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Study of two biblical choral symphonies with an original composition

Gregory Klug

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

A STUDY OF TWO BIBLICAL CHORAL SYMPHONIES
WITH AN ORIGINAL COMPOSITION

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Arts

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ABSTRACT

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The choral symphony is a hybrid genre. A symphony may be defined as an orchestral work that balances musical variety with an overarching unity, and creates the sense of a journey. Formal cohesion and a sense of inevitability are integral. These ends may be achieved without adherence to Classical symphonic structure. Franz Liszt's *Dante Symphony* and Hilding Rosenberg's *Revelation of St. John* are choral symphonies that use text from the Bible, and merit close analysis. They both serve as models in various ways to an original composition, the *Symphony of Creation*. Analysis of all three of these works shows the use of rhetorical formal structures, and demonstrates the explanatory power of a theory about the meaning of music: it is a language in which musical phenomena are recognized as metaphors for extra-musical phenomena. All the parameters of music—pitch, rhythm, timbre, harmony, dynamics, and range—collaborate to generate metaphors for such ideas as height and depth, light and dark, malevolence and benevolence, pain and pleasure, violence and gentleness.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When Beethoven included a chorus in the finale of his Ninth Symphony in 1824, he expanded the definition of the genre and established a precedent for later composers—not to mention creating one of the most celebrated monuments in the history of human art. Berlioz was the first to follow Beethoven's example with his *Romeo and Juliet* symphony of 1839, and in reference to this work coined the term “choral symphony.” Since that time several composers have written symphonic works that incorporate human voices, including Mahler, Stravinsky, and Glass. At the present time in the history of music, when so much has been done, and so many great works have been written, it is a challenge for a composer to contribute something new; but it is not impossible.

A choral symphony is a hybrid genre. Mendelssohn recognized this, and designated his *Lobgesang* of 1840 a “Symphonie-cantata.” Furthermore, if a choral symphony introduces voices early, or even immediately, as many twentieth-century choral symphonies do, then the work bears yet more similarity to the cantata or oratorio. Mahler's Eighth Symphony of 1907 is the first work to do this, setting the liturgical text *Veni Creator Spiritus*, as well as the final scene of Goethe's *Faust*. In applying the designation “symphony” to this work, Mahler too expanded the definition of the genre.

Havergal Brian, for one, followed this precedent in his Fourth Symphony of 1933, *Das Siegeslied*, a symphony setting Psalm 68, and featuring the chorus throughout.

But twentieth-century composers relied ever less on precedents. Webern's Op. 21 symphony, dating from 1928, virtually disregards any traditional notion of a symphony: it is a two-movement work for nine instruments using a serially-determined form. Also, Stravinsky's *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* of 1920 lacks a string section and the motivic development traditionally associated with the genre.¹ Works that challenge the traditional idea of a "symphony" continue to be composed in the present day, yet so do works that retain vestiges of it. To define the term "symphony" in some more specific way than "whatever a composer wants it to be" is another task that today is more problematic than ever.

However it is defined, the use of the term alone invites comparison with previous works that bear the title. The designation places a composition in a category that originated in the middle of the eighteenth century, whether the new work proclaims radical progress, gradual evolution, or reactionary conservatism.

Beyond this, an interpretation of the term symphony should start with its etymology: it is built out of the Greek roots "syn"—meaning "together," and "phōnē"—meaning "sounding." In late Greek and Medieval music theory, "synphonia" signified "consonance," as opposed to "diaphonia"—"dissonance." A symphony in this sense requires two or more sonic ideas that complement each other. This implies unity within variety, or variety within unity. In a symphonic work, variety is implied, because there

¹ Steven Walsh notes that Stravinsky used the plural form, "Symphonies," to "disarm the inevitable criticism that the work was not a symphony at all but an experimental arrangement of dissociated sound-blocks." Steven Walsh. "The Symphony, III: 20th Century, #2." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed 2 July, 2011).

are (usually) multiple instruments and music of substantial length. The etymology of the term therefore implies a sense of unity out of the obvious variety.

Classical composers accomplished this balance of unity and variety by using the framework of four movements consisting generally of (1) a sonata form movement, (2) a slow movement, whether in sonata/sonatina form, ternary, variation, or even binary form; (3) a Minuet or Scherzo, and (4) a Finale, usually a rondo or sonata form. This allowed for maximum variety that the skillful composer could balance with maximum unity. But this ideal may be retained without relying directly on the Classical symphonic framework. Robert Layton suggests this, while describing the essence of a symphony:

Any great symphony launches a listener on a mighty voyage; it conveys its illusion of movement by a complex of factors. Its composer's ability to generate motivic transformation and growth from a seminal group of ideas is fundamental. His skill is harnessing the tension generated between related key centers, however nebulous they may have become in our times, for it is the rate of tonal change which serves to convey movement. Its organic cohesion and sense of inevitability must be such that the listener cannot conceive of the musical journey on which he is embarked taking any other course. One cannot imagine the Fourth Symphony of Brahms or the Seventh of Sibelius proceeding in any other way.

