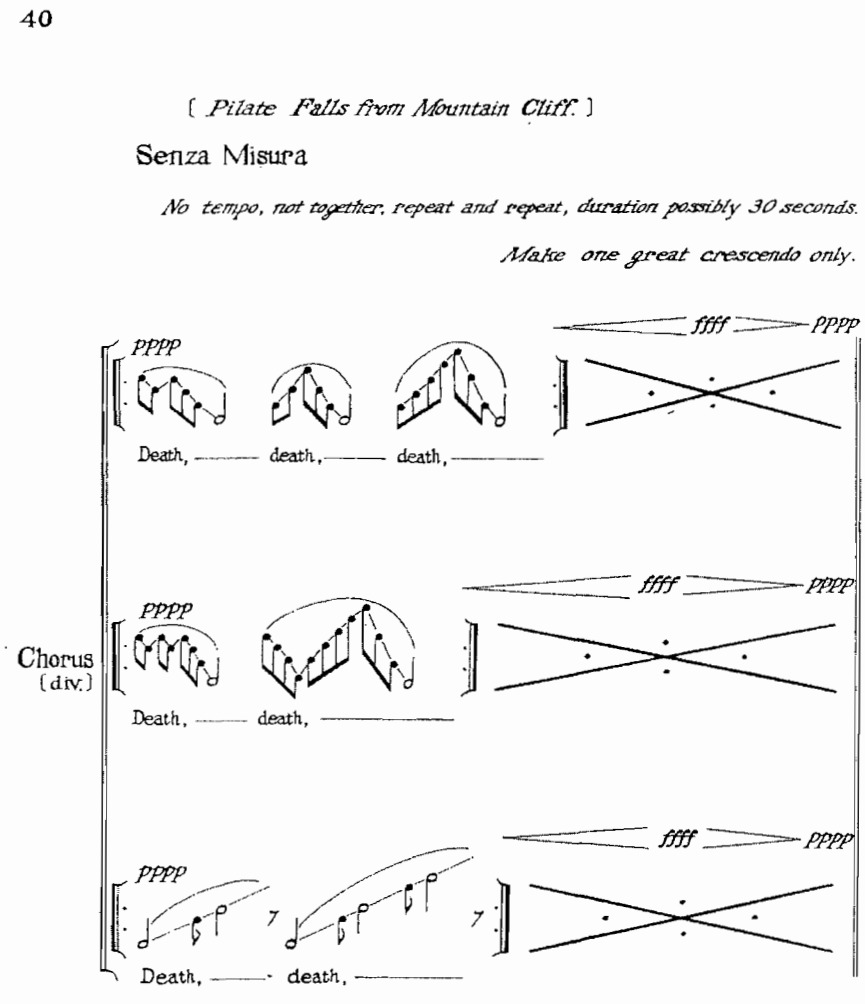

Figure 8: Climax scene in *Pilate*. C.F. Peters Corp., 1964.

The climactic scene of *The Burning House* differs from that of *Pilate* and *The Leper King* in that it is measured (in ¾ meter, with a tempo of 92 beats-per-minute), and consists of eleven parts (see Figures 10 and 11). The flute enters first, followed by vocal parts—Vahaken, Demon, 8-part Chorus—on the word "Burning." The presence of meter in the climactic canon of *The Burning House* supports the notion that it was Hovhaness's

exposure to the canonic piece "Kogaku Ranjō," during his study of Gagaku in Hawaii in 1962, which inspired the composer to write the climax scenes of subsequent works in free-rhythm.[80]

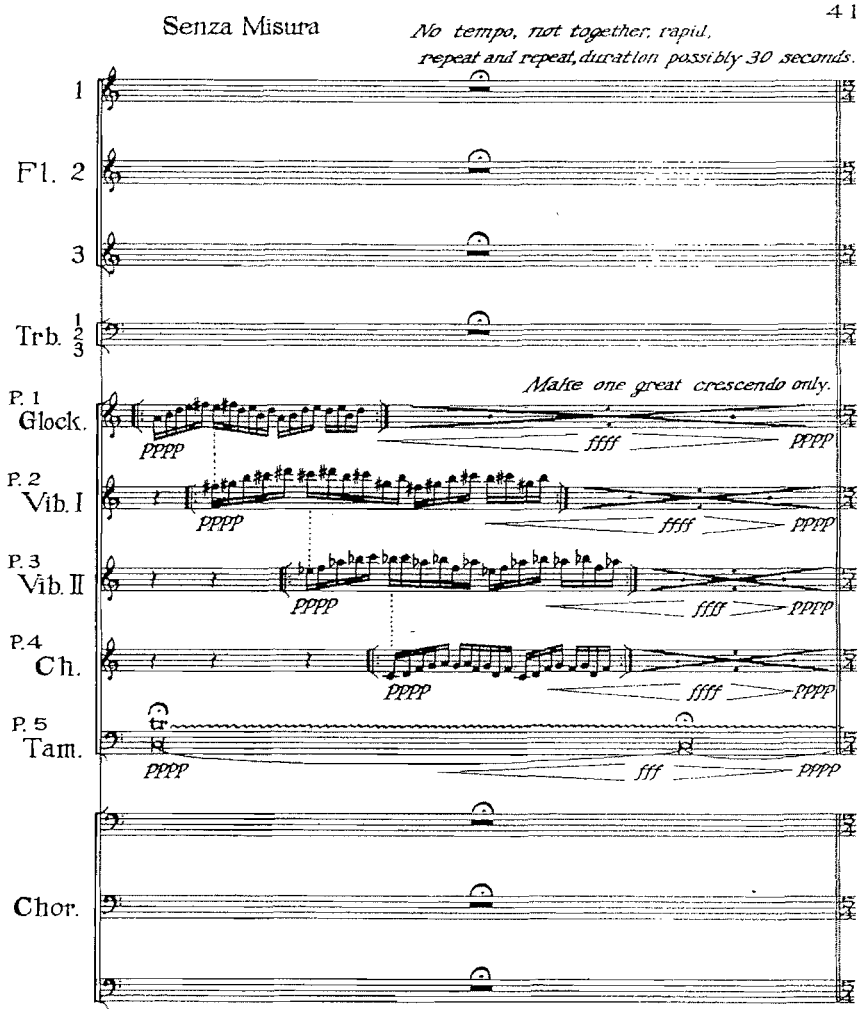

Figure 9: Climax scene in *Pilate* continued. C.F. Peters Corp., 1964.

[80] It plausible that Hovhaness first heard "Kogaku Ranjō" in Hawaii since the work is included in the composer's unpublished book of Gagaku pieces (see Figure 5).

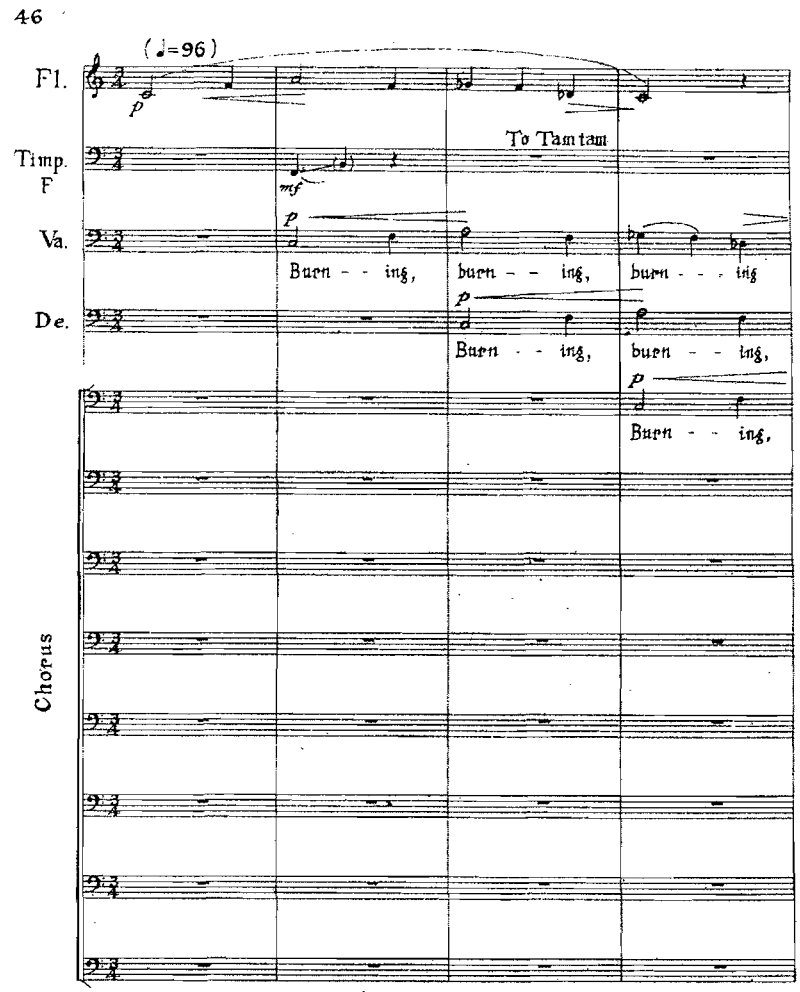

Figure 10: Start of climax scene in *The Burning House.* C.F. Peters Corp., 1962.

In *The Leper King* a nine-part canon begins at Rehearsal 70 in the flute (see Figure 12). Each voice in the chorus enters on the word "Stab." The canon in *The Leper King* differs from *The Burning House* by its ending. *The Leper King*' nine-part canon stops abruptly at *ff* to be followed by a *senza misura* section where the chorus recites on the vowel "O" at *pp*, swelling to *ffff*, whereas the final bars of *The Burning House* eleven-part canon fades out as it began, voice by voice.

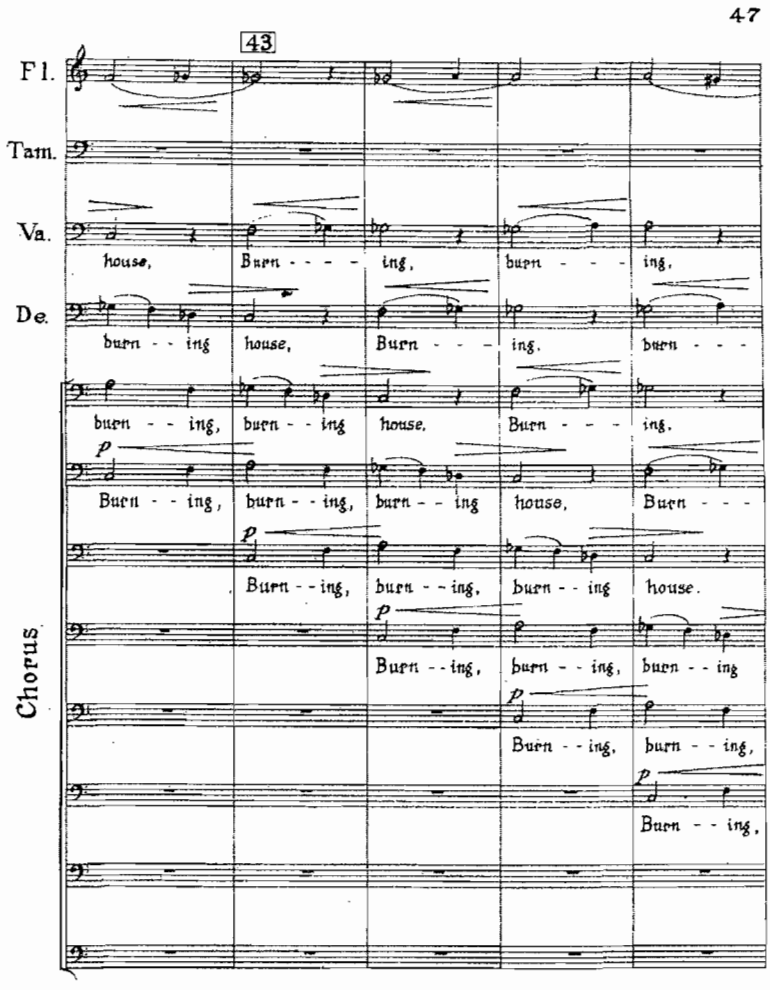

Figure 11: Climax scene in *The Burning House* continued. C.F. Peters Corp., 1962

G. Treatment of Instruments

Hovhaness began imitating non-Western instruments as early as the 1940s. In the 1960s we see both an orchestration and instrumental writing style that idiomatically reflect Gagaku music. Hovhaness originally conceived *The Burning House* in five acts,

calling for a large cast of characters and orchestra.[81] The work was condensed to one act (26 minutes), calling for two characters (Vahaken…Baritone; Death…Baritone), chorus (eight baritones), and one dancer (Demon). The instrumentation consists of one flute and four percussionists (timpani, bass drum, tam-tam, xylophone, four marimbas, glockenspiel, vibraphone, and chimes).

