JACK AND THE BLUE FLOWER: AN AURAL MYTH

by

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ABSTRACT

This Dissertation, entitled Jack and the Blue Flower: An Aural Myth, establishes a new approach to formal design, referred to henceforth as a Musical Personograph. This 17-minute work presents a highly developed musical portrait of an individual, in this case British writer and philosopher-theologian C. S. (“Jack”) Lewis. The conceptual and compositional designs are a synthesis of (1) the core principles of Personography, a psychological discipline that seeks to empirically determine the ways in which an individual establishes self-identity via an internalized and evolving life-story; (2) leitmotif and thematic transformation techniques, extended and expanded to include not only melody but harmony; rhythm; polyrhythm and polymeter; pitch centers; orchestration; tonality, polytonality, and atonality; (3) stratified textures consisting of perceptually distinct layers of musical material that contribute fundamentally to the overall shape and form of the work. Novel compositional principles applied include (1) an exploration of the expressive possibilities of an updated approach to programmatic music (musical materials with relationships to extra-musical symbols); (2) the use of intrinsically musical narrative and/or dramatic structures—that is, the establishment of a compositional design that imparts a narrative and/or dramatic structure to a work that functions independently of any imposed extra-musical associations. This work’s intrinsically musical narrative is accomplished via forward- and backward-pointing references (in time) to audibly recognizable musical material of primary importance, called Musical Aspects and Narrative Agents; changes to the musical context framing said Aspects and Agents as the work progresses; the use of multiple musical languages and rhetorical devices which, through shared cultural associations, enable the listener to assign dramatic and/or emotional values to the musical narrative as it unfolds.
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Clive Staples Lewis and his legacy

and many others.
1. Introduction: Background and Inspiration

1.1. Creative Impetus: Psychological Personography

The inspiration for this project arose in part from my interest in the psychological discipline of personography. As defined by Dan P. MacAdams, John Barresi, and Tim J. Juckes, personography is the science of the development of personal identity—the process by which a specific individual conceives his or her sense of self.¹

Of primary importance in personographic inquiry is the evidence provided by an individual’s narrative of his or her own life. This internalized life-story may be discerned through interviews with the individual, his or her stated beliefs and values, his or her activities, and/or through insights offered by close associates.

An individual’s identity-defining life-story changes and evolves over time, particularly in response to major life events. Tracing the nature of and the reasons for self-defined identity change is of primary interest to the personographic researcher.

A concise personographic study (presented in section 1.2 below) of British writer and philosopher-theologian C. S. Lewis was the conceptual starting point for this orchestral work. While the pursuit of a compelling musical form was paramount in its composition, I aspired to evoke the emotional journey Lewis experienced as he struggled to define his self-identity during his early life. An outline of this struggle is presented below.

1.2. A Brief Personograph of C. S. Lewis

A summary of Lewis’ essential personographic details follow. The manner in which this data contributed to the conceptual design of this Dissertation is detailed later in this document.

Born Clive Staples Lewis on November 29, 1898 in Belfast, Ireland, Lewis’ early childhood was marked by unbidden experiences of ecstatic longing. These occurred in response to the beauty of nature and fantastic literary myths, the likes of which he was already composing on his own. Lewis later referred to these experiences of longing as *Sehnsucht*, a largely untranslatable German word that connotes feelings of both nostalgia and irreconcilable longing mingled with a sense of wonder. In his spiritual autobiography, *Surprised by Joy*, Lewis declared that he was “a votary of the Blue Flower” by the age of six, in reference to the use of the symbol in German Romantic literature as representative of the joining of humanity and nature. Lewis termed the sensation “Joy” for his casual readership, although he took pains to define the feeling precisely even in those contexts:

> The experience is one of intense longing . . . though the sense of want is acute and even painful . . . the mere wanting is felt to be somehow a delight . . . But this desire, even when there is no hope of possible satisfaction, continues to be prized, and even to be preferred to anything else in the world, by those who have once felt it.  

Lewis’ childhood remained idyllic until cancer claimed his mother in 1908. Shortly thereafter, in attendance at an English boarding school—soon be counted among the worst of any period in his life—Lewis witnessed physical abuse and was exposed to violent, eroticized literature based on Roman Antiquity. These influences coincided with the onset of puberty and the beginning of Lewis’ long struggle to resolve what he viewed as a selfish, immoral, sexually maladjusted “outer life” with the fantastically imaginative, beautiful, essentially holy “inner” life he had known since early childhood:

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The two hemispheres of my mind were in the sharpest contrast. On the one side a many-islanded sea of poetry and myth; on the other a glib and shallow ‘rationalism’. Nearly all that I loved I believed to be imaginary; nearly all that I believed to be real I thought grim and meaningless . . . So, then was my position: to care for almost nothing but the gods and heroes, and to believe in nothing but atoms and evolution . . . At times the strain was severe.4

Despite his commitment to atheism in early adulthood, Lewis had continued to experience instances of “Joy”; he was drawing on his increasingly formidable scholarly abilities to bolster an incessant search for its source. Lewis’ allegorical and spiritually autobiographical The Pilgrim’s Regress (1933) traces protagonist John’s lengthy journey through all of the major philosophies of the day, each represented using a variety of fantastic characters and imaginary cities. In his afterword to the work, Lewis notes how his seemingly irreconcilable dual nature created a philosophical conundrum, which required the trying-on of many different ideologies to find his way:

With the counter-Romantics on the one hand and with the sub-Romantics on the other (the apostles of instinct and even of gibberish) . . . out of this double quarrel came . . . the barren, aching rocks of [the] ‘North’, the foetid swamps of [the] ‘South’, and between them the Road on which alone mankind can safely walk.5

Lewis eventually realized that he had been attempting to “contemplate the enjoyed”—that the “Joy” experiences were resulting from a phenomenon that lay outside himself.

I had tried everything in my own mind and body . . . last of all I had asked if Joy itself was what I wanted . . . Inexorably Joy proclaimed, ‘I myself am your want of something other, outside, not you nor any state of you.’ . . . This new dove-tailing of my desire-life with my philosophy foreshadowed the day, now fast approaching, when I should be forced to take my ‘philosophy’ more seriously than I ever intended.6

For some time, Lewis had maintained the position that religions were human-created mythologies, like all of the myths—his greatest literary love—he had read in books since early childhood. A late-night conversation in the fall of 1931 with friends Hugo Dyson and J. R. R.

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4 Lewis, Surprised by Joy, 132.
5 Lewis, afterword to The Pilgrim’s Regress, 206.
6 Lewis, Surprised by Joy, 171-173.
Tolkien caused him to reconsider his position. Dyson and Tolkien had reasoned that all myths, despite having been written by human hands, originate in God; they preserve something of God’s truth, although often in a distorted form. Lewis’ fascination with mythological literature (a source of “Joy” his entire life) was explained for him – he was reacting to the holiness inherent in mythological writing. What better than the universally appealing device of storytelling to reach out to humanity?

Everything Lewis held dear—myth, “Joy”, the beauty of nature—was turning out to be interconnected and interdependent while originating from the same apparently divine source. He embraced Christianity at 32 years of age. This resolved in large part the gulf he felt between his “inner” and “outer” lives as well as his hitherto intractable philosophical difficulties regarding morality and religion. Lewis went on to become one of the 20th century’s most prolific, widely read, and respected literary critics and Christian apologists.
2. **Conceptual Design**

Outlined thus far are the essential features of personographic study and C. S. Lewis’ specific personographic profile. To begin the pursuit of a Musical Personograph, I extracted those key Aspects of Lewis’ identity that best define the swirl of forces that interacted with, modified, and amplified one another to enable Lewis to define his unique personhood.

2.1. **Distillation of Personographic Aspects**

This Dissertation represents C. S. Lewis’ internalized, identity-defining life-story in musical form. To achieve this, I isolated the following key Aspects of his story based on the available personographic data, primarily biographies and letters. Each Aspect inspired corresponding components of this work’s compositional design (outlined below in section 5.3: Musical Aspects and Narrative Agents).

I. **Joy**

Lewis described unbidden, sudden, powerful instances of ecstatic, irreconcilable longing as experiences of a kind of Joy. They were poorly understood at first, but he perceived them as important above all else and sought after them with great intensity and persistence.

II. **Myth**

Lewis had an early fascination with myth and its “Joy”-evoking properties. He eventually came to understand myth as the path by which God engineered the true myth of the Christian miracle, affording myth a central role in Lewis’ identity development.