In the greatest of symphonies, form and substance are indivisible. Sibelius once spoke of musical ideas themselves determining form...the impression made on the listener is that the composer has caught a glimpse of something that has been going on all the time in some other world that he has stretched out and captured. A letter Sibelius wrote in the autumn of 1914 puts it perfectly: "God opens his door for a moment, and his orchestra is playing the Fifth Symphony."²

Sibelius' Seventh Symphony is a single-movement work, and a prime example that demonstrates that a symphony need not achieve the balance between unity and variety specifically the way the Classical symphony did.

The idea that a symphony may bear so much resemblance to an oratorio or cantata as to introduce voices early in the work and feature them virtually throughout represents a step past the hybrid status of such choral symphonies as Beethoven's Ninth and

² Robert Layton, *A Guide to the Symphony* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 29.

Mendelssohn's Second. Though many of the choral symphonies of the twentieth century follow Mahler's precedent, it represents a significant departure from the traditional symphony. The evolution to this condition was indeed gradual, but the result is a different species. Although voices and words can create a powerful partnership, pure music may be able to communicate what vocal music—with its preoccupation with textual rather than sheer musical logic—cannot. A new symphony that demonstrates the expressive potential of instrumental music therefore represents an effective approach. That humans have discovered how to express sophisticated ideas using nothing but pitches, rhythms, and timbres in itself is remarkable. The development of the complexity of this language in the west began in the seventeenth century, and since J.S. Bach—who integrated and expanded the craft of his predecessors and contemporaries, has since rapidly progressed. Twentieth-century composers yielded indispensable contributions. For musicians and audiences to continue to converse in this language is a credit to the human race.

A choral symphony may maintain this instrumental ideal by limiting the use of the chorus to certain sections or movements, as Beethoven did; but wordless choir may also support it, as Milhaud demonstrated with the second movement of his Fourth Symphony. In either case, “pure” music is juxtaposed with vocal music, and each achieves new significance by being different than the other.

In summary, a symphony may be understood as an orchestral genre that subsumes great variety into an overarching unity, and creates a sense of a “mighty voyage” as described by Layton. These ends may be achieved without reliance on traditional symphonic structure. If a symphony uses a chorus throughout, it follows the precedent of Mahler's Eighth, and represents a genre distinct from that of its symphonic ancestry.

Limited use of a chorus in a symphony allows for contrast and the enjoyment of purely musical logic alongside textual-musical logic.

Albert Einstein said that the “grand aim of all science is to cover the greatest number of empirical facts by logical deduction from the smallest possible number of hypotheses or axioms.”³ This may be applied to music. Analysis relates to a composition the way natural science relates to nature: both seek to reverse-engineer the object of study to discover how it is designed. It behooves the composer to study intelligently crafted works.

Felix Weingartner called Liszt’s *Symphony to Dante’s Divine Comedy* a “masterpiece.” But historical reception has not concurred, and the work remains a rarity in the concert hall. It consists of two movements inspired by Dante’s epic poem: *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*. The closing section of the latter features a setting of parts of the *Magnificat*, quoted from Luke 1, for female/treble chorus. Some have interpreted this choral section to be a third movement. Wagner, to whom the work is dedicated, dissuaded Liszt from including the envisioned *Paradiso* movement. Perhaps the work has been poorly received because only the darker sections of Dante’s poem are depicted, without the redemption of *Paradise*.⁴ Of all the existing choral symphonies, this work is a particularly attractive model to a new choral symphony because, first, in addition to its musical value the work introduces the chorus toward the end, allowing for substantial exploitation of instrumental music; second, it achieves symphonic status while relying little on Classical symphonic structure; third, it expresses ideas of the Satanic and Divine;

³ Lincoln Barnett, *The Universe and Dr. Einstein*, Revised Edition (New York: Bantam Books, 1957), 112-113.

⁴ Peter Brown suggests this as well. See A. Peter Brown, *The Symphonic Repertoire*, Volume III Part A, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 822.

and fourth, it uses text from the Bible. These characteristics enable the work to serve as a unique model.