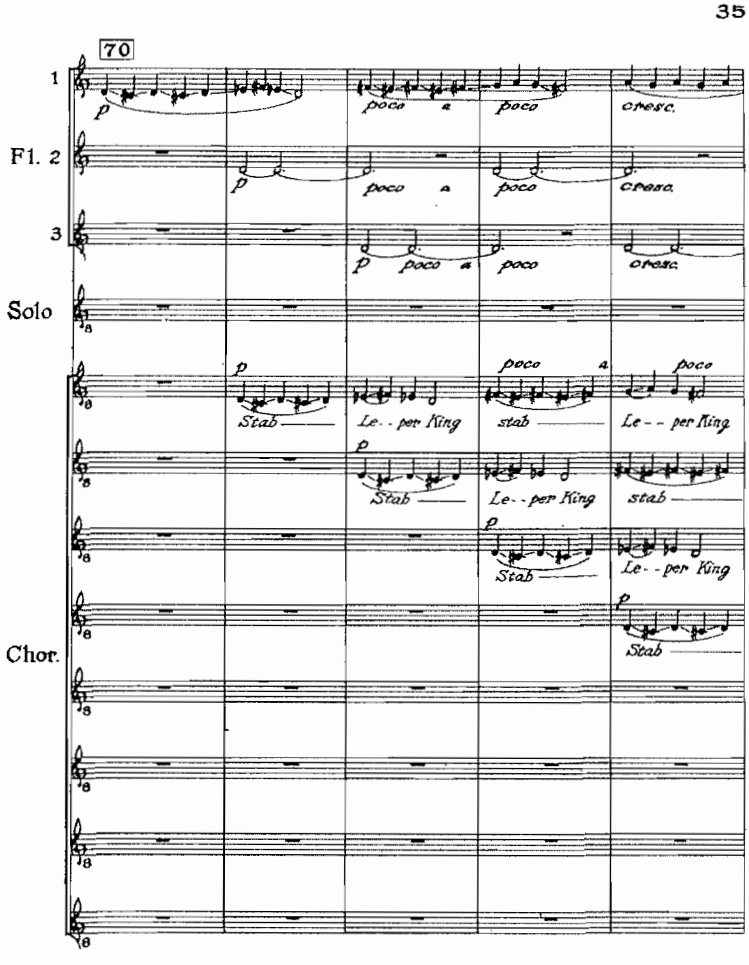

Figure 12: Start of climax scene in *The Leper King.* C.F. Peters Corp., 1967.

[81] Sanhedra-Tenor; Desert-Baritone; Death-Bass; Man of Sorrow-Bass; Goddess-Soprano; Life-Baritone; Beggar-King-Baritone; Chorus-Mixed Voices; Dancing Girls-Dancers; Beggar Children-Dancers; Demons-Dancers; Woman in Funereal Robes-Dancers. UW Alan Hovhaness Collection. Information regarding instrumentation was unavailable.

The design of subsequent stage works is similar to *The Burning House* in terms of the demand for orchestral forces:

Wind Drum: Mixed chorus,[82] flute, percussion (timpani, bass drum, xylophone, glockenspiel), harp, and string orchestra.

Spirit of the Avalanche: Two baritone soloists and one coloratura soprano soloist, male chorus (eight baritones), flute, English horn, trumpet, trombone, four percussionists (pedal timpani on G, timpani, bass drum, tam-tam, glockenspiel, vibraphone, chimes), harp, and strings.

Pilate: Bass and alto soloist, chorus of basses, three flutes, three trombones, five percussionists (Player One…glockenspiel, alto gong; Player Two…vibraphone I, tenor gong, Player Three…vibraphone II, bass drum; Player Four…chimes; Player Five…giant tam-tam).

The Travellers: Three bass and three alto soloists, mixed chorus, three flutes, percussionist (giant tam-tam and bass drum), and harp.

The Leper King: Baritone soloist, male chorus (the score reads: "8 baritones or mixed chorus of 8 mezzo sopranos singing octave above 8 baritones"), three flutes, one trumpet, timpani, and two percussionists (Player One…chimes, bass drum, glockenspiel, sleigh bells; Player Two…celesta, tam-tam, bass drum).

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[82] In the performance notes to *Wind Drum*, Hovhaness writes "men's chorus," but notes women's chorus, with low voices, or mixed chorus, may be substituted. According to the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* in 1962, a chorus of men sang at the work's premiere. Undated newspaper clipping at UW Alan Hovhaness Collection.

> *Lady of Light*: Soprano and baritone soloist, mixed chorus, flute, oboe, English horn, two clarinets, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, three percussionists (Player One…vibraphone, xylophone, celesta; Player Two…chimes and snare drum; Player Three…giant tam-tam and cymbals), harp, and string orchestra.

The fact that his instrumentation is generally the same for each work may have as much to do with Noh and Gagaku influences as with the resources available to him at the time. In an interview with Julia Michaelyan in 1971 the composer states:

> There has been a preponderance of wind symphonies because of the lack of strings in America. This has caused a sort of crisis, turning the band into the wind orchestra, resulting in calls and commissions for symphonies for this combination. In Mozart's time there was a great deal of orchestral music needed. Today, no one needs orchestral music. But they do need music for wind orchestras and for wind and percussion. New groupings, perhaps not instruments, but a new grouping of instruments, and this is inevitable[,] and it is to meet this need that I have written this music. It is not necessarily a preference, but whatever I do, I do to the best of my ability. I discover many new possibilities as soon as I try something different. While I love the conventional orchestra, I feel that one has to go along with whatever the new possibilities and needs are in music, just as they did in the day[s] of Mozart and Haydn.[83]

Hovhaness's limited access to string players may well explain why only two of the seven stage works call for strings. All of the works call for wind instruments and percussion. It

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[83] Michaelyan, 28.

is worth highlighting Hovhaness's view that, "one has to go along with whatever the new possibilities and needs are in music." As much as the composer's instrumentation reflects the ancient Gagaku and Noh ensembles, it also brings to light the musical climate of the 1960s.

H. Gagaku Traits in Instruments

Like Gagaku and Noh, Hovhaness's stage works employ flute and percussion as basic orchestral components. The orchestration for *The Burning House* is perhaps the most reminiscent of Noh theatre; flute and percussion alone are the instrumental forces. Hovhaness generally assigns the flute the primary melodic role. In *The Leper King*, however, the trumpet carries the melody. When the flute melody is played on different instruments, such as an oboe or clarinet, it is varied slightly.

Canon

A Gagaku technique Hovhaness frequently employs is the three-part canon at the unison (see Figure 13). In his book *Japanese Music and Musical Instruments*, William Malm states, "At the end of the introductions to certain Koma-gaku pieces the melodic line is taken up by the various winds in what amounts to a short stretto, each beginning at a slightly different time. It is one of the rare instances of such near-contrapuntal action in Japanese music."[84] Hovhaness utilizes this formal device throughout his stage works, not only in the introductory sections, as in Koma-gaku pieces.

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[84] Malm, 103.

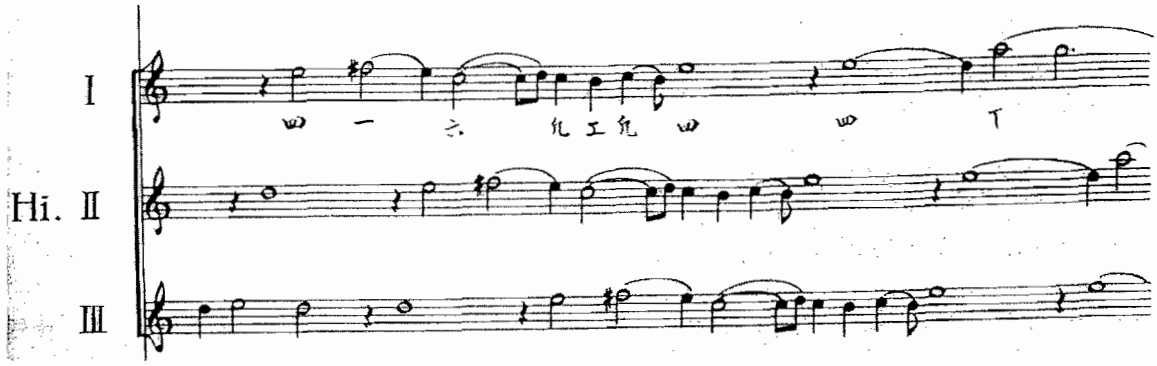

Figure 13: Three-part canon at the unison. Found in Hovhaness's unpublished book of Gagaku pieces. Used by permission of Martin Berkofsky. Hovhaness, "Japanese Gagaku."

This formal tool of Gagaku is most frequently used in the score for *The Travellers* (see Figure 14). Other works in which canons are commonly found include *Pilate* and *The Leper King*. The composer uses this technique in a similar way it is used in *Kogaku Ranjō*; that is, as a three-part canon during *senza misura* sections.

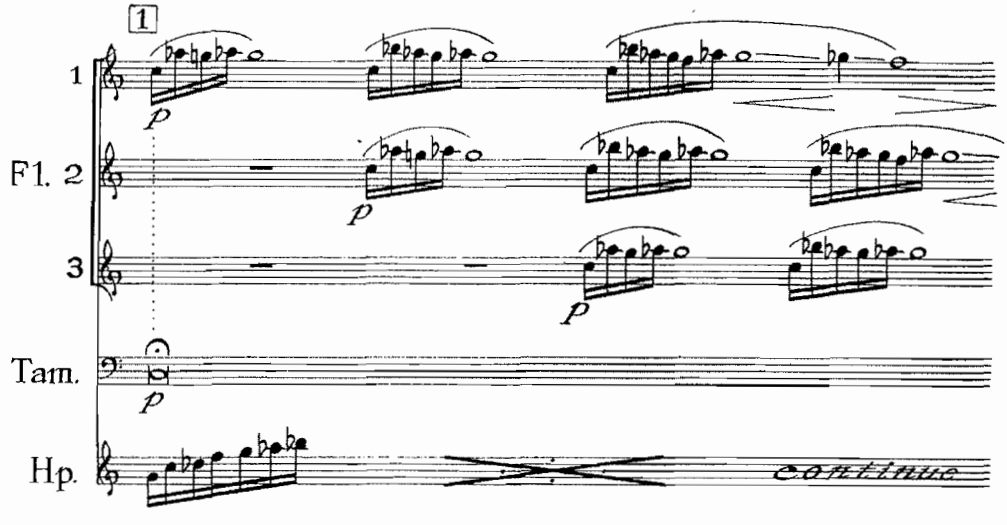

Figure 14: Example of a three-part canon in *The Travellers.* C.F. Peters Corp., 1965.

Unique to Hovhaness's treatment of this contrapuntal form, though, is his application of it in two non-traditional ways: (1) using instruments other than flutes (for example, in the beginning of *Pilate* the trombones play a three-part canon at the unison), and (2) applying the technique to more than three instruments (see, for instance, *The Leper King*, Rehearsal 70).

I. Percussion

In Hovhaness's stage works of the 1960s, percussion is typically used in one of two ways: (1) to establish a pulse stream; and (2) as an accenting effect. The former is less frequently used, and is most commonly used during dance scenes. Take, for instance, the xylophone part in the seventh movement of *Lady of Light*, "Oh, blissful floating dance." Here, the xylophone plays consistent eighth notes as a drone, while treating the on-beat strikes as a melody (see Figure 15).[85] For the most part, though, Hovhaness uses the percussion for an accenting effect, either interjecting rhythmic rhythmic cells or highlighting points in a musical phrase.

Compare the xylophone excerpt from *Lady of Light* to the xylophone part in "Dance of Black-Haired Mountain Storm," from *Wind Drum*. In this instance the xylophone plays an eighth-note double stop every thirteen quarter-note beats (see Figure 16). The xylophone, along with the other instruments in this movement, is governed by a tala. Hovhaness adopted this effect from his study of Indian music. *Wind Drum* contains perhaps the most frequent use of this cyclic effect.

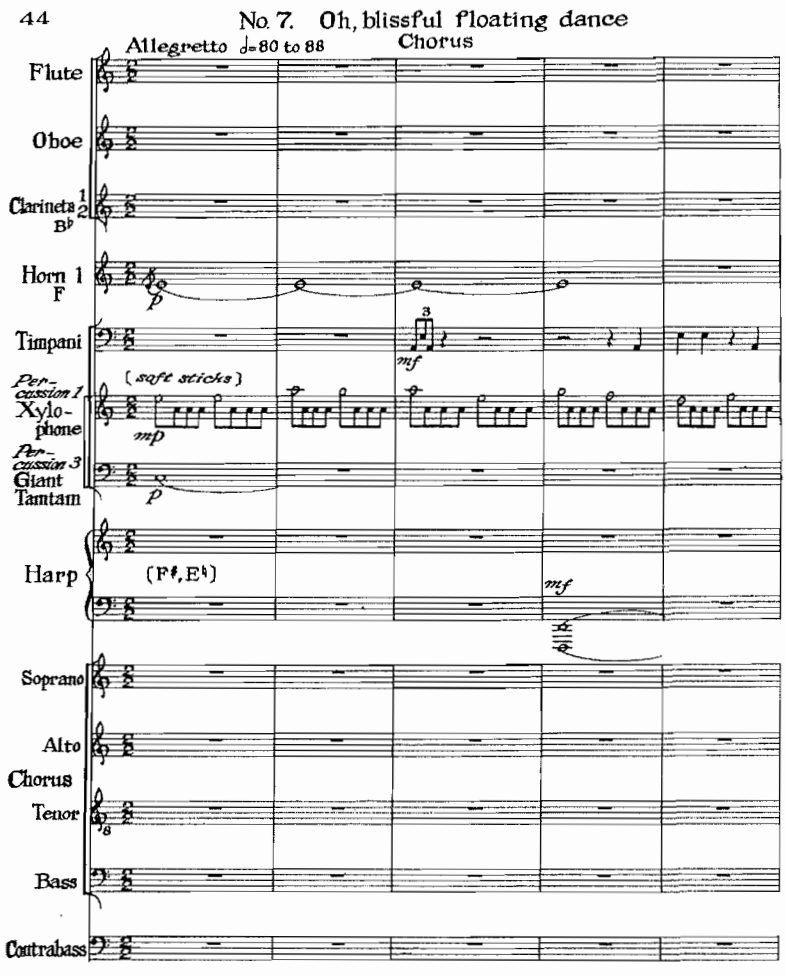

Figure 15: Excerpt of xylophone part in *Lady of Light.* C.F. Peters Corp., 1969.