III. **Duality**

Duality represents Lewis’ struggle to reconcile what he viewed as his outer life—that framed by an atheistic philosophical position and occupied by a largely meaningless reality fraught with his own compulsions toward darkness, cruelty,
and fears of sexual deviance—and his inner life: fantastic, creative, imaginative, and filled with “Joy”.

IV. Faith

For Lewis, the answer to the question of “Joy” in his life was the recognition of the existence of an Agent or Source outside of himself that compelled his attention and, eventually, his devotion. This reconciliation of his philosophy with his emotional, Romantic inner nature led to a heightened sense of identity and emotional stability.

2.2. Interactions Between Personographic Aspects

The Aspects of Lewis’ identity described above interacted with one another interdepen- dently during the first half of Lewis’ life. The manner in which this conceptual framework influenced the compositional design of this work is discussed in sections 5.3 and 5.10.
3. Musical Precursors and Influences

Having outlined the conceptual background and inspiration for this Musical Personograph, the following sections summarize those prevenient musical forms and compositional techniques that provide the musicological context in which to consider this work’s particular approach to the realization of a musical narrative focused on evoking Lewis’ emotional journey as he struggled to achieve a cohesive self-identity.

3.1. Musical Portraits

There have been several attempts to compose portraits of individuals or to illustrate the life events of real or imaginary characters. In some cases, composers have represented episodes from their own experiences or their reactions to events that have unfolded around them.

François Couperin, in his 1713 collection of harpsichord pieces entitled *Pièces de clavecin*, used texture, melody, harmonic sequences, and rhythmic patterns (among other techniques) to evoke the physical and personal characteristics of close associates, royalty, and various other personalities, including his own. Bedrich Smetana’s *First String Quartet* (1876, “From My Life”) portrays the composer’s emotional reactions to the various loves and tragedies of his life, including his wife, his affinity for dancing, and his tinnitus affliction—events that were identity-defining for him. Edward Elgar’s *Variations on an Original Theme* (‘Enigma’, 1899) won acclaim for its use of a single theme set in different ways to portray fourteen different people. Alban Berg’s *Lyric Suite* (1927) uses autobiographical references to generate musical material; these are hidden within the work’s pitch organization.

More recently, Virgil Thomson composed over 100 musical portraits of individuals, almost all of them while the subject was present. Thomson sought to evoke both the psychological character and the physical characteristics of each individual through the
methodical use of a very personal, yet abstract language of spontaneous musical characterization. Each movement of John Corigliano’s *Symphony No. 1* (1990) is dedicated to a close friend, each a victim of AIDS. Corigliano’s feelings of anger, frustration, and loss govern the form of the work and inform his use of rhetorical devices.

The notion of representing a person’s (auto)biographical details or character traits in a musical composition is an important precursor to the development of a Musical Personograph. Some scholars, however, present evidence in support of music’s intrinsic ability to generate a narrative that stands independent of any overtly espoused program or any other extra-musical basis.

### 3.2. Narrative in Instrumental Music

Clifford Taylor, in his book *Musical Idea and the Design Aesthetic in Contemporary Music*, makes an immediate distinction between what he calls musical “idea” and “design”. He argues that musical ideas have a narrative function: they create expectations of further development or manipulation. A musical design is, by contrast, a local sonic process (such as a texture or figuration) through which an aural effect is perceived in its totality immediately. As musical ideas carry narrative and even dramatic ramifications, subsequent events that either preserve or disrupt a listener’s expectations for the way those ramifications will be realized constitute a work’s narrative structure. Taylor also notes that in the intentional absence of “historical reference”, a composer’s creative effort will be experienced more as “sound design” as opposed to an idea-based, “vicarious” experience of the composer’s narrative process.

Lawrence Kramer is unequivocal in his assertions that “works of music have discursive meanings [that] are definite enough to support critical interpretations comparable . . . to

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8 Ibid., 32.
interpretations of literary texts and cultural practices.” He adds that these discursive meanings “are not ’extra-musical’ but on the contrary are inextricably bound up with the formal processes of stylistic articulations of musical works.” Kramer exchanges the term “culture” for Taylor’s “historical reference” where he argues that musical meanings “are produced as a part of the general circulation . . . [and] continuous production and reproduction of culture.” Like Taylor, Kramer believes that musical narrative is intrinsic to formal structure yet is also dependent on cultural associations and historical practice.

Vera Micznik finds that Mahler’s compositional technique supports a narrative interpretation of his music, citing the composer’s Ninth Symphony (1911) in particular. In that work, the disintegration of two polarized themes via distortion, fragmentation, and interference by unrelated musical material creates narrative expectations. Satirical middle movements that juxtapose musical styles continue the narrative; a fourth movement that ends with textural and thematic disintegration provides an ending similar to that of the first movement. The meaning of such a musical narrative depends on an elaborate network of cultural cues—musical materials that are linked to particular extra-musical symbols such as popular musical genres, or rhetorical techniques understood to evoke particular moods or emotions.

Mahler disagreed with creating music to a program or assigning a specific program after the fact, concerned that preexisting ideas could devalue one’s listening experience. He nonetheless acknowledged, however, that the ”motive for a musical picture is certainly an experience of the author’s—indeed an actual one, which might after all be concrete enough to be

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10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
clothed in words.”

Gregory Karl prefers to describe those narrative properties he finds in Beethoven’s Piano Sonata Op. 57 (1807) in terms of a “musical plot” that is defined as “an abstract and specifically musical form of dramatic organization.” Fred Maus and Jerrold Levinson go further to claim that supposed analogies between musical structure and narrative theory might be much more efficiently cast as analogies between music and drama.

Whether musical syntax is more comparable to narrative or dramatic structures, or whether it contains discursive meanings of its own, for the present purpose it shall suffice to acknowledge that musical resources, carefully deployed and developed, may be reasonably expected to aid in the establishment of a specifically musical form of dramatic and/or narrative structure. Any such structure is, however, ultimately dependent on a rigorously designed internal musical logic as well as culturally-defined emotional or extra-musical associations.

3.3. Music and Psychological Drama

Certain works portray the evolution of psychological states through dramatic genres such as opera or through purely instrumental musical narratives like those described above; such works are direct precursors to this work’s delineation of an individual’s psychological and philosophical journey toward self-identification.

Debussy’s opera Pélles et Mélisande (1902) is based on a Symbolist play by Maurice Maeterlinck—as such, the characters’ evolving emotions, motivations and, the indirectly expressed meanings of their dialogue are portrayed largely through the orchestral writing.

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Bartok’s *Bluebeard’s Castle* (1918) reveals in its spoken prologue that the actions on-stage are a portrayal of the characters’ changing psychological states.

Shostakovich revealed that many, even most, of his major works for orchestra and string quartet contain autobiographical inspirations, some of which evoke his own struggles dealing with political interference in his work (5th Symphony) and his responses to the hardships and trauma of the Second World War (7th Symphony). His Eighth String Quartet (1960) was written during one of many personal crises precipitated by the on-again, off-again persecutions of the Soviet regime. Intensely self-critical, the work is infused with Shostakovich’s self-referential D-S-C-H (D-Eb-C-B) theme and with quotes from his own works. The quartet ends with a funereal chorale.

Psychologically-laden works have come from some unlikely sources. Author Allen Shawn writes in *Arnold Schoenberg’s Journey* that Schoenberg’s late String Trio (1946) is literally and figuratively autobiographical, based on comments from the composer. Its musical content (which plays like a survey of the composer’s stylistic evolution) and the work’s musical references to personalities and events of his life at the time (an asthma attack, injections to the heart, and a male nurse who was giving him care following a medical emergency) support Shawn’s interpretation.

### 3.4. Leitmotif and Thematic Transformation

The assignment of musical material to various Aspects of Lewis’ identify development has an obvious antecedent in Wagnerian leitmotif technique. That Aspect-associated materials (melodic or otherwise) in this Dissertation develop (and their narrative meanings evolve) interactively over the course of the work can be seen as an extension of traditional techniques of

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In the latter part of the 19th century, Wagner introduced the concept of the musical leitmotif to the overtly narrative and dramatic genre of opera. As originally employed, the leitmotif is a musical idea, often a melody or a particular set of harmonies, that is associated with a character (or any other element) of an operatic storyline, as in *Lohengrin* (1848) and *Die Walkure* (1856). As Wagner’s use of the technique develops and matures in his later operas (i.e. *Tristan und Isolde* (1859), *Gotterdammerung* (1874)) his leitmotifs undergo significant adaptation, transformation, and fusion with other leitmotifs over the course of a work. The symbols to which the leitmotifs allude become more ambiguous; associations with any single leitmotif become multivalent and more abstract than in earlier usage.