Hilding Rosenberg's Fourth Symphony, considered one of the Swedish composer's greatest works, dates from the Second World War, and features text from the book of Revelation, as well as poetry written by his colleague Hjalmar Gullberg specifically for the symphony. The text is in Swedish, but an English adaptation has been made. The work originally called for a reciter, but the revised version of 1949 substitutes a baritone solo. Although the multi-movement work has been called "more an oratorio than a symphony,"⁵ it features a twentieth-century adaptation of sonata form, as well as an interior slow movement and scherzo, as well as significant instrumental sections. The work consists of seven movements, each with subsections of choral-orchestral material, recitative, and *a cappella* choir. This work, like the *Dante Symphony*, also features musical ideas of the Satanic and Divine. The presence of this rather rare juxtaposition in Rosenberg's Fourth Symphony makes the work special; and being a twentieth-century work, it represents a different approach to similar ideas.

Both Liszt's *Dante Symphony* and Rosenberg's *Revelation of St. John* are choral symphonies that use text from the Bible. There is a significant number of Biblical choral symphonies that have been written, among the most celebrated of which are Mendelssohn's already-mentioned *Lobgesang*, Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* (1930), and Penderecki's *Seven Gates of Jerusalem* (1996). The concept of a Biblical choral symphony is interesting because it unites a sublime art form, the symphony, with text that has wide appeal and relevance. The study of the works by Liszt and Rosenberg will inform the presentation of a new Biblical choral symphony.

⁵ Layton, *A Guide to the Symphony*, 372.

In analyzing these works, the object is to cover the greatest number of musical notations by the fewest number of hypotheses or axioms. The gathering of musical facts in itself is meaningless; it is only when those facts are explained by overarching hypotheses that they become meaningful. Leonard Bernstein presented a hypothesis in his lecture-series at Harvard, *The Unanswered Question*, to explain what music means. He said that music possesses the power of expressivity by generating a “constant stream of metaphors.”⁶ Musical ideas compare with each other through repetition with variation; they also may compare with extra-musical “real world” phenomena; third, they may compare with devices used in poetry, such as antithesis, alliteration, etc. While Bernstein focused more on the first and third of these theories, this study shall take the second as the “Unified Theory”: music is a stream of metaphors or symbols for extra-musical phenomena. Pitches, rhythms, and timbres together resemble states of consciousness, emotions, spatial dimensions, or various forms of energy. The vocabulary of musical topics and styles codified by Leonard Ratner and others (i.e. storm music, pastoral music, dances, etc.) are included within the realm of this hypothesis.

To test this theory, analysis must consider not only harmony and form, but potentially any parameter of music, whether melody, dynamics, range, texture, harmonic rhythm, root movement, scales, modes, orchestration—everything that defines a piece of music. Pursuant to this, any analytical method that may serve to illuminate the resemblance between the musical and the extra-musical may be employed.

The following chapters will consist of an analysis of Franz Liszt’s *Symphony to Dante’s Divine Comedy*, an analysis of Hilding Rosenberg’s *Apocalypse of St. John*, and

⁶ Leonard Bernstein, *The Unanswered Question: Six Talks at Harvard by Leonard Bernstein* [1973], DVD, Kultur D1570 (1992).

an analysis of an original composition, *The Symphony of Creation*. The purpose of the analysis is threefold: (1) to establish the value of the works; (2) to demonstrate the Unified Theory; and (3) to show how the works compare, and how the original composition uses the other two as precedents.

CHAPTER II

ANALYSIS OF FRANZ LISZT'S "DANTE SYMPHONY"

On 2 June 1855, Liszt wrote to Richard Wagner:

So you are reading Dante. He's good company for you, and I for my part want to provide you with a kind of commentary on that reading. I have long been carrying a Dante Symphony around in my head—this year I intend to get it down on paper. There are to be 3 movements, *Hell*, *Purgatory*, and *Paradise*—the first two for orchestra alone, the last with chorus. When I visit you in the autumn I shall probably be able to bring it with me; and if you don't dislike it you can let me inscribe your name on it...⁷

Wagner responded on 7 June:

A Divina Commedia is it to be? That is a splendid idea, and I enjoy the music in anticipation. But I must have a little talk with you about it. That *Hell* and *Purgatory* will succeed I do not call into question for a moment, but as to *Paradise* I have some doubts, which you confirm by saying that your plan includes choruses. In the Ninth Symphony the last choral movement is decidedly the weakest part, although it is historically important, because it discloses to us in a very naive manner the difficulties of a real musician who does not know how (after hell and purgatory) he is to represent paradise.⁸

Wagner continues to convey his impressions of Dante's *Divine Comedy*: how he sympathized with the Inferno and Purgatorio, and respected elements of the Paradiso, but ultimately condemned it on philosophical grounds. He explains his loathing of the Catholic Deity, whom "Dante represents...with the same art with which you, no doubt,

⁷ Franz Liszt, *Selected Letters*, trans. Adrian Williams (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 375.