[85] Marvin Cooke, in his book *Britten and the Far East*, notes that Britten makes use of this same rhythmic pattern. Cooke traces these rhythms to music of the Indonesian gamelan.

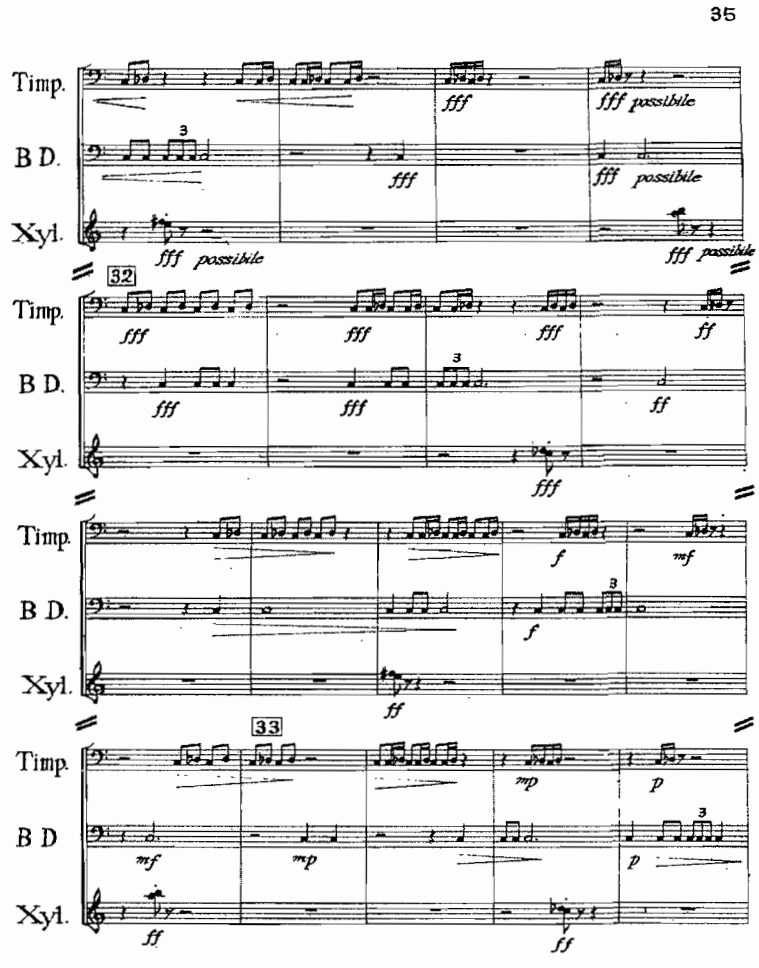

Figure 16: Excerpt of xylophone part in *Wind Drum.* C.F. Peters Corp., 1962.

J. Rhythm

Non-percussion instruments, like percussion instruments, also play short rhythmic gestures for accent effect. In the overture to *Spirit of the Avalanche*, for example, starting two measures before Rehearsal 1, the violins play two sixteenth-note double stops every five measures. In addition to creating accents, Hovhaness also writes complex rhythmic cells. Specifically, augmentation and diminution are applied to rhythmic patterns. In the well-known Gagaku piece "Etenraku" accelerating patterns are played by the *kakko*.

The composer uses these rhythmic gestures to add color, energy, or drama to the music. Bursts of triplet and quintuplet cells are found throughout *Pilate*. "Dance of Silent Wings," from *Spirit of the Avalanche*, and the thirteenth movement from *Wind Drum*, "The Flute of Azure," also contain complex rhythmic gestures. The flute in the latter work contains triplet, quintuplet, septuplet, and thirty-second note patterns. Such rhythmic patterns are also present in the Gagaku pieces Hovhaness wrote while in Hawaii (see Figure 17), and in the latest of the 1960s stage works, *Lady of Light* (see Figure 18). Hovhaness makes greater use of these complex patterns in later stage works; "The Flute of Azure" is the only movement of *Wind Drum* that has a substantial amount of such rhythmic patterns.

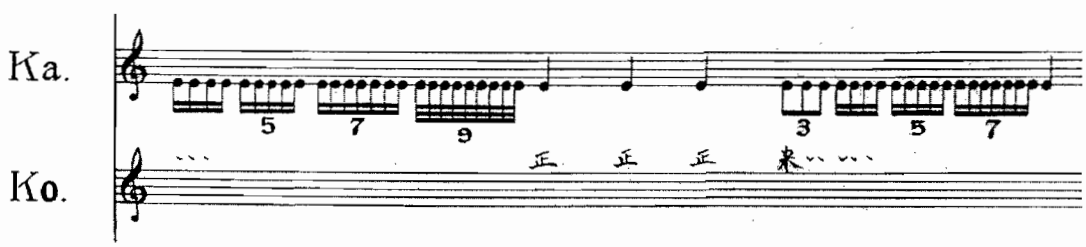

Figure 17: Use of diminution in rhythmic patterns found in Hovhaness's unpublished book of Gagaku pieces. Used by permission of Martin Berkofsky. Hovhaness, "Japanese Gagaku."

K. Imitation of the *Shō*

Hovhaness's use of sustained pitches may be interpreted in two ways: (1) as an adaptation of the Indian drone, and (2) as an imitation of the *shō*. Take, for example, the opening of *Wind Drum*. Hovhaness states that the entire work is based on a raga.[86]

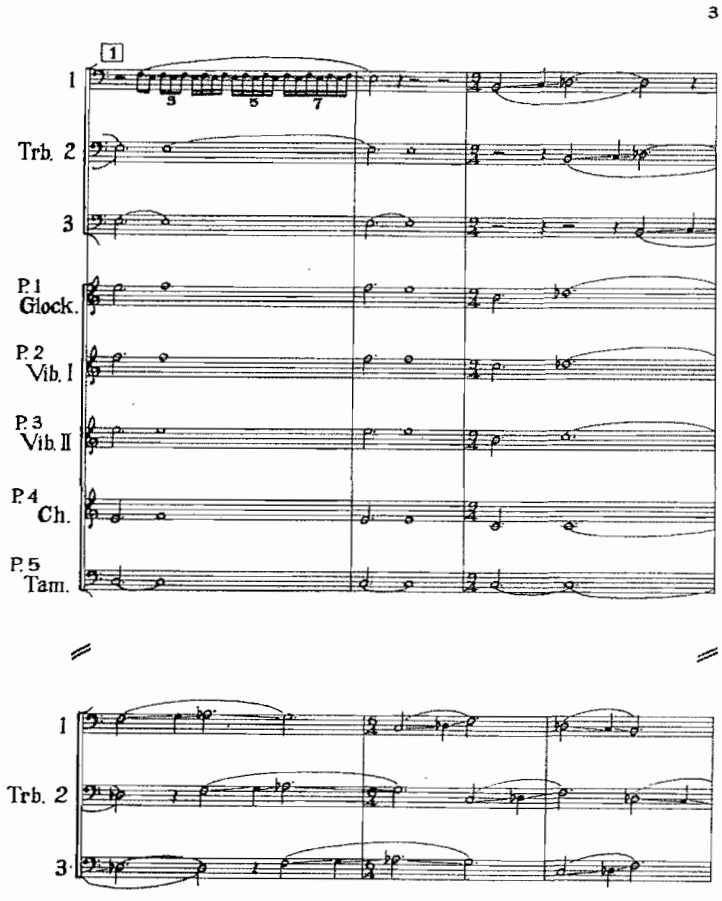

Figure 18: Example of rhythmic diminution in *Lady of Light.* C.F. Peters Corp., 1969.

At the start of the piece the raga is announced. The strings enter voice-by-voice, stating the seven-note scale—A, B, C, D flat, E, F sharp, A. But as much as this work reflects an Indian influence, we must not forget while Hovhaness was composing *Wind Drum* he was also studying Gagaku. Hence, this work also reflects similarities to Gagaku scale

[86] "In India they only use this *Hamsanandi* scale [the raga which the piece is based on is a janya of the 53rd *Melakarta Gamanasrama*, the fundamental collection of Carnatic ragas] to improvise for a very short time. They don't consider it a scale that's good for too long an improvisation, because perhaps it has so much color of its own. However, this was a challenge [for me]." Alan Hovhaness lecture, "Giant Melody in Nature and Art." UW Alan Hovhaness Collection. Hovhaness sometimes combines different ragas simultaneously. His ragas may also ascend one way and descend in another. For expressive purposes, Hovhaness allows a change in tones (generally one) after the raga is established.

structure. The Gagaku mode known as *Oshikicho* consists of nearly the same notes as the *Hasanandi* scale, excluding the D flat—A, B, C, D, E, F sharp, A. In Indian music the drone is typically a single sustained pitch. In *Wind Drum*, however, Hovhaness writes double, triple, and up to six-voice drones. Although the pitch collection of *Wind Drum* is based on a single raga, Hovhaness expands the number of drone-like voices to six, which challenged the traditional tendencies of Indian improvisation. This chordal density is analogous to the number of tones played simultaneously by the *shō*.

Hovhaness's adaptation of this instrument lacks consistent application. Some works present near authentic treatment of the *shō*, while other works simply employ the pitch relations. This harmonic effect is absent from two of the eight stage works, *The Leper King* and *The Burning House*. The reason for this is the instrumentation. The use of a solo melodic instrument, percussion, and baritone choir in both *The Leper King* and *The Burning House* suggests more of a Nohgaku approach than a Gagaku one. Furthermore, *The Travellers*, as mentioned earlier, contains many three-voice canons, but no sustained chords.

The two operas that imitate the sustained chords of the *shō* are *Wind Drum* and *Spirit of the Avalanche*. In *Wind Drum*'s "The Flute of Azura," while the flute has the melodic line (analogous to the *hichiriki*), the strings create a *shō*-like chord, sustaining the E and F sharp below middle C. *Spirit of the Avalanche* begins with a three-note collection of pitches among the glockenspiel, vibraphone, and chimes. The notes C, D, and D flat are held throughout the Overture.[87] As seen in Figure 19, for the opening eight

[87] This is heard not as a tonal sonority but as a shimmering effect.

measures of the second movement, "Chorus," the violas and cellos sustain these same pitches. In measure nine the texture shifts to a six-voice harmony. Here, the violins one and two are added. The cellos drop out. The chord consists of the pitches C, D flat, D, G, A flat, and B flat. This expanded *shō*-like chord is held for only three measures. Hovhaness then releases it, returning to the former three-note collection.

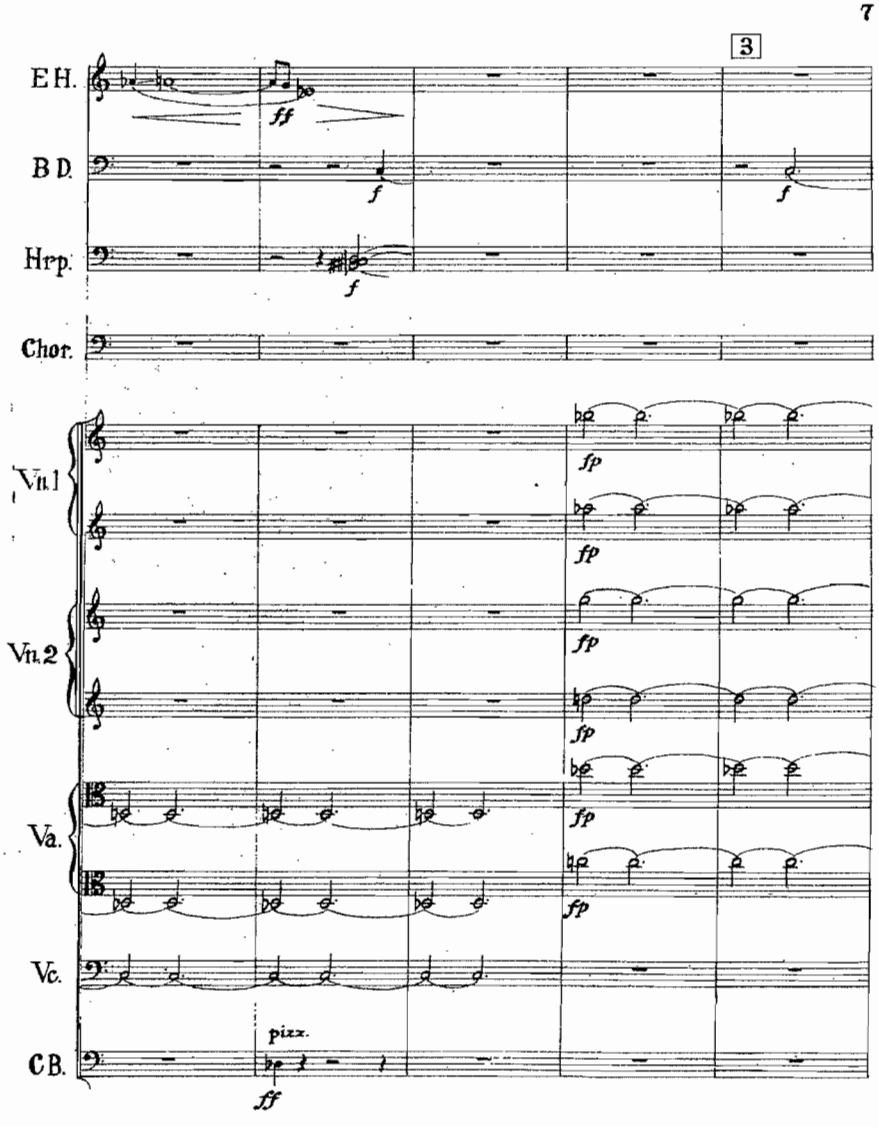

Figure 19: *Shō*-like chords in *Spirit of the Avalanche.* C.F. Peters Corp., 1962.