Liszt’s *Faust-Symphonie* (1854–1857) features elaborate thematic evolution and transformation. Liszt’s “Three Character Sketches after Goethe: (1) Faust (2) Gretchen, (3) Mephistopheles” feature a multitude of musically interrelated themes that evolve continuously over the course of the work. Thematic development is linked to programmatic concerns—for instance, Liszt assigns the character “Mephistopheles” no themes of his own, in contrast to the characters featured in prior movements. As Mephistopheles represents the devil, to whom Faust is beholden, the final movement mocks and distorts the themes and indeed the entire form of the first “Faust” movement, giving the symphony as a whole distinctly narrative and dramatic qualities.

Both Debussy’s *Pélleas et Mélisande* (1902) and Bartok’s *Bluebeard’s Castle* (1918), mentioned above, use leitmotif technique, the former to represent important characters and their changing psychological states and the latter using the simple motif of a falling semitone to symbolize blood. Britten’s *Peter Grimes* (1945) applies leitmotifs to multiple situations within
the drama to associate events and character emotions. A descending “corkscrew”-like motif, for example, is assigned to both Grime’s feelings of guilt and the townspeople’s condemnation of his murderous actions.17

Michael Colgrass’ "Winds of Nagual: A Musical Fable on the Writings of Carlos Castaneda" (1985—for wind ensemble) offers a fairly recent example of instrumental music that seeks to evoke a narrative, as noted in the title; to this end it vaults back and forth between traditional and more modern modes of expression. Colgrass’ program notes offer a fuller explanation of the work’s intent:

Each of the characters has a musical theme . . . We hear Carlos’ theme throughout the piece from constantly changing perspectives . . . The score is laced with programmatic indications such as “Juan entrances Carlos with a stare . . . a horrible creature leaps at Carlos” . . . I don’t expect anyone to follow any exact scenario. My object is to capture the mood and atmosphere created by the book.”18

3.5. Superimposition of Layers: Polytonality, Polyrhythm and Polymeter

Many 20th century works include combinations of tonalities, modalities, and/or simultaneous dissonant rhythmic patterns or metrical organizations that are articulated via superimposed layers of musical material. Stravinsky (Pertrushka, 1911; L’Histoire du soldat, 1919), Ives (The Unanswered Question, 1908; Symphony No. 4, 1925) and Varèse (Hyperprism, 1923) provide substantial early examples of this approach; going further was Conlon Nancarrow, who wrote, over the course of several decades (1948-1992), more than 50 studies for player piano in which multiple simultaneous tempi are used, applied at unique ratios in almost every case. Elliot Carter’s mature output, beginning with his Second Quartet (1959) and the Double Concerto (1961) has seen extensive development of his highly personal methods of combining

17 For a thorough analysis of Britten’s use of leitmotif-inspired motivic development in support of Peter Grimes’ dramatic structure, see Alex Ross, The Rest is Noise (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux; Picador, 2007), 458-467.

simultaneous meters and/or tempi in tightly organized, rigorously structured works. The rhythmic layering found in Ligeti’s piano *Etudes* and the additive processes by which Ades combines texturally distinct rhythmic layers in, for example, *Asyla* (1997) for orchestra, provide even more recent examples of these techniques.

In a refinement of the theory and analysis of simultaneous, dissonant rhythmic textures, John Roeder has provided support for a theory of “pulse streams” in the music of Arnold Schoenberg, Bela Bartok, and Steve Reich.19 According to Roeder, there is considerable evidence of simultaneous, dissonant streams of rhythmic pulses in select works by these composers. The prominence of one or more streams versus the others is constantly shifting as a work progresses, with streams dropping in and out of audibility in a constantly changing kaleidoscope of pulse layers.

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4. Compositional Design: General Principles

4.1. Introduction

I aimed, in this Dissertation, to capture the dramatic essence of C. S. Lewis’ identity-as-life-story via a newly conceived form of musical portrait—one in which Musical Aspects and Narrative Agents (see section 5.3), based loosely on leitmotif techniques, develop and interact with one another over time to create a uniquely musical narrative. As a secondary goal, I sought to have the evolving narrative meanings of these Aspects parallel the ways in which personographically-derived aspects of Lewis’ identity interacted with and influenced one another over the course of his early life.

Outlined below are the general principles that guided the composition of the work, followed by commentary on specific dimensions of the work’s design in section 5.

4.2. Primacy of the Absolute Over the Programmatic in Design

Coherency and consistency of form through musical means alone were of primary importance in the design of this Dissertation. Although the interior drama inherent in the development of Lewis’ life-story-as-identity was a conceptual starting point and provided considerable creative impetus for the compositional design of the work, the generation of an intrinsically musical narrative that is internally consistent, independently of any externally-imposed scaffolding, took precedence when making formal choices.

4.3. Intrinsically Musical Narrative

Scholarly work demonstrating evidence of a specifically musical form of dramatic narrative in purely instrumental music informed the processes by which I manipulated musical materials over the course of the work. To create a compelling musical narrative, I composed with a view to having each of the four central aspects of Lewis’ identity-defining life-story (Joy,
Myth, Duality, and Faith) appear to cross-pollinate and influence one another in their musical
development, much like their extra-musical equivalents—insofar as the principle of absolute
musical considerations (as the ultimate arbiter of formal choices) permitted.

While the evolution in narrative meaning of these four musical Aspects is central to the
form of the work, several other musical materials act as Narrative Agents; these are discussed in
detail in section 5.3: Musical Aspects and Narrative Agents.

4.4. Extension of Leitmotif and Thematic Transformation Techniques

I extended and expanded Wagnerian and Lisztian leitmotif technique to generate Musical
Aspects and Narrative Agents based not only on melodic themes but on interval relationships;
recurring shifts of harmonic quality; orchestration; rhythm; polymetric and polyrhythmic
textures; recurring pitch centres, atonality, and polytonality. Furthermore, the narrative meanings
these Aspects and Agents carry as the work progresses evolve and are transformed not only
through traditional techniques of musical development but through continual changes to their
surrounding musical context.

4.5. Ensuring Comprehensibility

A central component of the compositional design of this work is the association of
distinctive musical material with each key Aspect of Lewis’ identity-forming life-story. As a
secondary goal, in support of an intrinsically musical narrative, I sought to have these Musical
Aspects evolve and develop in interaction with one another in a manner that parallels the way
these personality Aspects interacted with one another as Lewis formed his identity.

Given the inevitable profusion of musical ideas that could arise from such an approach,
potentially challenging the ability of the listener to effectively parse the work’s musical logic and
narrative flow, I adopted the following practices to ensure comprehensibility:
• The musical materials that make manifest each Aspect draw on a wide variety of techniques, ensuring a compositional as well as perceptual (audible) distinction from one another;

• Aspect-associated materials are introduced gradually as the work unfolds;

• Non-melodic manifestations of an Aspect, such as those rhythmically- or harmonically-based, are afforded sufficient profile to ensure audibility and comprehensibility, through techniques such as repetition or the duration of initial and subsequent presentations;

• Although Aspects appear individually at times, they often appear as related complexes, i.e. a particular melodic or harmonic theme is accompanied by a specific method of orchestration and/or a unique rhythmic pattern. These evolve and develop in tandem rather than as separate entities.

4.6. Evocation of Emotional States

I sought to portray changing emotional states in broad strokes as the musical materials of this work evolve and transform. These emotional states are largely dependent on shared cultural associations (Taylor’s “historical references” and Kramer’s “production and reproduction of culture”). It is in this area that I owe a large, general debt not only to the large repertory of concert music and opera but to the dramatic language of musical theatre and film scoring. The compositional techniques used to generate these evocations are discussed in detail below in sections 5.3 and 5.10.

4.7. Multiple Musical Languages

In keeping with the dramatic, narrative-inspired (Lewis’ internalized life-story) nature of this work, frequent changes in evoked emotion (or “mood”) occur as the work progresses. Here, in addition to shared cultural associations, I depend on a multiplicity of musical languages, including (broadly speaking) functional tonality, non-traditional tonality (such as Impressionistic or Minimalistic approaches to establishing pitch centres), varying degrees of pandiatonic and/or
chromatic harmonic structures, atonality, polytonality, polymeter and polyrhythm. I attempt to unify these changes in language via consistency in other areas, such as recurring Aspect-associated materials and the use of perceptually distinct layers of musical material throughout the work as a unifying device.
5. **Compositional Design: Specifics**

I discuss the Dissertation in detail in this section. Each of the dimensions described below are used in support of the expression of a clear and compelling musical narrative; it is equally possible, however, to experience the work in “absolute” terms, i.e. without knowledge of the work’s extra-musical associations. Following discussions of various individual components of the compositional design, I include in section 5.10 a detailed analysis of how these dimensions, working in concert, elucidate the work’s narrative structure.