⁸ Franz Liszt and Richard Wagner, *Correspondence of Wagner and Liszt* Vol II: 1854-1861, trans. Francis Hueffer (London: H. Grevel and Co., 1897), 92.

will endeavor to celebrate...in your choruses.”⁹ After disparaging Dante’s image of Paradise, Wagner closes on a positive note: “But perhaps you, dear friend, will succeed better, and as you are going to paint a *tone* picture I might almost predict your success, for music is essentially the artistic, original image of the world.”¹⁰

Liszt suited the work to his friend’s liking. The result is a symphony of two movements, with a concluding choral section; essentially it is a pair of symphonic poems on Dante’s *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*. The tempos and forms are dictated by the program, and the work therefore represents for its time a radical approach to the symphony.

The *Dante Symphony* as a whole is unified by depicting a trajectory from the depths to the heights. Weingartner describes this: “Of still greater unity, and perhaps still more powerful than the ‘Faust’ symphony, is the music to Dante’s ‘Divine Comedy,’ with its expressive picture of the infernal tortures and Purgatory, rising higher and higher, towards the utmost heights of purity and sentiment.”¹¹ Kenneth Hamilton’s comments are similar:

His skill in producing a kaleidoscope of orchestral color reaches its zenith in the *Dante Symphony*, typified by the gradual raising of the orchestral tessitura from the subterranean brass choruses of “Inferno” to the Magnificat that gives us a glimpse of paradise, its ethereal harmonies resonating high in the orchestra. The tonal journey follows the same path from a Stygian D minor in ‘Inferno,’ obsessed with unstable tritonal harmonies, through the B minor of “Purgatorio,” to the modally inflected B major of the Magnificat. There are of course, contrasts within the movements, the most striking being Francesca da Rimini’s *adante amoroso* in F[#] major...”¹²

⁹ Liszt & Wagner, *Correspondence*, 94.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 99.

¹¹ Felix Weingartner, *The Symphony Writers Since Beethoven* (Westport: CT Greenwood Press, 1971. Orig. publ. Leipzig, 1897), 134-135

¹² Kenneth Hamilton, “Liszt,” in *The Nineteenth-Century Symphony*, ed. D. Kern Holoman (New York: Schirmer Books, 1997), 158.

The tonal journey of the symphony contributes to the representation of the vertical journey. Brown observes that unity is achieved by the progressive purification of the harmonic language, from “the most chromatic” in the *Inferno*, to “less chromatic and more stable” in *Purgatorio*, to “diatonic and at times like chant” in the *Magnificat*.¹³ Thus the symphony achieves unity via means different than those of the traditional Classical symphony, but which are still effective. This is an important lesson for future symphonists.

Movement I: *Inferno*

Barricelli articulates the artistic context in which this music was written: “Liszt’s initial problem had to do with writing infernally horrible music, particularly at a time in the history of the art when the notion still prevailed...that music should be only sweet and beautiful and not concern itself with the characteristic, let alone the ugly.”¹⁴ Barricelli suggests “beautiful ugliness” to be the aesthetic achievement of the *Inferno*.

The movement is a large ABA form, with borrowed elements from sonata form and opera. It erupts with an octave-unison melody played by the low brass and low strings. The orchestration in this symphony is remarkable, as Hamilton observed. The use of three trombones and a tuba, in particular, was novel in 1856, and contributes volumes to Liszt’s depiction of Hell.

The thunderous melody is accompanied with words in the score, taken from Canto 3 of the *Inferno*: “Per me si va ne la città dolente” (through me is the way to the city of woe) (see Ex. 1). Knowledge of this text enables the performers to execute the

¹³ Brown, 809.

¹⁴ Jean-Pierre Barricelli, “Liszt’s Journey Through Dante’s Hereafter,” *Journal of the American Liszt Society*, 14 (1983), 5.

music with a conscious association of the words with the notes, resulting in a more subtle expressivity.

Lento

Timp. *secco*
p *ff*

T.-t. *mf*
suffocato

trbs.
tba. vla.
vc. db.