In contrast to the predominantly chromatic notes in the sustained chords of *Spirit of the Avalanche*, *Pilate* and *Lady of Light* display a harmonic texture lacking in a sustained quality. Also, chromatic pitches are replaced with more consonant sonorities. This change in harmony may be a reflection of a larger shift in Hovhaness's style, a precursor to what Rosner and others have qualified as Hovhaness's "Fifth Period." In short, the harmonic palette shifts among these works, with Hovhaness assigning the strings the duty of establishing the harmonic texture.

L. *Shō* Effects

In addition to the theoretical qualities of the *shō*, Hovhaness was also interested in a Gagaku effect known as *tombo*, or "dragonfly effect."[88] This effect is created when several notes are sustained and nearby notes are treated as neighboring tones, creating a moment of tension and release. To some this alludes to a dragonfly touching the surface of water. An example of Hovhaness's use of this technique is found in *Wind Drum*'s "The Flute of Azura." The first violins play a pizzicato tremolo on the A below middle C and the A and E above. The "dragonfly effect" is applied in the second measure when the higher of the two A notes is moved up to B. In the third measure the B returns to A. As the movement progresses the violin chords continue to shift in this manner, altering intervals to create a brief musical flutter.

M. Choreography and Staging

Hovhaness's correspondence reveals that he often left the choreography and staging to others. Given he was frequently called upon for commissions, Hovhaness may have decided to invest his time in composing new works rather than committing himself to the staging process. He may have felt that providing the music and libretto was enough of a guide for those involved in a work's production. In a January 12, 1966 letter to Royal Stanton, the conductor of the California-based Schola Cantorum (the ensemble that commissioned *The Travellers*), Hovhaness discusses the staging of the opera:

> I like to leave the staging to the imagination of the drama department.... Some effects...might be done by projecting images on the stage through lighting and slides.... I welcome any new suggestions and naturally it should be most conveniently adequate to the theatre or hall. I would like to keep everything very flexible.[89]

One aspect of design Hovhaness preferred to advise was placement of the orchestra and chorus on stage. In comparison to the solo flute and two or three drums on stage in Noh, to position a small-scale orchestra on stage with the performers may be considered a neo-Noh concept. A January 26, 1967 letter from Myron Howard Nadel, director and choreographer of *The Leper King*, to Hovhaness reads, "I will probably use a

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[88] The only available reference to this Gagaku effect was Hovhaness's own discussion. Hence, its use in traditional Gagaku pieces remains uncertain.

[89] UW Alan Hovhaness Collection.

combination of the proscenium and the thrust stage with the orchestra on stage."[90] Also for the premiere of *The Travellers*, Hovhaness supported the idea of placing the chorus on stage: "[I] think a performance on stage with chorus entirely on stage will be splendid and can be worked out in several ways."[91] *The Travellers* and *The Leper King* are the only works in which primary evidence confirms that Hovhaness directed the placement of the orchestra.

Letters and photographs from the premiere of *The Leper King*, housed at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Archives Department, contain the most extensive staging details available. In an August 25, 1967 letter to Hovhaness, Myron Howard Nadel writes of staging ideas:

> Design wise, a feeling of primieval [*sic*], green, pits, stone covered by jungle, enclosed set, cavernous holes in a sculpture set for a snake-like sensation, bits and pieces are suggestions of Khmer costuming and architecture. Movement will probably have some elements of Cambodian dance but again only a suggestion.[92]

Nadel's description suggests the work's staging was more inspired by Cambodian sources than Japanese Noh theatre. Hovhaness did state in a letter to Nadel that Noh theatre had had a great influence on his conception of stage works. But this seems to have been disregarded in terms of costuming and set design for *The Leper King*.

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[90] January 26, 1967 letter from Myron Howard Nadel to Alan Hovhaness. University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Archives Department, Box 4, Folder 7. Whether this was Hovhaness's original conception or not remains unknown.

[91] October 21, 1965 letter from Alan Hovhaness to Royal Stanton, UW Alan Hovhaness Collection.

Hovhaness was willing to sacrifice control of staging in order to have his works performed. In a September 7, 1965 letter to Royal Stanton, Hovhaness states, "This little opera can be performed as a cantata with or without action, possibly with some lighting effects or slight choreographic suggestion."[93] Due to both the accessibility of the composer's music and the fast rate at which he composed, Hovhaness's music has been referred to as *Gebrauchsmusik* ("utility music"). The composer is said to never have turned down a commission, always keeping the performer in mind. This demanding lifestyle would likely have an effect on the amount of time Hovhaness had to invest in staging details. Both Stanton and Nadel, however, mention that the composer was of great help, willing to put in extra time to work out details. For both *The Travellers* and *The Leper King*, Hovhaness attended rehearsals, and he conducted the premiere of the latter.

N. Singing Style

Hovhaness's music utilizes two styles of singing: recitative, or *kotoba*, and aria, or *utai*. The former is generally syllabic, with little movement away from a central pitch with emphasis on narration. In contrast, arias are often melismatic but not virtuosic, often serving as a moment of reflection for the character. For an example of this recitative style consider the prologue to *The Burning House* (see Figure 20). At the start of the work Vahaken announces himself in a recitative-like chant. The pitches used are

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[92] August 25, 1967 letter from Myron Howard Nadel to Alan Hovhaness, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Archives Department, Box 4, Folder 7.

F, which serves as the central tone, and G-flat and G-natural as neighboring tones. The latter two pitches are occasionally approached through a sliding motion, which Hovhaness notates with a diagonal line.

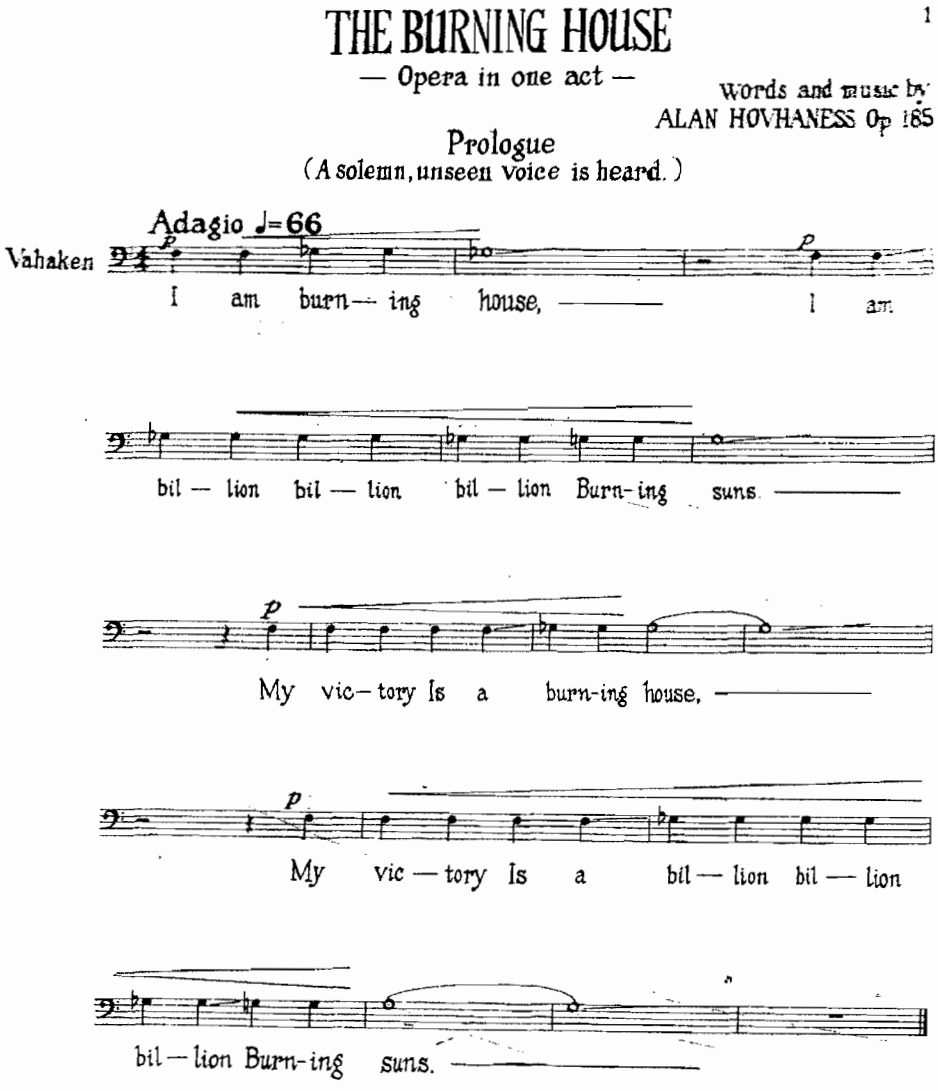

Figure 20: *Kotoba* style singing in *The Burning House.* C.F. Peters Corp., 1962.

[93] UW Alan Hovhaness Collection.

The melodic range of the arias is limited. Chromatic pitches are commonly found. The second and fourth scale degrees are the most commonly altered notes. The singer often slides between pitches. In *Spirit of the Avalanche* the only words the Mad Bird sings in No. 13, "Aria," are the words "Fall" and "Fall on mountain thief." *Lady of Light* is an exception, with the arias geared more toward melodic beauty rather than portraying the essence of the text as in *Spirit of the Avalanche* (see Figure 21). Lyrical melodies, often accompanied by imitative counterpoint and rich chords, provide a stark contrast to the simple, yet potent, tone of Hovhaness's earlier stage works.

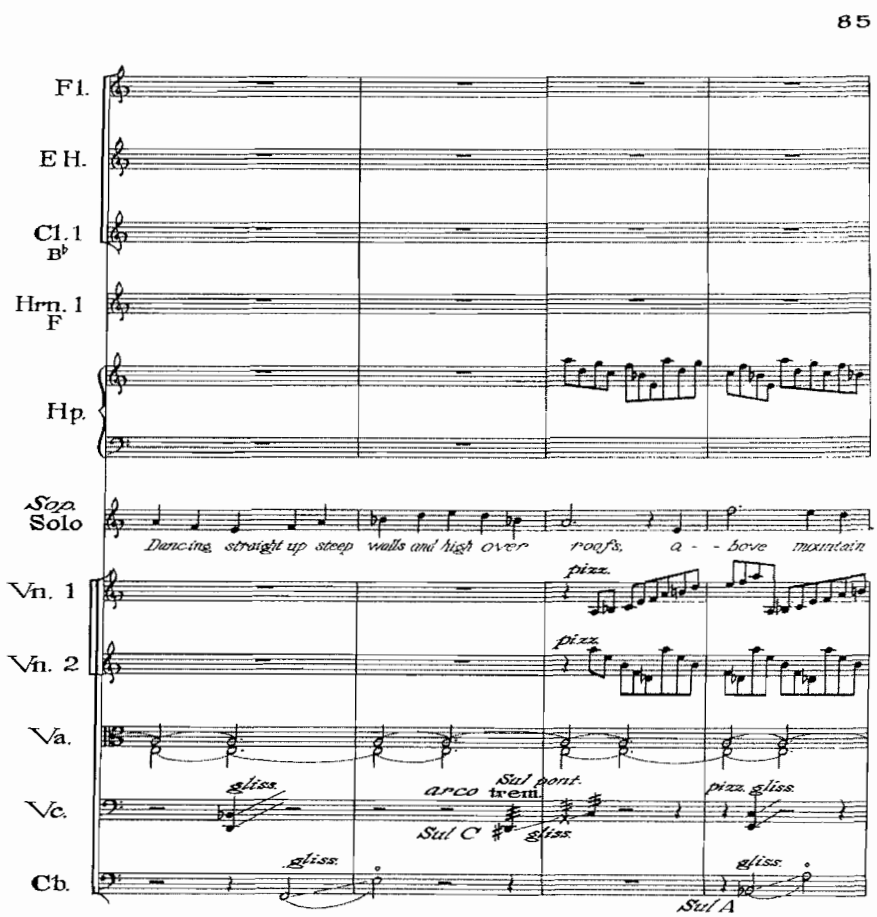

Figure 21: *Utai* style singing in *Lady of Light.* C.F. Peters Corp., 1969.