5.1. **Medium**

This Dissertation is scored for medium-sized orchestra, consisting of woodwinds, in pairs with piccolo and contrabassoon available for additional expressive possibilities; four horns, two trumpets, three trombones; timpani; two percussionists; harp, piano, and strings. The medium of the orchestra was chosen to take advantage of its proven potential for expansive dramatic possibilities in all dimensions of musical design, such as texture, orchestration, dynamic range, and colour contrast. As the compositional design emphasizes the development of multiple thematic ideas and the superimposition of contrasting layers of musical material, the medium of the orchestra was required to provide the wide variety of instrumental combinations and textural devices needed to clearly articulate the form.

5.2. **Form**

This work’s large-scale organization is dependent on the use of shifting languages to evoke changing emotional states and the rise and fall of musical tension and momentum. These large-scale processes are achieved through a variety of means; the reader may find reference to section 5.10 particularly helpful as he or she reviews the following general guide to the work’s contours. Additional details regarding the strategies used to realize this piece’s structure are
presented in sections 5.3 to 5.9.

5.2.1. Movement I: Macroscopic View of Shape, Contour, Tension and Momentum

Section I

The first movement begins with music that is decidedly unstable; there is little discernible overriding pulse, harmonies are unsteady and constantly shifting, melodies exist only in fragmentary form. Thicker textures begin to build in an on-again, off-again manner, as if the music is slowly making discoveries and gaining its footing. The use of register slowly expands in tandem with this series of small revelations until some certainty is achieved at last with the introduction of a complete melodic theme (m. 53) and a greater sense of recurring pulse. The piece’s first substantial climax follows (m. 73-74), an apotheosis of sorts in which the material introduced during the previous two-and-a-half minutes is confirmed as having been leading to a moment of triumph.

Section II

After a brief transition in mm. 75-86 to establish a regular meter and a celebratory mood, this music revels in unreservedly overzealous optimism, casting aside most of what was heard previously in favour of new material that is presented with simple, excited naivety. The contrast with the previous Section is marked; this music is self-assured, over-confident, stable in its orchestration within each phrase, and it presents its ideas without ambiguity. This music builds through intensifying polyrhythmic layers to a consummate proclamation of victory (mm. 134-138).

Section III

The confidence of the previous section begins to unravel through renewed metric uncertainty and ambiguous harmonies and pitch centers. Material from the opening Section
returns; the music searches for its footing once again through frequent textural changes. A shift in mood is evident through increasingly aggressive orchestration. After a fully realized reprise of thematic material and orchestral textures from the opening of the movement (mm. 193-214), the music, spent, begins a long, slow descent into exhaustion.

**Section IV**

The bleeding away of a regular pulse, stable tonality, and the rapid descent in register of this Section’s opening (mm. 215-229) represents a kind of death, signalling that materials heard up to this point have, broadly speaking, expired and won’t be heard again in their original forms. After completing a fall into low registers and dark timbres, the music begins to rise in pitch and build in textural density once again from m. 242—but the tone is different this time. All that was “accomplished” up to this point is subverted. The purity of the instrumental timbres themselves is distorted from m. 250: cluster-based tone formations dominate the harmony while metric and tonal instability prevail. The movement ends in extreme uncertainty with a polytonal and polyrhythmic climax that obliterates any lingering stability from previous sections, replacing it with unanswered questions and unresolved musical conflicts.

**5.2.2. Movement II: Macroscopic View of Shape, Contour, Tension and Momentum**

**Section I**

The opening of this movement pulls back from the frantic activity of the first to set up those materials that will be subsequently explored. Images of duelling natures and competing priorities are implemented through falling gestures in the middle and low registers while fragmented echoes of first-movement material persist in the upper register. The ideas of intervallic expansion, voices moving outward in contrary motion, and the continuing use of polymeter through aurally distinct layers emphasize a trend toward musical separation and
Section II

Despite the establishment of a regular, insistent pulse (m. 37), muted timbres prevail and the texture here is largely static: it gets “nowhere fast”, an exercise in futility. No resolution is in sight for the continuing build-up of conflicting materials. Soon a renewed shift to polymetric textures and teasing, mocking transformations of previously familiar materials reflect this. Hints of traditional orchestral dance rhythms and gestures appear: these are but weak, halfhearted attempts to celebrate fleeting, false resolutions of a conflict that continues with increasing intensity. A violent debate between high register woodwinds and the brass brings the section to a close.

Section III

The sliding glissandi of the introductory moments of this movement make an assertive return at m. 86, this time supported by an unmistakably elemental, almost (neo-)primitive heavy pulse. Shifts in tonal center lend it increased strength and a more dangerous edge. Crude, grotesque appearances of thematic material occur over unremitting pounding in the low register instruments and percussion. As the orchestration expands in breadth and depth, it becomes apparent that this is music of inevitability; this conflict will end, somehow.

Intensity and momentum continue to build through a thickening of polyrhythmic layers until a march-like, martial presentation of this movement’s most important melodic material signals dominance for ideas of conflict and pulsation. Such terse, commanding rhetoric influences the re-introduction of some Movement I materials at m. 150, a counterattack foreshadowing the imminent final, desperate struggle for dominance. Following the unravelling of prevailing trends in harmony, meter, and orchestration, this section’s long buildup culminates
in the work’s most important climax—a three-fold “scream” (mm. 177-184).

Section IV

At m. 181, a short transition re-introduces clarity and brilliance through radical changes in harmonic language and orchestration. The work’s final area, like its opening section, builds steadily in intensity and textural density. This time, however, contrapuntal lines that combine ideas introduced throughout the piece are introduced additively, each containing transformations that reflect the resolution of previously insurmountable tensions. A brief, celebratory Coda concludes the work; this avoids the rash excesses of its previous incarnation (in Movement I) while providing catharsis for the recently concluded buildup of contrapuntal intensity.

5.3. Musical Aspects and Narrative Agents

The large-scale trajectories described above are comprehensible independent of any consideration of an intrinsically musical narrative or its extra-musical associations. Further inquiry, however, would reveal many materials that contribute to the establishment of this work’s narrative structure. These materials, described presently, provide a rhetorical base upon which to consider how local details of the composition’s design contribute to its large-scale construction. For a comprehensive outline of the work’s narrative structure, see section 5.10.

As described above (in section 2), during the personographic, conceptual phase of this work’s design, I identified four Aspects of Lewis’ identity-defining life story that were of central importance to his internal narrative. A key component of the compositional design is the assignment of musical material that corresponds to each personographic Aspect to create Musical Aspects. These musical Aspects then serve as narrative symbols in the work—as pillars of evolving meaning within the logical flow of ideas.
Each Musical Aspect is multivalent, manifesting through several associated musical materials, conversely, some materials are used to manifest more than one Musical Aspect.

I. Joy
• Primary manifestation: Descending semitone
• Secondary or derivative manifestations:
  ◦ Alternation of major- and minor-quality harmony
  ◦ Added-tone major harmony
  ◦ Any fragmentary or repetitive use of interval class 1 (minor 2nd, minor 9th, major 7th)
  ◦ Pitch centre E, possibly moving to A (a loose V-I relationship)
  ◦ Polymetric/polyrhythmic textures in piano and/or harp and/or mallet percussion

II. Myth
• Primary manifestation: Melodic theme as follows in Figure 1:

Figure 1. Melodic Manifestation of the “Myth” Aspect

• Secondary or derivative manifestations:
  ◦ Component melodic motives of the above theme
  ◦ Like “Joy”: Polymetric/polyrhythmic textures in piano and/or harp and/or mallet percussion

III. Duality
• Primary manifestations:
  ◦ Polyrhythmic textures, in combination with polymeter
  ◦ Prominently scored voice leading moving outward in contrary motion
  ◦ Heavy, repetitive pulses (also a Narrative Agent; see below)
  ◦ Alternation of major- and minor-quality harmony (weighted toward the latter)

IV. Faith
• Primary manifestation: Melodic theme as follows in Figure 2:

Figure 2. Melodic Manifestation of the “Faith” Aspect

• Secondary manifestations:
  ◦ Contrapuntal textures
  ◦ Like “Joy”: Pitch centre E, possibly moving to A (a loose V-I relationship)
In addition to the Aspects mentioned above, other materials guide the musical narrative in ways both large and small. Identified here as Narrative Agents, these elements have more diffuse rhetorical and/or extra-musical associations, as noted in Table 1 below, but are nonetheless integral to the compositional and narrative structure of the work.