Per me si va nel-la cit-tà do-len-te

ff

Ex. 1: Liszt, *Inferno*, mm. 1-5, reduction

The descending semitones that end the phrase, corresponding to the word “dolente,” eliminate major or minor tonality. If the phrase ended with a leap from A to D, D minor would be firmly established. The fact that it does not do this, but ends on a chromatic note outside any recognizable key creates non-resolution. “Sorrow” is depicted by non-tonality. This is an important concept that pervades the following depiction of Hell.

A diminuendo takes this grim melody to silence, and is spliced with a crescendo in the two timpani, leading to a suffocated climax accented with the tam-tam (see Ex. 1). Lack of resolution leading nowhere but to unreleased concentrated energy—this is appropriate tone-poetry. Not only does it suggest torment, but intentionality: the buildup of the timpani features a slow but direct trajectory from *piano* to *fortissimo*, and is

stopped all at once. Such a sound cannot be stopped but with additional, rapid intention. The first few bars effectively portray the malevolence of the Gates of Hell.¹⁵

The three beats of silence that follow in m. 5 heighten the sense of doom. As the material repeats in mm. 5-8, the parallelism of the music corresponds to that of the poetry, “Per me si va nell’ eterno dolore” (through me is the way to everlasting pain). At m. 9, the third phrase forcefully completes the thought, featuring an ascending octatonic scale (in this case Octatonic 1-2-4; see Ex. 2).



Ex. 2: Liszt, *Inferno*, mm. 9-11, reduction

The phrase ends with a melodic 5[^] to 1[^] cadence suggesting G-sharp-minor. But the following sonority, after two beats of silence, is C-sharp-minor, which seems to be the tonic, but soon yields to diminished-seventh-chords that end the phrase with tonality destroyed. The key of this piece so far is anyone’s guess—if it has one. Liszt has even left the key signature empty.

Commentators claim the key to be D minor. This might be construed from the opening phrases, which emphasize chord tones on strong beats, and feature a 3[^]-2[^]-1[^] line. But the phrase starts with C-sharp and ends with G-sharp, eliminating D-minor tonality; and the G-sharp along with the D and F of the timpani create a D-diminished

¹⁵ Whether Dante intended them to be malevolent, indifferent, or lovers of justice is another question; Liszt’s interpretation unequivocally portrays malevolence.

chord. D minor is at best fleetingly implied. Ellen Knight's comment is far closer to the reality: "It would be more apt to say that the key is D diminished."¹⁶

Bar 12 begins the "Lasciate" motive (see Ex. 3). Brown likens this powerful, nearly monotonal passage to Monterone's curse in Verdi's *Rigoletto* of 1851.¹⁷ Both are fate-deciding proclamations. In the *Inferno*, this decree will be confirmed.

12

Timp. *secco*
p *ff*

T.-t. *mf*
suffocato

(hn., tr.) La - scia - te ogni spe - ran - za, voi ch'en - tra - te!
sf
sfp

Ex. 3: Liszt, *Inferno*, mm. 14-19, reduction

This completes the introduction of the Gates of Hell. What follows is continual unrest, depicted by extremely chromatic and essentially non-tonal music. By "non-tonal" I mean "not establishing any major or minor key." Measures 18-21 feature atmospheric chromatic scales in the low strings, illustrating the winds of Hell. Measure 22 introduces a descending chromatic theme (see Ex. 4).

This material is now somewhat faster than the original "Lento" marking, since Liszt indicated "accelerando poco a poco" in m. 19. So far there is still no major-minor tonality. Barricelli says the descending chromatic theme "produces an eerily jagged effect

¹⁶ Ellen Knight, "The Harmonic Foundation of Liszt's Dante Symphony," *Journal of the American Liszt Society* 10 (Dec. 1981), 59.

¹⁷ Brown, 809.

but also has no identifiable tonality, no central tone, therefore no centralized, purposeful motion” resulting in a “sense of disorder” and “downward motion.”¹⁸

Ex. 4: Liszt, Inferno, mm. 22-27, reduction
“Descending Chromatic Theme”

This material is now somewhat faster than the original “Lento” marking, since Liszt indicated “accelerando poco a poco” in m. 19. So far there is still no major-minor tonality. Barricelli says the descending chromatic theme “produces an eerily jagged effect but also has no identifiable tonality, no central tone, therefore no centralized, purposeful motion” resulting in a “sense of disorder” and “downward motion.”¹⁹

Measure 25 introduces another theme, marked “violento” (see Ex. 4.). The pitches contained in mm. 25-30 comprise the octatonic 1-2-4 set. At m. 31 the material of mm. 18-30 repeats, transposed up a semitone. It is not until m. 43 that the diminished harmony, now A-diminished-seven, resolves to a triad: B^b-minor. But it is in second inversion, weakening the sense of resolution. D-minor tonality is nowhere in evidence.