In two of the eight works, *Pilate* and *The Leper King*, Hovhaness uses an unusual form of notation during solo vocal sections (see Figures 22 and 23). During sections of each work the soloist or chorus sing in what Hovhaness refers to as "a new oriental sprech-stimme"; that is a glissando style of singing by which the voice slides from pitch to pitch.[94]

Due to a lack of commentary on this "oriental sprech-stimme" by the composer, and the manner in which it is notated and sung, it is not far-fetched to suggest this is similar to the *Sprechstimme* defined by Arnold Schoenberg.[95] Hovhaness notates the rise and fall of the text, but, unlike Schoenberg, suggests the pitch by its placement on a single-lined staff, rather than using the usual five lines. The tempo and meter are notated.

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[94] University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Archives Department, Box 4, Folder 5. Choreographer and Director for the premiere of *The Leper King*, Myron Howard Nadel, was displeased with this singing style: "If I had my way, I would have had it orchestrated differently and begged for something more exciting than choral screaming." Personal correspondence with Nadel, September 20, 2008.

[95] "The melody given in notation in the vocal part (with a few specially indicated exceptions) is *not* intended to be sung. The performer has the task of transforming it into a *speech melody* [*Sprechmelodie*] taking the prescribed pitches well into account. He accomplishes this by:

I. adhering to the rhythm as precisely as if he were singing; that is, with no more freedom than he would allow himself if it were a sung melody;

II. being precisely aware of the difference between a *sung tone* and a *spoken tone*: the sung tone maintains the pitch unaltered; the spoken tone does indicate it, but immediately abandons it again by falling or rising. But the performer must take great care not to lapse into a singsong speech pattern. That is absolutely not intended. The goal is certainly not at all a realistic, natural speech. On the contrary, the difference between ordinary speech and speech that collaborates in a musical form must be made plain. But it should not call singing to mind, either." (Arnold Schoenberg, "Composer's Forward," *Pierrot Lunaire*, trans. Stanley Appelbaum (New York: Dover Publications, 1994), 54.)

O. Role of Chorus

The chorus plays a fundamental role in all of Hovhaness's stage works of the 1960s. The chorus comments on the action and on occasion sings the lines of the main characters. In one work, *Pilate*, the Chorus is a participant in the action, acting as the crowd of people calling for Christ's crucifixion. In the scores of five of the eight works—*Spirit of the Avalanche*, *Pilate*, *The Leper King*, *Wind Drum*, and *The Burning House*—the composer notates his preference for an all-male chorus. In one work, *The Leper King*, Hovhaness specifies eight male voices; we recall that the Noh chorus consists of eight to ten males.

As in Noh, Hovhaness has the chorus chant either alone or in alternation with one of the main characters, never in unison. Moreover, the chorus does not speak. The sole differentiation between the chorus of Hovhaness's works and the *ji-utai* of Noh is that in the composer's stage works the chorus takes part in the action; in the *ji-utai* it does not.

P. Masks, Costumes, and Props

Little information is available regarding the stage design of Hovhaness's works. Several photographs are available of dancers in costumes for *The Leper King* (see Figures 24 and 25). The only work for which Hovhaness specifies costumes in the score is *Spirit of the Avalanche*. Silent Wings wears a bird mask, beak, and black wings. In an early draft of the libretto for *The Burning House*, Death is specified to wear a Panama hat and a

Hawaiian shirt. A newspaper review of *Wind Drum* describes the solo dancer as wearing an all-white traditional Korean gown.[96]

The props Hovhaness integrates into his stage works may be interpreted as both functional and symbolic. In *The Burning House*, Death carries a gun. In *The Travellers* there appears a suitcase containing a toy wheel, several dolls, and two wine glasses.

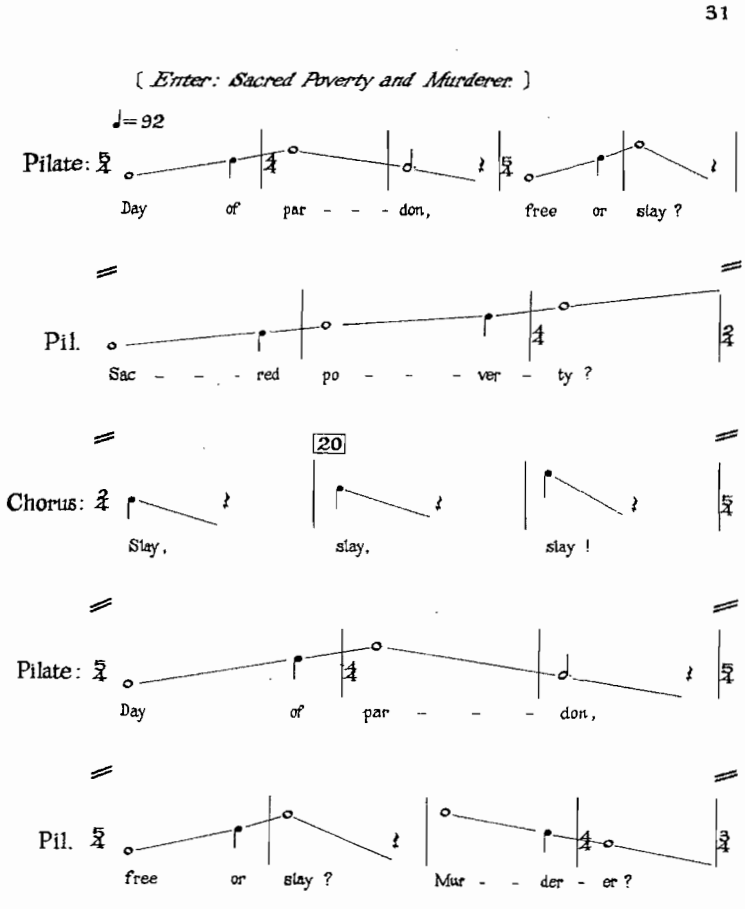

Figure 22: Notation used for vocal section in *Pilate.* C.F. Peters Corp., 1964.

[96] Joann W. Kealinohomoku, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, "A Triumph in Dance," May 30, 1962.

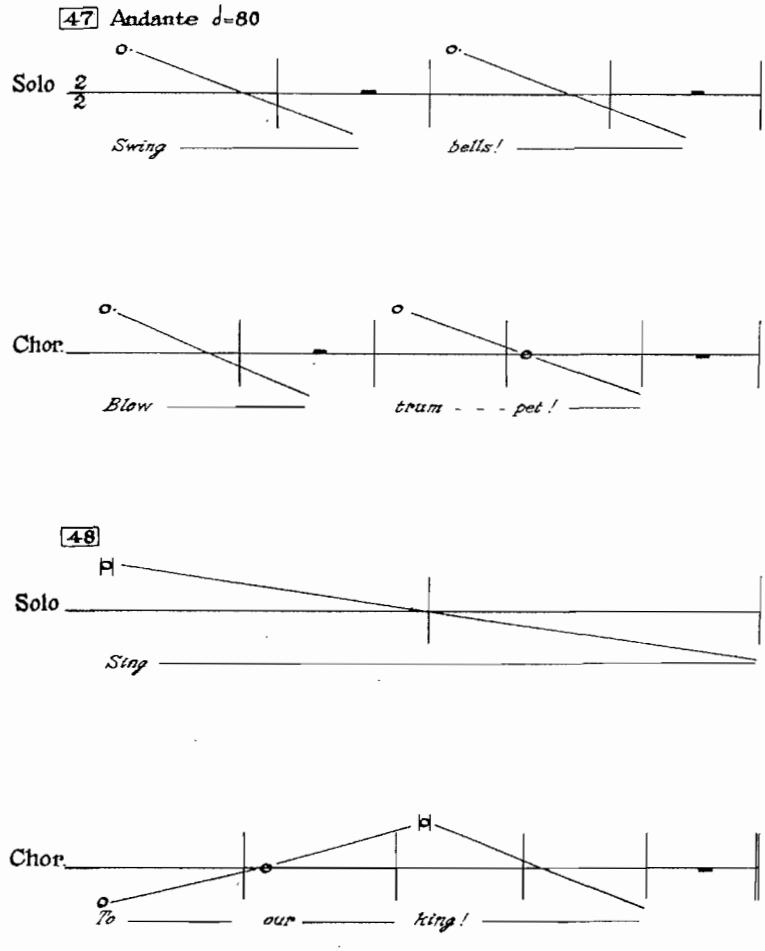

Figure 23: Notation used for vocal section in *The Leper King.* C.F. Peters Corp., 1965.

Q. Concluding Remarks

After his exposure to Gagaku music and Noh drama, Hovhaness molded stylistic features of these Japanese arts to fit his own musical vision. Some of the main features discussed in this chapter have been Hovhaness's attraction to Japanese music-theoretical practices (e.g., modes, importance of melody, static harmony, and stock rhythmic patterns), his imitation of Gagaku instruments with Western instruments, his adherence to

the *jo-ha-kyū* aesthetic, and his adoption of Noh character roles, the *dan* structural concept, and the use of masks. Because the composer removes these Japanese elements from their original context, the traditional tendencies are sacrificed, yet the overall effect remains. With this in mind, it is plausible that Hovhaness did not intended for his audience to see and hear Gagaku and Noh traits, but experience rather a neo-Gagaku and a neo-Noh style.

In our study of this composer, we must address one fundamental question: how did Hovhaness want his stage works to be interpreted? The composer discusses the meaning of his operas in a May 26, 1963 letter to Walter Simmons:

> My operas only ask questions. So far no one has performed my operas.[97] If my operas are performed, the audience will have many questions to answer.... Some New Yorkers and Parisians have attended Zen lectures. Now they will answer all questions. Do you like their answers? Is something solved at last? I don't know.[98]

In other words, Hovhaness wanted to stir his audience. By puzzling them Hovhaness may have intended for his audience to be the ones to determine the intent of his stage works. The philosophical nature of these works supports the notion that it is the role of the audience to make their own judgment of it. With this in mind, the most viable

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[97] When this letter was written, Hovhaness had only written two operas: *Etchmiadzin* and *The Burning House*. *The Burning House* premiered August 23rd the following year at Union College in Gatlinburg, Tennessee.

[98] UW Alan Hovhaness Collection.

interpretation of Hovhaness's statement is that he felt there was no right answer to the meaning of his productions.

The seven stage works I have addressed in this thesis demonstrate a similar aesthetic intent and employ some of the same compositional traits. Yet, each in some way shares a thread to the previous work. Whether one may trace a developmental style is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, Hovhenss' recognition of the East as a musical treasure-trove came perhaps as a response to one of the most trying experiences in his life, the 1942 Tanglewood Music Festival in Lenox, Massachusetts. It is to this subject that I will turn in the next chapter.

Figure 24: Scene from the premiere of *The Leper King*. (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Archives Department)

Figure 25: Leper King (left) pictured with Alter Ego (right). Note the main character is wearing face paint, and the secondary character is wearing a mask. (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Archives Department)

CHAPTER VIII

CRITICS, CONTEPORARY AUDIENCE, AND THE CRISIS

Hovhaness began his studies in the European tradition: he took piano lessons with Adelaide Proctor and Heinrich Gebhard in Boston, and later studied composition with Leo Rich Lewis at Tufts College and with Frederick Converse at the New England Conservatory of Music. Hovhaness became discontented, however, when he realized he was following tradition rather than cultivating his own voice. The composer decided that his musical ambitions, which did not follow American classical-music compositional practices of his day, were worth pursuing:

> I think it came out when I was really very young, about 19 or so. I had a scholarship to the New England Conservatory to study with Frederick Converse. He was a very nice man and he asked me if I would like to get a scholarship to go to Paris and study with Nadia Boulanger. And I said "no." I felt I didn't want to be a part of contemporary music. I didn't want to be a part of this very intellectual approach. A very cold approach I felt.[99]

This departure from the expected norm for a composition student of the European tradition had a dual effect on the composer. On the one hand, Hovhaness was alienated from American art-music composition circles of the day, yet at the same time the

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[99] Peter Westbrook, "Angelic Cycles," *Downbeat* (March, 1982), 28. Throughout his life, Hovhaness respected certain composers of the European tradition, namely Claudio Monteverdi and George Frederick Handel.

accessibility and exotic quality of his music attracted the consumer at large. As a result, Hovhaness was able to make a living by writing music alone. Hovhaness received numerous awards during his career, and his music achieved a firm reputation throughout America. His works have been performed by America's top orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic's premiere of *Lousadzak* (op. 48) *And God Created Great Whales* (op. 229) and Symphony no. 19 "Vishnu" (op. 217, 1956), and the Houston Symphony and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's well-known interpretations of Symphony no. 2 "Mysterious Mountain" (op. 132). The Seattle Symphony, where Hovhaness was composer-in-residence starting in the mid-1960s, has been the leading champion of Hovhaness's music. Despite these successes, even today Hovhaness receives a lack of recognition by academic circles, even today.