Table 1. Narrative Agents and Their Associated Narrative Significances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Agents</th>
<th>Narrative Significances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rising interval of an octave</td>
<td>“Awakening”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising and falling harmonic clusters</td>
<td>Searching for lost “Joy”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descending glissandi</td>
<td>Perversion; grotesquerie; carnality; darkness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissonant harmony</td>
<td>Negative emotions: confusion, anger, angst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of tonality or an identifiable pitch-center</td>
<td>Clarity of thought or emotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polyttonality</td>
<td>Confusion, chaos or crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atonality</td>
<td>Confusion, chaos or crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapid note repetition</td>
<td>Anticipation or excitement; trepidation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dotted-note rhythms</td>
<td>Naivety; celebration; rejoicing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchestral “hits”</td>
<td>Victory or triumph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy, repetitive pulses</td>
<td>Carnality; base motivators; darkness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polymetric and/or polyrhythmic textures</td>
<td>Variously: tentativeness; confusion; chaos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lydian mode</td>
<td>Naiveté; celebration; rejoicing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequential repetition, especially by 2nds</td>
<td>Perversion/corruption; futility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental solos</td>
<td>Individuality; self-reference; self-will</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4. Melodic Materials and Their Transformations

The “Joy” Aspect’s melodic manifestation of a descending semitone pervades the entire work, its meaning determined both by its changing configurations as well as its surrounding context.

The initial presentations of this semitone motive sit amidst and, before long, atop added-tone major-quality harmony (mm. 24-74). When placed as the harmonic third of such sonorities, the semitone move downward results in a shift to minor-quality harmony, a property exploited throughout the work (more on this below) to generate tonal and emotional ambiguity. Seated atop added-tone major harmony, the motive generates open and colourful major-7th chord
harmony, another “Joy”-associated material. This motive also figures prominently in the work’s most important melodic ideas, as shown in Figures 3 and 4:

**Figure 3. Melodic Manifestation of the “Myth” Aspect (first sub-phrase): Semitone Content**

![Figure 3](image)

**Figure 4. Melodic Manifestation of the “Faith” Aspect: Semitone Content**

![Figure 4](image)

As the musical form progresses, the descending semitone assumes musical qualities and/or is placed within musical contexts that denote changes in narrative meaning:

- Excitable, rapid-fire appearances in solo instruments (i.e. mm. 75-82) reframe the motive’s emotional content, previously one of stability and beauty lying just out of reach, as being under individual control as opposed to that of some larger force or entity;

- Repeated appearances of descending semitone glissandi in the mid- to low-register partway through Movement I (mm. 140-150) beg a new narrative interpretation;

- This motive’s presentation as an intensely wrought, obsessively insistent plea for redemption in the first movement’s final measures (mm. 250-269) completes its evolution from a signifier of beauty and stability to one of anguish and futility;

- In movement II, “Duality” is expressed (in part) via voice leading in contrary motion. Figure 5 demonstrates how its initial and many subsequent appearances begin with a descending semitone which then expands outward via implied counterpoint:
Figure 5. The “Duality” Aspect, Manifested Through Interval Expansion

Movement II, mm. 1-4 in oboe 1:

Later on, multiple voices are used to articulate this idea (i.e. brass, mm. 110-115; upper winds and strings, mm. 130-134);

• The motive appears throughout Movement II as a component of upper-register polyrhythmic and polymetric textures (i.e. mm. 99-107);

• Sequential repetition of blocks of material through ascending or descending semitone slides occurs frequently in Movement II, representative of perversion/corruption and futility (i.e. strings mm. 24-34; all sections mm. 70-85; woodwinds mm. 99-107);

• The inverted form of this interval, the major 7th, is also used pervasively in both background and foreground elements of the score.

The work’s most important complete melodic statement is that identified as “Myth” (see Figure 1 above). Its constituent motives make frequent appearances throughout the work:

• In Movement I:
  • Prior to its introduction in its complete form (mm. 28-51);
  • In fragmentary, freely altered form (mm. 110-119);

• In Movement II:
  • As a reminiscence (mm. 32-35);
  • In fragmentary, metrically displaced layers (mm. 119-127);
  • As a timpani solo in mm. 136-139, announcing the imminent re-introduction of the full theme.

“Myth” recurs in a more complete, easily recognizable form several times throughout the work, usually in diminished or augmented rhythmic values. In these areas, the theme’s evolving narrative significance is dependent largely upon the musical context in which it is placed (see, in particular, Movement I, mm.151-170, 192-241 and Movement II mm. 137-155 and 205-241).
The evolving narrative meaning of the rising octave, a Narrative Agent symbolic of the idea of “awakening”, is similarly defined by its placement within the work’s unfolding time-line of events. The octave opens the work and then lies dormant until its appearance in Movement I (mm. 180-177), where it forecasts an upcoming drastic change in tone (mm. 230-249). Nearing the end of movement II, the motive once again signals a dramatic shift in the narrative in mm. 188-196.

5.5. Harmony

Narrative themes concerning inner and outer lives and light versus dark underlie both the conceptual and compositional design of this work. Harmony supports the representation of these opposing poles through the use of major- and minor-quality harmonic structures, respectively associated, through shared cultural definitions, with brightness or optimism (even happiness) on the one hand and darkness, negativity, and sadness or anger on the other. Frequent shifts between these two qualities articulate emotional ambiguity or instability while the consistent use of one sonority or the other indicates the opposite. This piece employs added-tone and extended harmony (chordal 7ths, 9ths, 11ths, 13th) throughout, which may be interpreted in this context as simultaneities of stacked major- and minor-quality sonorities.

Figure 6 shows a harmonic reduction of the work’s opening section, illustrating these techniques:
Figure 6. Harmonic Reduction Illustrating Unstable Major-Minor Harmonic Quality to Portray Ambiguous, Anticipatory Mood

Movement I, mm. 6-74:

The implied harmony of the “Myth” Aspect’s melodic manifestation tends strongly toward ambiguity as well, permitting different harmonizations depending upon the needs of the musical narrative at each appearance of the theme.

Polytonal areas reflect more extreme musical and emotional states. Through the harmonic equivalent of impotent anger, futility and confusion, the final section of the first movement (mm. 269-282) is based on a bitonal harmonic scheme (see Figure 7) that loops back on itself and ends where it began—a sort of musical Möbius strip:

Figure 7. Bitonal Framework Used in Movement I, mm. 269-282

```
E   Bb   Ab   B   Em   Db   E  
Bb  Ab   B   Em   Db   Dm   Bb
```

The movement ends in crisis; all questions and doubt.
Dissonant sonorities are similarly reflective of difficult emotional states. These acquire this narrative meaning from both culturally-shared associations and their contrast with prevenient, more consonant simultaneities. As the work moves toward its central crisis point near the end of the first movement, the intervallic content of vertical structures tends toward the use of 2nds, 4ths and 7ths (as outlined in Figure 8) as opposed to the 3rds, 5ths and 6ths characteristic of consonant harmony:

Figure 8. Movement I, Horns 1-4, mm. 253-267: Harmonic Reduction

Harmonically unambiguous areas reflect stable emotional or rhetorical content. The first movement’s naive celebration (mm. 87-138) shows a marked preference for major-quality harmony, as does the second movement’s concluding “Faith”-based section (mm. 179-239). Minor-quality harmonies predominate in the heavy, militaristic sections of the 2nd movement (mm. 114-178, in particular).

Functional harmony lends a sense of completion and forward motion to the final section of Movement II. Measures 197-223 utilize F major and G major tonalities; the harmony oscillates slowly between I and IV, all the while maintaining a tonic pedal point. The move to E major at m. 224 completes the trend toward fully hierarchical harmonic progressions; the free-wheeling solo piano line celebrates this development. The work’s only openly stated V-I cadence occurs in mm. 241-242; a further V-I relationship is revealed in a move from E Lydian to A Lydian in the final measures of the work.
5.6. **Tonality, Pitch Centres, and Pitch Collections**

This work’s use of a multiplicity of musical languages in service of musical storytelling results in the use of pitch collections (or scales) with varying degrees of consistency in order to establish a tonal center, or, in some areas, a lack thereof.

Tonal, diatonic harmony along the major-minor axis is used in some areas where tonal stability is particularly desirable from a narrative point of view. The use of functional harmony in the traditional sense is relatively rare (its use almost exclusively in the final Section of the work is discussed above); pitch centres tend to emerge via direct repetition or the consistent use of a pitch collection or scale over an extended period.