¹⁸ Barricelli, 7.

¹⁹ Barricelli, 7.

Measures 48-63 feature more fully-diminished-seventh chords, as explorations of texture, range, and orchestration drive the music forward—using the two main thematic ideas—the “descending chromatic” and “violento” themes.

Measure 64 begins a new tempo “Allegro frenetico,” featuring the violento theme.

Example 5 includes two alternative harmonic analyses of this music.

Alla breve
Allegro frenetico (Quasi doppio movimento)

64

chordal analysis: $g\sharp_7^\circ$ B_7^\flat F^+ d_6 $g\sharp_7^\circ$ B_7^\flat F^+ d_6 $g\sharp_7^\circ$ B_7^\flat F^+ d_6 $g\sharp_7^\circ$ B_7^\flat F^+ d_6 b_7° E^7 c_6

$d:$ vii_7° / Ger^6 V^+ i_6 vii_7° / Ger^6 V^+ i_6 vii_7° / Ger^6 V^+ i_6 vii_7° / Ger^6 V^+ i_6 X X X

V V V V

Ex. 5: Liszt, *Inferno*, mm. 64-68, reduction
 with alternative harmonic analyses

The music passes very quickly, and is harmonically ambiguous. In m. 64 the descending semitone of beats one and two is repeated by inversion in beats three and four.²⁰ The measure thus consists of two parallel motives. This formula is repeated in mm. 65-67.

Major or minor tonality emerges either when a triad is sustained or established by a cadence. The sense of resolution is more certain when both subdominant and dominant harmony fortify the tonic. So far, none of this has happened in the *Inferno*. The harmonic analysis in Example 5 showing the music to be in D-minor is a theoretical abstraction; the music proceeds very quickly, and emphasizes chromatic melody, so that D-minor tonality

²⁰ For purposes of discussion, the beats will be identified as if in four, although the music is alla brev.

is extremely tenuous at best. This music is like the composer's fourth Mephisto waltz, which he entitled, "Bagatelle Without Tonality."

Measure 64 contains four different chords including a diminished chord, an implied German sixth chord, an augmented chord, and a first inversion minor chord. Together these chords create an absence of tonal resolution. Also Barricelli says the downward and upward pulsations describe "pained restiveness," and "a feeling of restless insecurity...that characterizes most of Hell's damned."²¹

The music that continues through m. 130 develops the violento theme, and is conceived out of the chromatic scale. The chords follow root movements that establish no major or minor tonality. Attempts to resolve them thus would be as contrived, or even more so, than that showed in Example 5.

Starting at m. 131, D-minor emerges for the first time in the symphony as the indisputable key; but the harmony remains chromatic, and the tonic is never in root position, on a strong beat, or sustained without non-harmonic tones for more than a frenetic moment (see Ex. 6). Preceding this material Liszt sustained the dominant of D—A^{m9} (or vii^{o7o} with a dominant pedal); but its significance as the dominant is not clear until D-minor emerges in mm. 131-132. The length of time the dominant is sustained is significant: mm. 103-110, and then again at 121-130). The continual postponement of resolution is emphasized, and when the tonic comes, it comes weakly and fleetingly, as if something hoped for in vain.

²¹ Barricelli, 7.

131 (Allegro frenetico)

sempre *ff*

tp

pt

ret.

stimmtausch; cf mm. 135-136

ant

d: vii°7 i6 vii°7 i6 vii°7/iv

iv6 vii°7/iv iv6 vii°7 V7 iii i

Ex. 6: Liszt, Inferno, mm.131-140
reduction with analysis²²

Even this vain hope does not last long. Between mm. 149 and 162 various tonalities are implied in passing; finally at m. 163 there is a decisive sustained chord against a descending line in the strings and winds (see Ex. 7). The scale is not diatonic, but the Jewish scale, also known as the Spanish scale. Yet the corresponding chord is in second inversion, and does not resolve as well-behaved six-four chords ought to.

²² In this example, the analytical abbreviations are: *pt*=passing tone; *tp*=tonic pedal; *ret*=retardation; *ant*=accented neighboring tone.

Ex. 7: Liszt, Inferno, mm. 163-175, reduction

Since Liszt did not intend to write Jewish or Spanish music here, but merely avoid the diatonic scale and its concomitant sense of stronger tonality, the pitch set seen in the melody of Example 7 is best identified as the fifth mode of harmonic minor.²³ This peculiar mode predominates for some time, until non-functional progressions ensue in mm. 230-259, including root movement by tritone: B-major alternates with F-minor in mm. 231-241.