A. Tanglewood

A turning point in Hovhaness's career came during the summer of 1942 when the composer burned between 500 and 1,000 pieces of his music. This event is well-documented, but the composer's explanations of what motivated this decision varies. In a 1983 interview with Richard Howard, Hovhaness states the reason was based primarily on Roger Sessions' criticism of his works.[100] However, in other interviews (see, for example, Cole Gagne's 1993 interview with the composer)[101] Hovhaness suggests it was

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[100] Richard Howard, "Hovhaness Interview: Seattle, 1983." Reprinted by Marco Shirodkar at "The Alan Hovhaness Website," www.hovhaness.com (accessed March 3, 2009).

[101] Cole Gagne. "Alan Hovhaness," *Soundpieces 2: Interviews with American Composers* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1993), 121.

his distressing encounter with Aaron Copland and Leonard Bernstein at the 1942 Tanglewood Music Festival that drove his decision.

One of Hovhaness's earliest documentations of the Tanglewood incident is a letter he wrote to William Saroyan written shortly after the festival of 1942:

> This summer has been very difficult for me because of unpleasant dealings with unscrupulous, jealous and insincere composers who have done everything within their power to undermine and destroy my work. Aron Copland [*sic*] [and Leonard] Bernstein have been especially despicable both by creating a scornful propaganda against my style and by creating a disturbance during the playing of my music which ruined the entire impression. Thus I have been forced to do many things this summer and I fear much mail and other things have been lost. This is a terrible letter but I am in the midst of composing several works and am struggling to remedy a summer of failures.[102]

In addition to Hovhaness's own account of the Tanglewood incident, John Cowell, one of the few surviving composers present at the Festival, confirmed Hovhaness's distinct behavior in a 2005 phone interview with ethnomusicologist David Badagnani. Following the interview with Cowell, Badagnani provided the following commentary:

> [John] Cowell didn't really get to know Hovhaness at Tanglewood in 1942, although Hovhaness made quite an impression on him; he perceived Hovhaness as a very different strange person, and the composers at Tanglewood didn't take anything Hovhaness submitted seriously, as his works seemed to them to be made

> up primarily of snippets of Armenian folk songs; Cowell stated that Hovhaness didn't mix the way the others did, although it was a very gregarious and wonderful time, but that instead Hovhaness mainly hung back and off to one side.[103]

Hovhaness continued to express his distaste with the state of Western music well after the Tanglewood experience. In a July 2, 1965 letter to Simmons, Hovhaness shared his disappointment with the current state of Western music. The composer also accuses certain figures of playing a role in its future demise, including John Cage, with whom he once shared a friendship. Due to the importance of this letter I will provide it in full:

> Your letter is good, good that you think for yourself and find an inner resistance to the pedantic propaganda of the status opinion of this moment in history. The next moment will overthrow this moment as always in the history of the peculiar animal mass opinion of characteristic of the weakest of all animals, man. All weak men think alike, go in mass cycles, feel weak and inferior to the past mass opinions, so cannot create a new opinion without destroying the old. The weak sons kill the fathers only to be killed by their sons. Your teacher parrots the fashionable European opinion of 15 years ago which is now already ridiculed and overthrown in Europe by a new sloppy opinion which soon will give way to still another worse opinion. So it continues until a revolution kills almost everybody

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[102] UW Hovhaness Collection.

[103] John Cowell, phone interview with David Badagnani June 10, 2005. UW Hovhaness Collection.

and the whole cycle again starts at the beginning. In religion, Beel or Beelzebub was God, then Christ was God, and Beelzebub became the Devil, now Christ has become the Devil and Lenin is God, so you should think for yourself and let idiots march in step with other idiots. Those educational courses are only propaganda to train mass thinking to help sell a special kind of constipated music. But already the pills for music diarrhea are being prepared by the new idiots, Cage, Stockhausen and company. They always go in company. It should only amuse you to see one idiot laughing at another. There are better jokes for intelligent people but perhaps the over-abundance of wealth and ease has destroyed the ability to think, destroyed the intelligence of part of the world, so that their humor has deteriorated. I am happy to see that you swallow with difficulty. The dung of the masses is not necessary or good for the digestion. However[,] if you are wise you will keep your opinions to yourself and save your time. Music is business, and big business has its slogans, so let them advertise while you listen with silent skepticism and hold all things in suspicion. All best wishes[.]

Sincerely,

Alan Hovhaness[104]

It is unknown to what extent Hovhaness publicly spoke of his dissatisfaction with modern music and culture. Yet, it is plausible that his reaction against many Western practices played a role in the lack of recognition his music has received among academic circles. Hence, by turning to the East for enrichment, and abandoning the path of his

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[104] UW Alan Hovhaness Collection.

contemporaries, Hovhaness satisfied his personal ambitions, but sacrificed his place in the canon of Western music.

B. Reception of Hovhaness's Music

I argue it is the West's lack of recognition of this Eastern aesthetic that is likely a key factor in Hovhaness's lack of recognition. For the West, the twentieth century is seen as an era of technological, social, and ideological innovation. These developments are a reflection of culture's interest in progress. Many composers followed suit, creating music with a sense of complexity and intellectuality similar to modernity itself. Furthermore, the East, Japan particularly, has been viewed as a challenge to America, a country backed by its investment in manifest destiny. The tension of politics is a study unto itself, but it is worth recognizing as a possible factor in the West's subordination of the East.

Given Hovhaness's use of sustained harmony, transparent textures, and rhapsodic melodies in place of the historically essential ingredients of Western music—these include harmonic progressions, motivic development, and frequent moments of tension and release—it is no surprise the composer's music has been disregarded by contemporary compositional camps. Author and former Head of Music at Napier College, Edinburgh, Neil Butterwoth provides a typical example of this evaluation of Hovhaness's music based on European-centric aesthetic values:

> The unusual quality of the music of Hovhaness is difficult to define; at times the effect is one of startling originality, with exotic textures, but other works are

> restricted in variety of melodic and harmonic invention, so the result can seem monotonous.... Detractors draw attention to the four basic recurring ingredients of Hovhaness's music: chorales on divisi strings or brass, relentlessly worked out mechanical fugues, modal solo incantation against slow moving harmonies and a walking bass, and what the composer himself called 'spiritual murmurs': uncoordinated repetitions of short figures, a forerunner of aleotoric devices. These mannerisms risk becoming tiresome clichés from one piece to another.[105]

Butterworth recognizes Hovhaness's originality, but states the composer's repeated use weakens the quality of his music. In general, mainstream critics and composers viewed the adaptation of Eastern elements as merely experimental and reflective of a composer's lack of desire to pursue the mastery of Western styles.

In contrast, composers interested in the East offered a different reception of Hovhaness. For example, Colin McPhee wrote the following in his recommendation letter for Hovhaness's 1949 Guggenheim application: "His use of classical Near Eastern musical idioms and scale systems are legitimate and structural, and I feel he is making a significant contribution to music in melody, form and interesting rhythm. I have admired the intelligent way he is evolving his own personal style and developing his own scale systems."[106] In order to fully understand Hovhaness's stage works of the 1960s, and possibly his entire oeuvre, one must consider the East as much, if not more, than the West.

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[105] UW Alan Hovhaness Collection.

[106] UW Alan Hovhaness Collection.

Hovhaness's artistic merit continues to be questioned by academics. As noted above, numerous music history texts, even those focused on American music such as Richard Crawford's *The American Musical Landscape* and H. Wiley Hitchcock's *Music in the United States: A Historical Introduction*, make no mention of Hovhaness. This demonstrates that bias still exists against composers that do not fit a so-called 'Western standard.'[107] At times composers such as Colin McPhee and Dane Rudhyar lost faith in dominant twentieth-century practices; McPhee burned all but two of his works composed before the age of twenty-five. Both composers turned to alternative careers for financial stability. Hovhaness was one of the few twentieth-century composers able to make a career solely from writing music. The accessibility of his music, and its lyricism and tonal richness attracted a solid stream of commissions throughout his life. Critics and academics of the mid-twentieth century are often skeptical of music that is overtly accessible. Because of the textural differences between Hovhaness's music and that of the dominant twentieth-century practice, critics and academics have marred the importance of the influence of Eastern music on Hovhaness's compositional style. They have misinterpreted his use of Eastern traits as a lack of desire to pursue the mastery of a worthwhile (i.e., Western) style. In essence, these opinions have created a gap between Hovhaness's public success and his compositional competency.

C. Concluding Remarks

> I hope that as a result of my efforts there will be an increased knowledge and appreciation of forgotten but universal musical practices which will enlarge the scope of all musicians and bring deeper understanding to appreciators of music.
>
> - Excerpt from Hovhaness's 1949 Guggenheim Application[108]

This study, I hope, has raised awareness of the degree to which Hovhaness integrated elements from Japanese Gagaku music and Noh drama into his 1960s stage works. The Eastern tendencies in Hovhaness's works include the dramatic structure of *jo-ha-kyū*, the imitation of Japanese instruments with Western instruments, Noh staging techniques, such as the placement of instrumentalists and chorus on stage and the use of masks, and Gagaku and Noh theoretical practices (e.g., canon, use of non-harmonic tones, and sliding pitches).

While many Western composers were just beginning to utilize qualities unique to the East—tuning, instrumentation, and rhythmic and melodic patterns to name several—for the sake of enriching their own compositions, Hovhaness chose to define his compositional style as much by Eastern qualities as by those of the West. For this reason, Hovhaness was at the forefront of Western composers tapping into this Eastern vein for inspiration. His motivation was not to imitate Eastern practices, but as a means to free himself from a solely Western perspective on music. One aspect Hovhaness sought to

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[107] Peter J. Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 8th ed. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2009).

[108] UW Alan Hovhaness Collection.

emulate in his music was the emotions of the human spirit. When proclaiming his views Hovhaness's language resonates with an Eastern undertone:

> I try to imitate...the feelings of the soul rather than the feelings of industry[,] which is a thing of the moment.... This is what is causing sickness in the mind, in the spirit; we are advanced in science but are not scientific in regard to the effects of science. Because it is convenient, we consider it marvelous, very clever, yet we are destroying ourselves. I think the arts must show something different, a new direction toward more cosmic consciousness and away from the sciences. I want to belong to all centuries, to all time. I do not believe that there is such a thing as time in cosmos; there are only cycles which repeat. The only thing an artist can do is to rise above his time and be of the future.[109]

In this regard, Hovhaness's aesthetic approach is similar to Dane Rudhyar's in that it exhibits a search for something the West may once have had but lost, yet still exists in the East. Hovhaness believed music written for all people transcended not only cultural boundaries but also temporal limits. His means towards writing music to "touch" all of humanity was to have a continuous exposure to music of other cultures. Hence, looking to ancient Gagaku and Noh traditions was a stage of Hovhaness's life-long ambition to be free from what he saw as a deteriorating Western culture.

The 1960s stage works, and those from other periods—*Echmiadzin* (op. 62, 1945), *Afton Water* (1951), *Blue Flame* (op. 172, 1959), *Pericles* (op. 283, 1975),

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[109] Sahan Arzruni, "Alan Hovhaness: The Wellspring of His Music," *Journal of Armenian Studies* 3, no. 1 and 2 (1986–87), 159–60.

The Tale of the Sun Goddess Going into the Stone House (op. 323, 1978; revised 1990), and *The Frog Man* (1987)—are not at the core of Hovhaness's output; the composer's sixty-four symphonies carry this honor. (*Symphony No. 2* "Mysterious Mountain" (op. 132, 1955) is the composer's most well-known and most frequently recorded work.) His stage works, however, hold a prominent place among the composer's output during the 1960s. Though the majority of his stage works have been forgotten since their premiere performances, excerpts from some of these stage productions are in popular recordings: *Prayer for Saint Gregory* (op. 62b, 1946) is an intermezzo from his opera *Echmiadzin*; *Mountains and Rivers Without End* (op. 225, 1968) contains multiple quotations from *The Leper King*; and *Symphony No. 19* "Vishnu" (op. 217, 1956) recycles several melodic sections from *The Travellers*.

We must not forget that Hovhaness's stage works were not intended to satisfy the taste of a contemporary audience. It was precisely this audience that Hovhaness sought to avoid. The composer speaks of this distinction in an April 15, 1966 letter to Adaskin: "Would you like to hear something of this special kind of opera conception? Not at all for the "Met" or for the usual opera situation."[110] Hovhaness's stage works raise an interesting question: Should music be written only with the masses in mind, or can there be value from a study of a composer who sought to inspire and freshen his stage work by borrowing and blending Western and Eastern musical cultures? I contend that even if a composer's music is not written for a given audience we should search for alternative intent, thereby understanding its place in the canon of music history.

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[110] UW Alan Hovhaness Collection.