A tonal center of A is established through the brute-force method of intense repetition in mm. 68-74; this coincides with the work’s culminating instance of the “Joy” Aspect, which remains associated with pitch A in the final, celebratory measures of the work. Directly preceding both of these areas are extended passages in which a tonal centre of E prevails, creating a loose yet nonetheless highly directional V-I relationship.

The ultra-bright Lydian mode also signifies celebration or victory; it dominates Section II of the first movement (mm. 75-138) and recurs at the end of the work. Movement I, Section II’s opening A Lydian mode quickly gives way to a succession of pitch-centres, each committed to the preservation of the mode’s signature raised 4th degree. The final statement of victory in mm. 134-138 returns to the “Joy” pitch centre of A following a brief pause on its “dominant”—a low E in mm. 127-130.

The prolonged C pedal tone in mm. 230-261 signals the permanent arrival of new musical materials, those symbolic of duality, conflict, and dark emotions. The practical purpose of such a long drone is to provide a modicum of audible stability from which the listener may
venture to absorb the radical shifts in musical language occurring during these final measures of the movement. This last bit of security is obliterated in the final, bitonal measures of the movement. Pitch center C returns to govern the darkest moments of Movement II (mm. 154-169) although it is quickly destabilized by the chaos of the ensuing climactic crisis.

Much of the first third of Movement II is tonally ambiguous, in keeping with this portion of the work’s focus on conflict and fruitless searching for its resolution. Although repetitive gestures are common, tonal centers tend to be quickly dissolved by irresolute harmony, sequential repetition, polytonality, or chromatic voice-leading. Tonal centers, largely via pedal point, re-emerge as a base upon which to build a relentless, polyrhythmic pulse in mm. 86-155.

As noted above, measures 197-241 employ functional harmony, and a V-I cadence occurs in mm. 241-242, all the more significant due to its singular occurrence and its placement near the conclusion of the musical narrative.

5.7. Rhythm and Polyrhythm; Meter and Polymeter

As with this work’s use of harmony and tonality, rhythmic and/or metric regularity signal stability while irregular meter, polyrhythm, and/or polymeter are indicative of tension, conflict and unstable emotion.

In areas where a single meter dominates, such as Movement I, Section II, emotional clarity is achieved. Occasional applications of metrically dissonant material (i.e. mm. 97-99 and 107-109) provide interest and forecast later developments but fail to disrupt the established meter. The dotted rhythms prominently featured in the strings are a simple device designed to convey excitement and forward drive.

Movement II, Section IV is intended to portray the resolution of previous conflicts; although polymeter is lightly applied in the violas, cellos and basses from m. 197 and the violin
melody unfolds in its own time, by m. 224 a single meter is dominant until the Coda that begins in m. 240 (although the piano lines drift through mm. 224-231 according to their own schedule). This shift to regular 3/2 time coincides with the emergence of fully tonal, functional harmony.

Polymetric and/or polyrhythmic layers may combine either (1) to obscure a sense of regular pulse and/or meter or (2) to convey the effect of multiple, simultaneous pulse streams. Displaced meter or asynchronous rhythmic phrase lengths may be used in either of these contexts to enhance the desired effect. As a third approach, in some passages displaced meter simultaneously contributes to the maintenance of a regular pulse while eroding the sense of a single dominant meter. Such a texture may resemble polymeter but is largely a constructive rather than destructive device [as in (1) just mentioned] or a truly metrically dissonant one [as in (2)].

Figures 9, 10, and 11 provide representative examples of each of these three approaches:
Figure 9. Polymeter, Polyrhythm, and Irregular Phrase Lengths Combine to Obscure a Sense of Regular Pulse

Movement I, mm. 26-31: polymetric background elements only (harp, piano, vibraphone)
Figure 10. Polymetric Texture Audibly Conveying Multiple, Simultaneous Pulse Streams

Movement II, mm. 55-58 includes both multiple meters and displaced phrase rhythms:
Figure 11. Multiple Meters, Polyrhythm and Asynchronous Rhythmic Phrase Lengths Contribute to the Maintenance of Regular Pulse While Eroding the Sense of a Single Dominant Meter

Movement II, mm. 123-126:
5.8. Counterpoint

Contrapuntal material appears in this work where the textural complexity it offers serves to build tension and momentum, as both a musical and narrative culminating device (to articulate an important arrival point or climax) and as a way to associate musical ideas with one another, particularly in the last section of the second movement.

Movement I, Section II (mm. 100-130 in particular), previously described as a naive, over-the-top celebration, uses independent lines to evoke images of barely contained excitement and of spinning out of control; to this end, brief passages of counterpoint animate musical phrases that seem to continue rather longer than they should.

Independent lines complement the use of polymeter to separate pulse streams in Movement II, mm. 55-61 (see Figure 10, above). Later in the same movement (mm. 70-84), blocks of material are repeated sequentially but in contrary motion; the woodwind and brass materials climb by a 2nd with each iteration while the strings fall by the same interval with each cycle. Manifestations of contrapuntal voice-leading in contrary motion are a key component of the articulation of the Musical Aspect “Duality”. An additional example may be seen in mm. 130-134 where the high strings and high woodwinds seem to repel one another.

The last Section of Movement II simplifies meter (regular 3/2) and tonality (E major) in favour of contrapuntal melodic lines designed to associate musical materials, as shown in Figure 12. This is a culminating or climactic activity from both musical and narrative points of view.

The melodic manifestations of each of the work’s four central Aspects are combined: “Faith”, which is itself an evolution or transformation of the melodic “Joy” Aspect, is layered with motives from “Myth”; meanwhile the expanding intervals of “Duality” are presented in reverse, as intervals reducing in size from an octave to a 2nd.
5.9. Orchestration

The effective articulation of layers of material (as in a polyrhythmic or polymetric texture, contrapuntal lines, or even a simple homophonic texture comprised of a melody and its harmonic accompaniment) depends upon the separation of each layer via contrasts in both register and timbre. In the orchestration of this work, I aimed to present its complex series of musical ideas and their narrative evolution through instrumental combinations that ensure their presentation in an organized, clearly audible succession of musical events. I also exploited the orchestra’s capacity for sudden timbral and dynamic contrasts in support of the work’s emotional and dramatic dimensions.
The opening section of the work (mm. 1-74) uses intricately constructed, cyclic piano figurations combined with metrically dissonant rhythmic patterns in the harp to create a nearly pulseless background texture that is nonetheless colourful and articulate. The repeated sixteenth notes in the vibraphone provide diffuse harmonic support. From this base, fragmentary motives are introduced via instrumental solos, which proceed eventually into fully orchestrated textures through a carefully paced additive process.

Throughout this work, instrumental solos are intended to lend a sense of intimacy and individuality, not only in a musical or even a literal sense, but in view of the work’s narrative focus on the “internal drama” of an individual’s identity development.

Some choices of orchestration are thematic. The “Joy” Aspect is manifested in part by the colourful and articulate textures just described, found in the work’s opening section. The “Joy” Aspect is recalled at several points later in the work through this (or similar) instrumentation, (in Movement I, mm. 139-150 and mm. 175-208 and in Movement II, mm. 216-223, for example). The woodwind section is assigned the narrative role of maintaining thematic connections to the first movement throughout the second movement, through continual recall of the “Joy” Aspect’s semitone manifestation and reminiscences of the first movement’s rapid repeated-note rhythms, originally evocative of trepidation, anticipation, and excitement.

The articulation of polymetric textures relies on both registral and timbral separation. In movement II, mm. 55-58 (Figure 10 above), Meter I occurs in the high strings and woodwinds; Meter II in low-register clarinets only; Meter III is articulated by middle-register solo brass instruments while Meter IV occurs only in the harp and low strings. Each layer is made distinct through both its instrumental timbres and through its placement in an exclusive registral
“pocket”.

5.10. Narrative Analysis

The following pages present a detailed outline of the design of this work’s intrinsically musical narrative. In Figure 13, beneath a reduction of the work’s most structurally important narrative events, captions describe the relationship between Musical Aspects and Narrative Agents, their transformations, and the articulation of an intrinsically musical narrative. Connections to the work’s extra-musical, conceptual design are also noted.

Figure 13. Reduction and Analysis of the Work’s Primary Musical Aspects and Narrative Agents

(following four pages)
Figure 13
Narrative Analysis - page 1 of 4

Movement I: Section I

mm.: 1-60

Pitch center E = "Joy" 
"Earth" Aspects

Percussion/plucked string polymeter = 
"Joy" (orchestrational manifestation)

Meter: Polymeric; indeterminate pulse
Aspects: Polymeric texture in 
piano/harp/vibes
Unstable harmonic quality 
(major vs. minor-quality)
Fragments of "Myth" (melodic 
manifestation)

Narrative Agents: Rising octave

Narrative Significance: Awakening (to "Joy") 
Dawning discovery of 
"Joy" through nature's 
beauty and stories (myths). 
Expression of ecstatic longing, 
the source of which lies just 
out of reach.