Measure 260 ushers the Lento tempo again, and the *Lasciate* proclamation, this time transposed up a fourth and re-harmonized. This second appearance is more forceful, with a near tutti, a wider range, and fuller texture in the brass. The bass gradually descends to B^b in m. 266, where for the first time in the symphony a major triad in root position is heard, void of restless melodic motion and the dissonant non-harmonic-tones that result. Hamilton says this “awesome consonance seems even more terrifying as a

²³ This terminology assumes the harmonic minor scale to represent the first mode, and the rearrangement of the same pitches starting and ending on the second scale degree to represent the second mode, etc. In this way, the fifth mode of harmonic minor features the pitch set of the harmonic minor scale, starting and ending on the dominant of the first mode.

symbol of ineluctable damnation than anything that has gone before.”²⁴ As usual the music does not resolve. B^b major soon yields to diminished-seventh- and out-of-context French-sixth-harmony. This gradually fades to silence in m. 279, which ends the first section of the movement.

The B^b-major chord has its origin in the opening moments of the symphony: the first phrase included an outline of a first-inversion B^b-major triad (see Ex. 8).



Ex. 8: Opening phrase with
noted B^b-major harmony

The repetition of this chord in m. 266, now fully harmonized and in root position, is the fulfillment of the initial proclamation of doom. But it is only a partial fulfillment; Liszt's argument continues.

Throughout the A-music unrest and suffering are depicted by the absence of tonal resolution. But this is balanced with very clear, varied repetitions of musical motives and phrases. Tonality creates a sense of order by which harmonies and melodies are heard in relation to the tonic. When this is absent, something else must govern the listener's interpretation of the music; in the A-music of the Inferno, it is the very clear varied repetition of motives and phrases. In this Liszt communicates very effectively. While his melody and harmony are complex and ambiguous, these repetitions are unequivocal.

²⁴ Hamilton, 158.

But some of his repetitions are subtle. Liszt's themes are in fact derived from the opening notes of the symphony. In the first phrase, there is a triplet rhythm on the second beat after the first downbeat (see Ex. 8 above). This rhythm appears again on the second beat of the descending chromatic theme, only now the pitches are chromatic (see Ex. 9).



Ex. 9: Descending Chromatic Theme

Also the third and fourth beats of this theme feature staccato unit beats that greedily anticipate the next marcato downbeat; the same occurred in the ascending octatonic scale in mm. 9-11, as B and C[#] reach D[#] (see Ex. 10). The strength associated with “strong” beats is exploited and exaggerated as the slower rhythms approach the downbeat as if with little effort, depicting the idea of power.



Ex. 10: Ascending Octatonic Scale of mm. 9-11

In the violento theme, the first four notes are a transposed rearrangement of the first four notes of the opening phrase, both forming the same octatonic subset (see Ex. 11).



Ex. 11: Comparison of motives of opening phrase and violento theme

Also, as the violento theme is developed in the Allegro frenetico section, there are more allusions to the opening phrase. The end of m. 67 and the beginning of 68 feature a dotted rhythm leading to a downbeat, followed by a unit beat chromatic descent, which also happened in mm. 2-3 (see Ex. 12).



Ex. 12: Comparison of mm. 2-3 with mm. 67-69

Furthermore the remainder of m. 68 features the ascending leap of a minor sixth, also familiar from m. 2. This leap is salient because most of the other melodic motion proceeds by seconds and thirds.

The A-section consists of an exploration of the two primary themes, both of which derive from the opening moments of the work. The result is symphonic unity. When the possibilities of this material are demonstrated, the first A-section ends, and the following B-section offers contrast of mood.

Dante's *Divine Comedy* is a substantial epic poem, with many details, episodes, and events. To depict all of it musically would result in an extremely long work. Vernon Harrison says the most a composer can hope to do is "to select a few characteristic episodes and try to convey the general feeling of each of the three parts of the *Comedy*."²⁵ The B-section depicts one of the many episodes of the poem: that of Paolo and Francesca da Rimini, whom Dante meets in the Second Circle of Hell in Canto V.

²⁵ Vernon Harrison, "The Dante Symphony," *Liszt Society Journal* XI (1987), 65.