I argue that if the critical listener has a general understanding of Japanese music, a new level of interpreting Hovhaness's 1960s stage works can be realized. Hovhaness once said, "part of my music is easy to listen to, in a certain respect. One must penetrate beneath the surface of a certain kind of beauty—one must listen to it with a certain concentration and listen to it many times before it reveals all that you have to say. I wish to create something for the unconscious mind, not for the conscious mind."[111] Like Gagaku, Hovhaness's music of the 1960s is to some extent transparent. By listening to a Gagaku piece or watching a Noh play before or after hearing a 1960s Hovhaness piece, one quickly finds a shared language between Hovhaness and these Japanese arts.

Through an investigation of the fundamental role Gagaku music and Noh theatre play in Hovhaness's stage works of the 1960s, it is my intent that other works by this composer will be approached and studied not only by using pre-established Western models, but also by acknowledging the richness and depth these Eastern influences add to his works. Hence, consideration of Hovhaness's music according to Eastern tendencies in the future may reveal that his music is not as disparate from the styles of other Eastern-influenced twentieth-century composers as previously thought.

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[111] Alan Hovhaness, CBC Interview, Vancouver B.C., October, 1968. UW Alan Hovhaness Collection.

APPENDIX A

OPERA PLOTS AND RECEPTION HISTORY

Documentation reveals that only two of the seven stage works were performed more than once, *The Leper King* and *Wind Drum*. *The Leper King* premiered May 14, 1968, and was performed again on May 21 at the same venue. *Wind Drum* premiered on May 22, 1962 at the University of Hawaii. Modern dancer Yuriko Kikuchi performed the work August 14, 1965, at the 8th annual American Dance Festival at Connecticut College, in New London, Connecticut.

A. *The Burning House* (1962)

The Burning House was commissioned by BMI. The work is dedicated to Carl Haverlin, a pioneer in radio broadcasting. It premiered August 23, 1964 at Union College in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. In a 1985 interview with Bruce McDuffie, Hovhaness speaks of how the libretto for *The Burning House* took shape: "It was all dreamed up, so to speak. I got the libretto from dreams I had, and I didn't get the interpretation until I was in Japan, when they told me what 'the burning house' means. 'The burning house' is life, or the body. And actually it works out that way."[112]

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[112] UW Alan Hovhaness Collection.

The opera tells the story of Vahaken, the ancient Armenian god of courage.[113] Vahaken confronts Death and passes a test of courage. Vahaken then fights Demon. The work ends with the transformation of Vahaken into a "burning house," a burning sun in the universe.

B. *Wind Drum* (1962)

In February 1962, the East-West Center in Hawaii commissioned *Wind Drum*. The work received its world premiere at the University of Hawaii Music Festival on May 22, 1962. Hovhaness wrote the music with dancer, Halla Pai Huhm, in mind. Halla Huhm performed the solo role at the premiere. Yuriko Kikuchi, a dancer associated with Martha Graham Dance Company, gave the work its New York premiere soon after (possibly February 3, 1966).

Wind Drum is essentially a series of alternating movements of dance and recited poetry. The dance is meant to be an interpretation of the religious concept of creation out of nothingness and to nothingness returning. A small chorus sings brief poems between dance segments.

C. *Spirit of the Avalanche* (1962)

Spirit of the Avalanche premiered in Tokyo February 15, 1963. This philosophical opera tells the story of Mountain Climber's attempt to reach the top of a

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[113] Vahaken has often been compared with the Greek Hercules. Vahaken is alternatively spelled as "Vahagn."

mountain. Reaching the summit may be interpreted as attaining enlightenment, or becoming one with the universe. (Mountain Climber at one point sings about "endless life.") In striving for this goal, Mountain Climber is shunned by Priest. Ambitious, Mountain Climber continues to pursue. Priest sends Mad Bird, who represents "the spirit of the mountain," to attack Mountain Climber. Mad Bird takes the form of an avalanche, wiping out Mountain Climber. The world returns to unity.

D. *Pilate* (1963)

Pilate is loosely based on the Biblical story of Pontius Pilate and the trial of Jesus. The work opens with Pilate asking what truth is. The Roman governor is tested by answering the request of the people of Judaea (represented by the chorus) in the trial of Jesus (Sacred Poverty) and to Barabbas (Murderer). Pilate is torn between the decision of the crowd and his own conscience. He climbs up Mt. Pilatus to free himself from his inner turmoil. He jumps off a cliff, committing suicide. Hovhaness states in an undated letter to his ex-wife and lifelong friend Serafina Ferrante that the mountain Pilate jumps off in the opera is Pilatus Mountain. The mountain is located near Lucerne, Switzerland, where Hovhaness resided during part of the 1960s. The work was premiered at Pepperdine College in Los Angeles, California, on June 26, 1966.

E. *The Travellers* (1965)

The Travellers tells the story of a space ship traveling in a distant galaxy. Three couples symbolize old age, middle age, and youth. The galaxy is so vast that the couples

represent generations living and dying before the ship reaches their destination. Hovhaness describes the work as "a little cosmic dance of the cycle of life and death."

The Schola Cantorum premiered the work April 16, 1966, at Foothills College in Palo Alto, California. The concert was under the direction of Royal Stanton. The work received perhaps the most negative reviews of Hovhaness's performed stage works. Paul Emerson of *Palo Alto Times* referred to the opera as "a dismal disappointment." Royal Stanton later remarked that "[Hovhaness] really foisted off on us a turkey—the "opera" "THE TRAVELLERS", which had almost no choral stuff in it, and was a disjointed bit of nothing."[114]

F. *The Leper King* (1965)

In the program notes for the work's premiere Myron Howard Nadel writes the following synopsis of *The Leper King*:

> The Legend of the Leprous King grew out of the 12th century in Cambodia at the height of the Khmer Empire when the buildings were glorious; and strong and warlike people gave allegiance to the Indian god, Siva.
>
> The monarch was all-powerful and tyrannical in his desires. His four wives convinced him to travel outside his kingdom, incognito, in order to escape the boredom of his existence; many sub-legends grew out of these travels.
>
> In his absence, two generals warred constantly, creating a state of anarchy. After several years the king returned, seeking to re-establish his greatness. Still

[114] Commentary by Royal Stanton. UW Alan Hovhaness Collection.

incognito, he revealed his military genius to one of the generals and was immediately given command of a wing of the army. After defeating the other general, the king regrouped and defeated troops and proceeded to conquer the first general's forces. His miraculous feat accomplished, he returned as a hero to his kingdom (possibly Angkor Wat).

As he rode in a glorious procession to reassume his throne, the King was attacked by an old hag seeking revenge for her daughter whom the king had violated. The hag stabbed the king's horse, threw herself onto the fallen rider and could be torn loose only after she had infected him with her hideous disease.

Was this a tragedy, or a just end for a tyrant? It hardly matters when the temple of Angkor Wat is crumbling and jungle-covered and the trials and emotions of the past are forgotten. Time obliterates all affliction.[115]

The Leper King premiered at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee May 14, 1968. The concert was sold out and was repeated May 21. Hovhaness attended several rehearsals, and conducted the premiere performance. The cast included David Murray (Leper King), Jeff Duncan (Alter Ego), John Wilson (Old Hag), and dancers Deborah Jowitt, Margaret Cicierska, Lenore Latimer, Kathy Posin, William Dunas, John Wilson, and Jeff Duncan.

From correspondence with Donald Keene, University Professor Emeritus and Shincho Professor Emeritus of Japanese Literature at Columbia University, I was

[115] University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Archives Department, Box 4, Folder 23.

informed of the details surrounding Japanese playwright Yukio Mishima's use of music from *The Leper King* for his play *Raio No Terasu* (The Terrance of the Leper King).

> When I learned that Mishima's play RAIO NO TERASU was to be produced I suggested that Alan Hovhaness should be asked to compose music for the play. This idea was enthusiastically accepted, but it turned out that the company had very little money available for commissioning a work of music. It is my recollection that some sort of agreement was eventually reached and that Hovhaness's music was used...[116]

G. *Lady of Light* (1969)

Lady of Light premiered at the University of Montana, Missoula, in 1974. Hovhaness wrote the following for the Crystal Record recording (CD 806, vol 6),

> I composed the music in Grand Opera style. It was my protest against war. The two outside pieces, numbers 1 and 18, are like two luminous pillars representing Nirvana or that which is beyond earthly existence. Each pillar is in the same three[-]part form—aria, choral fugue, aria. Between the two pillars hangs the dark tale of the dance of love and love's martyrdom.

The libretto for *Lady of Light* was influenced by the famous Swiss legend, "The Pied Piper of Hamlin." Different from the legend's revengeful rat-catcher, Lady of Light is a prophet-like figure. The townsfolk support her in vision. The War Priest is fearful of her power, burns her alive, and Lady of Light lives on in heaven.

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[116] Personal correspondence with Donald Keene (January 18, 2009).

APPENDIX B

LIBRETTI

A. *The Burning House* (1962)

Prologue
Vahaken: I am a burning house. I am billion burning suns. My victory is a billion burning suns.

Overture
(no text)

Scene 1
Chorus: Spiral web. Web of stars. Threads of lost stars. Threads of unborn stars. Threads of space. Threads beyond space. Threads of time. Threads beyond time. Vahaken touches threads.
Vahaken: I touch threads of fire.
Chorus: Oceans boil.
Vahaken: Mountains burn.
Chorus: From sea of fire, a reed.
Vahaken: From hollow reed I rise.
Chorus: My eyes like suns.

Scene 2
Vahaken: I touch thread of death.
Death: Give me your threads! I am Death!
Vahaken: I too am Death!
Death: I have a gun!
Vahaken: I too have a gun!
Death: Don't play games; hurry!
Vahaken: No!
Death: Do you want to die in the street?
Vahaken: Now is as good a time as any!
Death: You are brave; shake hands! I tested you; shake hands! I still have a gun!

Scene 3
Vahaken: I touch threads of life.
Chorus (senza misura for 25 to 30 seconds): Slay

Vahaken: Life, I have seen you!
Weary is birth!
Life, you shall not build this house again!
Life, you reach demolition!
("Vahaken fights demon. Battle is performed with appropriate dance movements, and without touching." "Exit demon, mortally wounded, with staggering movement.")
Vahaken: Shattered is the spine of life!
Broken are the bones of life!
Chorus: Vahaken is a mighty chenar [*sic*] tree!
Gnarled and strong he stands,
in sun and storm!
His leaves shelter the weary world!

Scene 4
Vahaken: I touch thread of Dust.
Death: thread turned to Dust.
Chorus: thread turned to Dust.
Death: Do you remember the last silence?
Vahaken: I remember silence before universe.
Chorus: Universe is my old song. I am silence before my song began,
I am silence to which my song returns.
Death: I deny you!
Vahaken: Many time you will deny,
many times you will prove I do not exist,
but I alone exist.
Death: I lock the door and leave you alone.
Vahaken: I am alone in universe,
Out of unutterable loneliness I create universe.
Death: What is universe?
Vahaken: My old song.
Chorus: My old song.
Vahaken: End of road stands burning house,
House with black beams,
House with charred ridge pole.
Chorus: Burning house.
Vahaken: I am born of fire, I am fire, I return to fire
Chorus: Burning house.
Vahaken, Death, Chorus (in canon): Burning house.

Burning House music
(no text)

Scene V
Vahaken: I wander,
billion burning suns.
Chorus: Burning suns.

B. *Wind Drum* (1962)

Overture
(no music)

Stone Water
Chorus: Stone, water, singing grass, singing tree, singing mountain, praise ever compassionate one.

Dance of Ocean Mist
(no text)

Island of Mist
Chorus: Island mist awake from ocean of endless slumber.

Dance of Waving Branches
(no text)

Snow Mountain
Chorus: Snow mountain, dance on green hills.

Dance of New Leaves
(no text)

Three Hills
Chorus: Three hills dance on forest. Winds sway branches of singing trees.

Dance of Singing Trees
(no text)

Moan
Chorus: Moan, wind drum! Crash, thunder drum! How, death drum!
Roar, black-hared mountain storm! Roar!

Dance of Black-Haired Mountain Storm
(no text)

Time, Turn Back!
Chorus: Time, turn back! Whirl wind of whirling star oceans unwhirl! Flute of Azura fill heaven with celestial sound! Death, become life!

The Flute of Azura
(no text)

Sun Melt
Chorus: Sun melt, dissolve black-haired mountain storm, Life drum sing, Stone drum ring!

Dance of Spring Winds
(no text)

Tree Singing
Chorus: Trees singing of branches sway winds, Forest dance on hills, hills green, dance on mountain snow.

Dance of Steep Hills
(no text)

Approach, O Spirit
Chorus: Approach, O Spirit of ancient ocean. Fall into endless ocean slumber o mist island.

Dance of Ocean Slumber
(no text)

One, Compassionate–ever
Chorus: One, Compassionate–ever, praise, Mountain singing , tree singing, Grass singing, water, Stone.

Lullaby of Ocean Night
(no text)

C. *Spirit of the Avalanche* (1962)

Overture
(no text)

II. Chorus
Chorus: On top of a mountain hangs a bell.
One swing of the bell creates the universe,
One swing of the bell dissolves the universe.

Who swings the bell?