Section II

mm.: 75-139

Tpt 1, solo

fls., strings

Meter: Polymeric; variable
Aspects: "Joy" semitones in solo trumpet

Narrative Agents: Lydian mode

Narrative Significance: Rapid semitone repetitions in a solo instrument 
reposses the "Joy" motive as being under control 
of an individual as opposed to a larger entity. 
The brightness of the Lydian mode signals naive 
celebration.

Section III

mm.: 134-139

Orchestral "hits" 
Added-tone major-quality harmony

Disintegrating 4/4

Falling semitone glissandi
Disintegrating regular meter 
Polymeric texture in piano/harp/vibes

Narrative Significance: Orchestral hits 
proclaim victory - 
"Joy" has been dis- 
covered and is now 
valued above all 
else.

Fragments of "Myth" and "Joy" 
are annexed by the emotion of 
the moment via dotted rhythms. 
Proclamation of 
victory is re-
assured.

Orchestral hits 
proclaim victory - 
"Joy" has been dis- 
covered and is now 
valued above all 
else.

Dominance of a single 
meter indicates a clear 
emotion - here, elation. 
Dotted rhythms are 
also celebratory. Undu-
lasting lines are repeated 
in overzealous fashion.

Orchestral "hits" 
Added-tone major-quality harmony

Erosion of regular meter 
and "Joy" as descending 
semitone glissandi in pro-
gressively lower registers 
signal emotional uncertainty 
"Joy" orchestration of the 
movement's opening section 
is recalled.
**Figure 13**

**Narrative Analysis - page 2 of 4**

**Section IV**

Meter: 4/4, then 3/4 with polyrhythmic or polyrhythmic background layers

**Aspects/Narrative Agents:**
- "Myth" theme in diminution
- Background layer polymeter
- Major-minor harmonic alternation/instability

**Narrative Significance:**
- "Celebratory"/undulating lines are retained but uncertain meter and ambiguous harmony undermine previous confidence.
- "Myth" fragments appear in an effort to conjure "Joy" like it did before (Section I).

**mm.: 151**
- Rising octaves
- Descending glissandi in bass register
- Voices in contrary motion
- Rising octaves signal a new kind of "awakening".
- Descending glissandi and movement of voices in contrary motion introduce the "Duality" Aspect.
- Falling "Joy" semitone glissandi
- Rapid pitch repetition
- Polyrhythmic texture in piano/vibes
- Continuing corruption of "Joy" motive (glissandi). Metric ambiguity = emotional ambiguity.
- Repeated tones reveal excitement for one last attempt at achieving "Joy" via "Myth".
- Regular meter
- "Myth" theme complete statement
- Polyrhythmic texture including the piano and harp
- Fully realized statement of "Myth" but without the crowning apotheosis of "Joy" at its conclusion.
- Optimistically rising woodwind lines realize only polyrhythmic confusion at their summits - "Joy" is not to be found this way any longer.

**mm.: 171**
- Intermittent; slowing

**mm.: 178**
- "Myth" theme fragments
- Falling register
- Metric dissolution
- Falling register, loss of metric vitality and thinning, darkening orchestration mark a "death" of sorts. "Myth" has expired as a way of achieving the prize of "Joy". The answer must lie elsewhere. Darkness floods in to replace the departing light.

**mm.: 193**
- Polyrhythmic with accelerating pulses in each layer
- Intensely polyrhythmic
- Rapid pitch repetition
- Polyrhythm
- Polytonality
- Chaos; crisis at the birth of a dark, outer self.
- The movement ends, all confusion and doubt.

**mm.: 215**
- Full awakening of Lewis' "dark, outer" life;
- "Myth" fragments incorporating descending "Joy" semitone
- "C" pitch center
- Melodic content through changes to their musical context (i.e. rhythm, orchestration, rhetorical devices evocative of darker emotions).

**mm.: 230**
- Slowly stabilizing 4/4

**mm.: 250**
- Polyrhythmic

**mm.: 269**
- Dissonant harmonies (2nd and 7th-based)
- The dark, outer life is the antithesis of the movement's opening: twisted, ugly, insistent and ever-present. The purity of the instrumental timbres themselves is twisted via dissonant harmony, grows and flutter-tones.
- A desperate, mocking transformation of the "Joy" motif is on high.
- Measures 267-268 are equal and opposite to the "Joy" apotheosis of mm. 72-74: This time an intense orchestral unison opens out to a wash of metric and tonal instability.
**Figure 13**

**Narrative Analysis - page 3 of 4**

**Movement II: Section I**

- **Meter:** Indeterminate
- **Aspects/Narrative Agents:** "Duality", manifest via voice leading in contrary motion; Dissonant string clusters; atonality
- **Narrative Significance:** "Duality" Aspect, the irreconcilable division between Lewis' inner and outer lives, is marked by dissonance and division.

**Section II**

- **Meter:** Loosely regular, becoming polymetric; slowing
- **Aspects/Narrative Agents:** "Duality" via gestures moving in contrary motion; descending glissandi; rapid pitch repetition; dissonant simultaneities; sequential repetition; rising harmonic clusters
- **Narrative Significance:** Continuing encroachment of the dark, outer life occurs amidst a futile search for lost "Joy" in upper-register echoes of Movement I material.

**Section III**

- **Meter:** Regular pulse; changing meter
- **Aspects/Narrative Agents:** "Joy" is recalled and "Faith" foreshadowed in the upper register; Atonality; repetitive pulse; polymeter
- **Narrative Significance:** The music is largely static, getting nowhere fast - an exercise in futility. Furtive searches for "Joy", for a lost inner life, continue in high register echoes of "Joy" where "Faith" is also foreshadowed. Increasing polymeter signifies the impotence of the search, impatience and emotional agitation.

- **Meter:** Polymetric
- **Aspects/Narrative Agents:** Rapid pitch repetition; rising and falling harmonic clusters; sequential repetition; polymeter
- **Narrative Significance:** Hints of traditional dance rhythms appear - weak, half-hearted attempts to celebrate worldly red herrings as substitutes for real "Joy". An interminable debate continues between inner and outer lives - high register woodwinds on the one hand and brass on the other. The continuing slide into darkness (strings) is only stalled, not halted by the ongoing hunt for "Joy".

- **Meter:** Polymetric, atop a dominant, regular pulse
- **Aspects/Narrative Agents:** "Duality" via contrary motion; rising and falling clusters; heavy, repetitive pulse; polymeter; descending glissandi
- **Narrative Significance:** The sliding glissandi of the opening make an assertive return, supported by an elemental, (neo-)primitive pulse. Crude, grotesque instrumental solos twist and mock "Joy" even as desperate attempts to recall it continue in the high register. Conflict builds as light and dark, inner and outer lives repel one another.

- **Meter:** "Faith" and "Joy" in broken, fragmented forms; "Duality" via contrary motion. Heavy, repetitive pulse; polymeter; pitch center
- **Aspects/Narrative Agents:** A march-like, martial statement of "Duality" indicates dominance and victory of the ideas of conflict and primal, even carnal pulsation as dark, wordly placeholders for "Joy". The return of pitch centers secures the assertion.
- **Narrative Significance:** "Myth", "Faith" and "Joy" appear in hopelessly twisted, broken forms in the high register, participating, even, in expressions of "Duality" - that is, darkness, division and conflict.
Figure 13
Narrative Analysis - page 4 of 4

mm.: 137

Meter: 6/8 suspended
Aspects/Narrative Agents: Orchestral "hits"; movement in contrary motion ("Duality")
Significance: Darkness proclaims victory over the light

mm.: 144

3/2 with background polymeter
"Myth" theme; regular meter; heavy pulsations; tonality; triadic harmony; unstable major-minor harmonic quality
Descending clusters and glissandi; heavy pulsations

mm.: 151

Irregular, single meter

mm.: 156


Section IV

mm.: 162

Meter: Polymetric with increasing instability
Aspects/Narrative Agents: "Duality" via contrary motion; rising and falling clusters; rapid pitch repetition, dissonant harmony; polymeter; atonality
Significance: The conflict raging up to this point reaches its climax through increasing polymetric intensity, dissolution of tonality and rapid-fire high register clusters and pitch repetition.

mm.: 172

Indeterminate
"Myth" reasserts its former character, a rally against the dark, yet the terse, commanding rhetoric of the previous section influences its re-introduction. Hints of the former beauty of "Myth" and "Joy" re-emerge through orchestration reminiscent of the first movement and triadic harmony.

mm.: 177

3/2 with background polymeter, then regular
"Myth" and "Duality" combine contrapuntally. Largely regular meter and functional, tonal harmony.

mm.: 185

"Faith" Aspects
Mellodic manifestations of "Myth", "Joy", "Faith" and "Duality" combine contrapuntally.

mm.: 188

"Joy" orchestration.

mm.: 197-241

Melodic manifestation of "Joy". "Faith" as a bridge between God and humankind and the reconciliation of "Duality" - conflicting natures within ourselves - is demonstrated through contrapuntal interweaving of each Aspect's melodic manifestation.

mm.: 242

Accel. polymeter
"Lydian" mode; rising octave; dotted rhythms; accelerating polymeter.

mm.: 255

Pitch center A = "Joy"; celebration; climax

mm.: 259

A final, celebratory gesture, absent the rash excesses of its previous appearance. The mood remains triumphant, however, as life has finally truly begun. "Joy" doesn't appear in its original form, revealed as having merely been pointing the way to its source.