III. Aria

Mountain Climber: Mountains without help me.
Mountains within are my strength.
The landscape of the stars is within me.
Priest: Mountain thief! To become immortal!
Chorus: Mountain thief!
Mountain Climber: I seek the top of mountain spire.
I clutch the branch of the tree of rebirth.
Broken is branch.
I fall.

IV. Aria

Priest: In ancient days a mountain thief fell here.
This stone is his grave.
Mountain Climber: I lost my way.
Priest: Stay on the road!
Chorus: Death stone!
Mountain Climber: From hanging cliff.
Priest: Stay on the road!
Chorus: Death stone!
Mountain Climber: I fell.
Priest: Stay on the road!
Chorus: Death stone!

V. Aria

Mountain Climber: I climb the wall of rock
Chorus: Forbidden rock!
Priest: Find the door!
Mountain Climber: Where is the door?
Priest: I am the door! I shut the door! Mad bird, smite the thief on the rock!
Mad Bird: Death
Chorus: Hangs from rocks.
Mad Bird: Death.
Chorus: Throws rocks.
Mad Bird: Death
Chorus: Threw this rock.
Priest: Death threw this grave.
Mountain Climber: I pass the grave.
Chorus: Pass quickly!
Mountain climber: I pass the wall.
Chorus: Pass quickly!
Mountain Climber: I pass the bird.

Chorus: Pass quickly!
Priest: Mad bird, Croak and whirl! Croak and whirl! Whirl!

VI. Aria
Mad Bird: Wonderful to be dead! Ah, wonderful to be dead!
Mountain Climber: Higher than bird I fly!
Mad Bird: Fall
Mountain Climber: Higher than death I fly!
Mad Bird: Fall
Mountain Climber: Over mountain spire I fly!
Mad Bird: Fall

VII. Dance of Mad Bird
Priest: Halt
Chorus: Halt
Priest: Slam the stone bell!
Chorus: Stone bell
Priest: Avalanche bell!
Chorus: Avalanche bell!
Priest: Death bell!
Chorus: Death bell!
Priest: Roar, stones!
Chorus: Roar, stones!
Priest: Fall, stones!
Chorus: Fall, stones!
Priest: Fall, mountains!
Chorus: Fall, mountains!

VIII. Aria
Mad Bird: Fall on mountain thief!

IX. Aria
Mountain Climber: Rise mountain of endless life!

X. Avalanche Music
(No text)

XI. Bass Solo and Chorus
Priest: Return to the stone of oneness.
Chorus: Ring bell of oneness.

D. *Pilate* (1963)

Overture
(no text)

Scene 1
Pilate: What is truth?
Chorus: Billions of galaxies.
Within each galaxy, billions of burning suns.
Around each sun orbit worlds.
Within each world rise mountains.
On mountains stand Pilates who ask:
Pilate: What is truth?
Chorus: From mountains, Pilates throw themselves into lands of death.
Even from lands of death come worlds.
Pilate: What is truth?
Scene II
Chorus: Moon dawn.
Moon strikes mountain.
Moon strikes water.
Moan mountain bells.
Moan Water bells.
Moan Moon bells.
Pilate: What is truth?

Dance of Silent Wings
Silent Wings (following dance): I am Silent Wings.
Glide.
I am spirit of the mountain.
Floating wings.
Glide.
Pilate: On the beam of your voice I am stretched on mountain, on pine tree, on azure green water.
My torture sounds forever more.
Silent Wings: I am sound of mountain, sound O mountain.
Pilate: On the beam of dead worlds I stand crucified.
Chorus: Dawn strikes mountain.
Sob, mountain.
Sob, bell.
Sob, Pilate.
(Enter Scared Poverty and Murderer.)
Pilate: Day of pardon, free or slay?
Sacred poverty?
Chorus: Slay!

Pilate: Day of pardon, free or slay?
Murderer?
Chorus: Free!
Pilate: Sacred poverty?
Chorus: Slay!
Pilate: I wash my hands!
Chorus: Pilate ruled by Rome.
Rome ruled by mob.
Mob ruled by murder!
(Exeunt: Sacred Poverty and Murder.)

Scene III
Chorus: Sunset fire, crack mountain;
Sunset fame, gash mountain.
Toll sunset bell.
Toll sunset of a soul/
Better never born than born Pilate.
Silent Wings: Pilate, no more proud Roman?
Chorus: What is truth?
Pilate?
Silent Wings: Truth not found in life-land.
Do you seek in death-land?
Chorus: Pilate?
Pilate: I stand on mountain, torn on mountain.
Fall from rock spire.
Death.
Chorus: Death (*senza misura*, repeat possibly 30 seconds)…
Come to me, O nothingness,
Spaceless, stillness, emptiness.
Hear, O Pilate.
Come to me, O birthlessness.
No life, no death, no separateness.
Hear, lost Pilate.
Come to me, O oneness.

E. *The Travellers* (1965)

Prelude – Sounds of Distant Stars
(no text)

Rehearsal Three
Man: Excuse.
Old Man: Yes, we're leaving.
Old Woman: Open the window.

Old Man: Terrible!
Out there, endless nothingness.
Old Woman: I'm scared!
Old Man: Fall into nothingness.
Old Man: Fall!

Rehearsal Six (Chorus of Endless Star Galaxies)
Chorus: Ah

Rehearsal Seven
Woman: Shut the window.
Man: Now breakfast;
soon the wedding feast.
Woman: Give me the ferris wheels.
Man: Such bright wheels!
Woman: How the toys sparkle!
Man: How they turn and turn!
Woman: Give me the dolls.
Man: What a bunch of new faces!
Woman: Give me the wine glasses.
Man: How the wine sparkles.
Woman: For the wedding ceremony.
Man: To happiness.
Woman: To a prosperous marriage.
Man: Many sons.
Man and Woman: Drink
Rehearsal Ten
(Man and Woman drink)

Rehearsal Thirteen
Woman, Man: Ring around the merry wheel,
Let us pledge the festive meal,
Tip the glass with song and laughter;
Endless night is coming after.

Chorus: Ring around…(enter Woman and Man with Chorus)…the merry wheel,
Like a moth in summer feel.
Joy in light and joy in flight,
Sting before the endless night
Ring around the merry wheel,
Let us pledge the festive meal,
Tip the glass with song and laughter,
Endless night is coming after.

Rehearsal Sixteen
(Man and Woman Dance)

Rehearsal Twenty
Woman: What's the time?
Man: It's getting late.
Woman: It's getting dark.
Man: Why so tired?
Woman: Put away the toys.
Man: Is this old age?
Woman: I hear knocking
Man: Yes, we're going.
Woman: Open the window.
Man: Terrible!
Out there, endless nothingness.
Fall into nothingness.
Fall!
Woman: Fall!
Man: Fall!
Rehearsal Twenty-seven
(Exeunt Man and Woman who jump out of window.
They disappear into nothingness.)
Chorus: Ah

Rehearsal Twenty-nine
Young Woman: Shut the window.
Young Man: Breakfast;
soon the wedding feast.

Postlude – Sounds of Distant Stars
(No text)

F. *The Leper King* (1965)

Overture
(no text)

Interlude I
Leper King: Here I am dead,
Chorus: There am I dead also.
Leper King: Blood stains this stone,
Chorus: Blood stains that stone also.
Leper King: Torn between two blood stained stones,
Chorus: Two stones stained blood also.

Leper King: In terrible clouds
I descend
to judge this world.
Chorus: In terrible clouds
I descend
to judge that world also.
Leper King: Blood crowns this stone,
Chorus: Blood crowns that stone also.
Leper King: Stone becomes king,
Chorus: King becomes stone also.
Leper King: Cursed be king and stone,
Chorus: Cursed be stone and king also.

Interlude II
Leper King: Curse
Chorus: No more!
Leper King: Sound flute!
Chorus: Strike drum!
Leper King: Dance
Chorus: For our king!

Interlude III
Leper King: Swing bells!
Chorus: Blow trumpet!
Leper King: Sing
Chorus: To our King!
Chorus: All hail O glorious king!
Valiant noble, worthy king!
Break forth oh joy!
Long life to our golden king!
Leper King: A king true,
but in my belly darkness.
Leper King: My warriors hurl back my enemies.
My workers cut back creeping jungles
Leper King: My palaces, my temples, my dreams of pride.
Tower to the sky.
Leper King: My throne is poison.
My walls crack.
My stones ooze blood.
My secret shame, my disgrace, my curse of leprosy.
Secret? No secret in my servants' eyes.
My women glance with terror.
Lest I choose them for my kiss of death.
All eyes turn from me.

All eyes fill with hatred.
Leper King: Yes a king,
a mighty ruler.
Leper King: I wait the plunge of the assassin's knife?

Interlude IV
Chorus: Dark jungles
Secret waters
Crocodile death
Assassins stab Leper King!
Leper King: My body drowned in green swamp slime.
My ruined city sunk,
Strangled by green snakes.
Leper King: What remains?
A leper's agony!
Pray for a leper's soul!

Finale: When will love heal this spirit torn?
Chorus: When will love heal this spirit torn.
Bleeding, lacerated, pierced on the precipice of
endless judgment. Cut in pieces on the knife edge
of the stone, of endless revenge?
O nothingness
O emptiness
O holiness
Chorus: When will love heal this spirit torn?

G. *Lady of Light* (1969)

1. Great is the Power of Love
Soprano Solo: Great is the power of love!
Dancing on mountain peaks of heaven,
Oh love dance, heavenly floating dance, dance of love.
Soprano Solo and Chorus: Wonderful Lady of Light!
She is dancing on mountain peaks of heaven,
Floating dance, love dance, dance of love and Oneness.
Chorus: We are dancing to the sun,
All are dancing, all are One.
Soprano Solo: Dancing on mountains of heavenly bliss
Great is the power of love!
Dancing on mountains of blessedness,
Oh Dance of love, Oh dance of oneness, Oh floating dance!
Great in the power of love!

2. Cruel World (Recitative)
Baritone Solo: Cruel world called her Mad Dancing Girl,
Burned her alive, later worshiped her;
Lady of Light, dancer in heaven.

3. Lady of Light, dancer in heaven
Chorus: Lady of Light, dancer in heaven.

4. High on hill-top (Recitative)
Baritone Solo: High on hill-top rose tower castle
piercing sky from steep rock crags.
Within walls guarded by towers,
huddled a protected village and temple.

5. Sunrise Salutation
Chorus: Ah

6. One day as temple voices sang
Baritone Solo: One day as temple voices sang sunrise salutation,
a young girl became possessed.
She danced around the temple and out into the sun.
Her dance caught fire, all the village follower her.
Castle gate and drawbridge opened,
Out into the world they danced.

7. Oh, blissful floating dance
Chorus: Oh blissful floating dance of Oneness,
floating dance of love.

8. Dancing, Singing of Love and Oneness (Aria)
Baritone Solo: Dancing, singing of love and Oneness,
Dancing and singing blissful songs,
How long we float on your wings,
Dancing love songs ever more.

9. Her Inner Fire (Recitative)
Baritone Solo: Her inner fire inspired possible feats of dancing.
People danced up walls, over rooftops, out into the air,
out into the air, across the sky without falling.
Dancing madness, dancing gladness, they sang!

10. We are Dancing over Snow-capped Mountain Peaks
Chorus: We are dancing over snow-capped mountain peaks,
We are dancing, floating, over clouds,

Dancing our dream of love.

11. Dancing to the Stars over Bridges of Thread
Soprano Solo: Dancing straight up steep walls, and high over roofs,
Above mountain peaks, over deep, dark ravines,
and out into space, far away from earth,
dancing to the stars over bridges of thread.

12. No More Serve your Brutal War Lords
Chorus: No more serve your brutal war-lords, join our dance!
No more slavery, join our dance!
Oh dance to our sun! Oh dance to our sun!

13. Intermezzo – Entrance of War Priest
(no text)

14. Cruel War Priest (Recitative)
Baritone Solo: Cruel war priest of proud walled city feared this dancing madness,
led his brutal army out to battle,
slew all dancers, burned alive the Mad Dancing Girl.
She danced in flames until she was ashes.

15. Fire is My Dance
Chorus: Roar
Soprano Solo: Fire is my dance, fire is my soul, ring of fire is my love.
Wings of fire, fly soul to heaven.
Chorus: Roar
16. Intermezzo – Lady of Light Enters Heaven
(no text)

17. By Night
Baritone Solo: By night cruel war priest encamped his army
in valley under tower castle.
On hill-top village woman set burning torches
between the horns of their goats and chased them down steep slopes.
Fire-crazed goats rushed down on sleeping army.
Screaming in fright, warriors were routed in chaos.
Wild bells rang victory from all towers.
Praise Mad Girl, praise Lady of Light, who dances in heaven.

18. I am Dancing in Heaven
Soprano Solo: I am dancing in heaven forever more,
dancing to endless love.
Great, oh great is the power of love!

Oh love dance! Great is the power of love!
Love dance of Oneness, dancing mysterious dreams,
blissful, floating dances of love.
We are the children of the Lady of Light,
light of heaven, light of endless love,
lady of blissful, floating love, light of endless love,
we are dancing to the sun, all are dancing all are one.
I am dancing in heaven a dance of love, a dance of love and Oneness!
Great is the power of love!

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