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6. **Aesthetic Statement and Conclusions**

John Harbison once said:

I have come to believe that a composer begins early constructing his own history of music, one that has nothing to do with the official hierarchies . . . We must do this . . . We must [also] study and learn “the classics” on faith. Not to do so means that our eventual, personal history will be too parochial to be useful . . . But very soon, as we go along . . . we must mobilize our versions of the past behind us like support troops.21

Just as Lewis formed his personal identity through the construction of an internal narrative, my identity as a composer thus far has been formed just as Harbison describes: through the formation of a personal understanding or story of how music has evolved over the centuries, marked by the absorption of a wide variety of musical languages and approaches to compositional form. Although my aesthetic approach is clearly linked to the Romantic tradition, given its focus on drama, emotion, and sundry techniques rooted in that era, I have striven to employ such devices in ways reflective of modern modes of musical expression for the compelling reason that the vast palette of compositional resources developed since the end of the 19th-century provides traditional methods of elucidating a musical narrative with renewed promise. I believe that such potential is deserving of exploration and realization by the musicians and audiences of our time. As such, in pursuit of ways to evoke a wide variety of emotions within a single dramatic, musical narrative, I have employed a broad range of rhetorical devices according to my personal history and personal understanding of music.

As such, with Jack and the Blue Flower: An Aural Myth, I have explored a new approach to generating a compelling musical form. Through updated and expanded applications of leitmotif technique, processes of thematic transformation, and the pervasive use of polymetric textures, I have focused chiefly on creating music that is robust in its internal logic. I have

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nonetheless allowed a carefully considered, narrative-focused extra-musical conceptual design to guide the formation of an intrinsically musical narrative.

By founding a nascent compositional design on an earnest, evidence-based study of an individual’s identity development, it becomes feasible to musically portray the essence of that person in a way that is particularly authentic—in correspondence with the emotion and drama of his or her self-perceived journey toward personhood. An assiduous awareness and use of culturally-defined emotional and dramatic rhetoric may then be employed to transmit this internal drama to others using music’s unique powers to communicate in ways inaccessible to words alone.

Paul Hindemith, in his book *A Composer’s World*, commented on music’s capacity to move a listener in singular ways, provided he or she is willing to engage the experience of hearing:

> Reactions to music . . . may change as fast as musical phrases do . . . without causing any discomfort to the mind experiencing them. . . . The reactions music evokes are not feelings; they are the images, the memories of feelings. . . . the only way to "have"—to possess—music, is to connect it with those images, shadows, dreamy reproductions of actual feelings, no matter how realistic and crude or, on the contrary, how denatured, stylized, and sublimated they may be.”

I submit that Hindemith’s position embodies an ideal middle-ground between the attribution of mystical, revelatory powers to music (from the Baroque conception of music as embodying states of the soul to Skryabin’s infamous fascination with the elevation of his listener to supernatural, mystic planes of existence23) and the assertion that music “is essentially powerless to express anything at all, whether a feeling, an attitude of mind, a psychological

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mood.”\textsuperscript{24} In addition to my desire to advance the craft of music composition and to reach greater maturity as a creative artist, my focus in portraying Lewis’ search for self-identity in music is to dramatize the internal struggle this engendered in him, with a view to providing a unique perspective on the formative years of an influential thinker and Christian apologist. For those so inclined, this music may indeed elevate and enlighten due to the expression of its extra-musical inspiration in audible form; I aspire equally, however, to engage those for whom “the form is everything”\textsuperscript{25}. I believe that new music is most successful when it offers rewards for both the casual and inquisitive listener; for the amateur enthusiast and the discerning scholar alike. To the extent that this music achieves these ends, I shall be satisfied with its cultural life.


BIBLIOGRAPHY


McAdams, Dan P. “What Do We Know When We Know a Person?” *Journal of Personality* 51 (September 1995): 365–395.


Jack and the Blue Flower
An Aural Myth

Colin Pridy
**Instrumentation**

2 Flutes (2nd doubling Piccolo)  
2 Oboes  
2 Clarinets in Bb  
2 Bassoons (2nd doubling Contrabassoon)  
4 Horns in F  
2 Trumpets in C  
3 Trombones (2 Tenor, 1 Bass)  
4 Timpani  

Percussion 1  
[Crash Cymbal, Glockenspiel, Xylophone, Vibraphone, Chimes]  

Percussion 2  
[Triangle, Suspended Cymbal, Crash Cymbal, Medium Woodblock, Bass Drum, Glockenspiel, Crotales (bowed)]  

Harp  
Piano  
Strings

**Performance notes:**

Score in C.  
Total performance time ca. 17'30".  
All instruments sound as written save the following, which are notated according to their customary octave transpositions:  
- Piccolo (sounds one octave higher)  
- Glockenspiel (sounds two octaves higher)  
- Crotales (sound two octaves higher)  
- Xylophone (sounds one octave higher)  
- Double Bass (sounds one octave lower)

**Program notes:**

The early childhood of writer, scholar and philosopher-theologian Clive (“Jack”) Staples Lewis' was marked by unbidden experiences of ecstatic longing. Lewis described the sensation simply as Joy. Lewis was, in his words, a “votary of the Blue Flower” by the age of six, in reference to the use of that symbol in German Romantic literature as representative of the joining of humanity and nature.

Joy was the core of Lewis' inner life, emotional and holy (he later recognized); his conflicting outer life, by contrast, was one of strict rationalism, fraught with existential anxiety and spiritual doubt. These dissonant identities defined Lewis’ struggle to achieve a strong, purposeful sense of self throughout the third decade of his life. Lewis came to understand myth as a vehicle for the transmission of the divine at the age of 30; the religious faith that ensued enabled him to reconcile his dual natures and to form a unified personal identity.

*Jack and the Blue Flower: An Aural Myth* evokes images and emotions from Lewis' inner drama. Fantastic stories, myths, and the beauty of nature lead to initial appearances of Joy; the sensation is bittersweet and full of longing, its full expression perpetually out of reach. Its discovery must be celebrated nonetheless - it is the thing "to be preferred to anything else in the world, by those who have once felt it." The sensation is increasingly fleeting, however, despite continual returns to its presumed sources. The loss of Joy, cherished above all else, is devastating, and a crisis ensues.

"Nearly all that I love I believed to be imaginary; nearly all that I believe to be real I think grim and meaningless . . . at times the strain is severe". The trying on of every fashionable philosophic ideology of the day in a effort to address inner turmoil achieves little success; the dichotomy between inner and outer lives is as pronounced as ever. Having reached "the bottom of misery," screams of frustration and anguish are the only path that remains.

Then: the realization that Joy comes from without, not from within. Myth does not generate but merely transmits the essence of the divine. Unbelieving, yet called, even compelled, to answer the call of Joy, the only possible answer is Faith. It reconciles and interweaves conflicting natures and competing impulses. Life begins anew.

*With quotes from* Surprised by Joy and The Pilgrim’s Regress
With unaffected excitement
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Picc.
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Hn 3&4
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2 Tbn.
B. Tbn. 3
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Vcl
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**162** | **163** | **164** | **165**
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To Crotales

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Serene $j = 70$

### Fl

### Picc

### 2 Ob

### 2 Bb Cl

### Bsn

### C Bsn

### Hn 1, 2

### Hn 3, 4

### 2 Tpt

### 2 Tbn

### B Tbn

### Timp

### Perc 1

### Vln I

### Vln II

### Vla

### Vcl 1

### Vcl 2

### DB

### Pno

### Hp

### X Serene $j = 70$

### X Serene $j = 70$

### X Serene $j = 70$

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