Parts of Dante's vision were based on historical events; the story of Paolo and Francesco is one of them. Harrison paraphrases:

Francesco, daughter of Guildo Vecchio da Polenta, was married for political reasons to Gianciotto, son of Malatesta Verruchio, Lord of Rimini. Gianciotto was deformed, but a capable man. According to the version of the story which Dante follows, Francesca was tricked into the belief that she was marrying Gianciotto's handsome younger brother, Paolo, and did not discover the deception until it was too late. The date was about 1275, and some ten years later, Gianciotto, having surprised his wife and Paolo in what are usually described as compromising circumstances, stabbed them both.²⁶

Now they are in Hell, relating their "perverse misfortune" to Dante. An understanding of this pathetic tale is essential for one to fully appreciate how the B-section relates to the surrounding A-sections.

Reeves Shulstad notes that in the *Divine Comedy* "the hurricane in the second circle subsides so that Francesca may tell her story, which in Liszt's orchestral version begins with a recitative melody played by a solo bass clarinet."²⁷ The B-section is a time of story-telling; the listener observes the sorrow of an individual as she relates her memories, and the imagination is taken away for a time from the torments of the underworld. This affords much needed musical contrast. The means by which this is accomplished includes yet another notable feature of Liszt's instrumentation: the use of the bass clarinet, like the inclusion of the low brass, was exceptional in 1856.

Dominant-minor-ninth harmony prevails in mm. 280-288, while the corresponding melodic material, including the solo recitative of the bass clarinet, consists again of the fifth mode of harmonic minor. It is not until m. 287 that the diatonic scale is presented for the first time in the symphony as the foundation of the music. The

²⁶ Harrison, 66.

²⁷ Reeves Shulstad, "Liszt's Symphonic Poems and Symphonies," in *The Cambridge Companion to Liszt*, ed. Kenneth Hamilton (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 221.

foreground is still chromatic, but the diatonic structure produces music of an entirely different character, as the layer analysis in Example 13 shows.

(Quasi andante, ma sempre un poco mosso)
cl. *dolce teneremente*

287

F#: vii^{♯4}₃ V^{♯9} I vii^{♯4}₃ V^{♯9} I

LAYER ANALYSIS

287

F#: I

^6 ^5

3 3

///

Ex. 13: Liszt, *Inferno*, mm. 287-292 with layer analysis

The raised-submediant is critical in achieving contrast to the darkness of the A-music. This is because the diatonic modes possess varying degrees of “brightness” and “darkness,” and the raised sixth scale degree is an attribute of the brighter modes. Locrian mode has been called the darkest because it has the greatest number of lowered scale degrees, and Lydian mode the brightest because it has the greatest number of raised scale degrees.²⁸ The major-mode structure shown in Example 13 contrasts with the chromatic material of the A-music.

Also, the dotted rhythm leading to the downbeat of m. 288 is a motive familiar from the A-music, only now the line resolves up a semitone, happily leading to the tonic. The use of parallel thirds has a kindly effect. In Barricelli’s words, “Liszt makes us aware of the accompanying presence of Paolo as well [as Francesca], through the most obvious

²⁸ R. Evan Copley, *Harmony: Baroque to Contemporary Part Two* (Champaign, IL: Stipes Publishing, 1991), 91-92.

harmony of two persons, namely thirds, played by two clarinets.”²⁹ But the extreme thinness of the texture and soft dynamic level underscore the fact this benevolent music represents but a past memory.

In m. 311, the English horn takes the gloomy recitative melody, and words are inscribed in the score as in the introduction, now reading: “Nessum maggior dolore che ricordarsi del tempo felice nella miseria” (No greater pain than to remember days of joy when in misery)—text found in *Inferno* 5.121.

Harrison praises the following *Andante amoroso* section starting at m. 354: “This, surely, must be one of the loveliest things that Liszt ever wrote, and the symphony deserves permanent remembrance for this alone”³⁰ (see Ex. 13). In addition to the indication “*amoroso*” in the tempo, Liszt inscribes the violin melody with “*dolce, con intimo sentimento*,” the accompanying harp part with “*teneremente*,” the clarinet and bassoon harmony with “*dolce suave*,” the violas even get a footnote: “*very pure, equal, and tender*.” With these indications alone, in conjunction with the Paolo-Francesca program, it is clear that this music is intended to depict the erotic rapture of lovers.

One believes the tonic may indeed arrive in the *Andante amoroso*, which it does, handsomely, in m. 360—an ingratiating F-sharp-major. The passage leading to this moment makes its arrival all the more climactic. In m. 354 the melody, craftily set in 7-4 time, features gracefully descending conjunct motion, followed by a sprightly leap of an ascending fifth (see Ex. 14). This ascending leap contrasts with the descending-chromatic theme of the A-music, evoking an levity rather than gravity.

²⁹ Barricelli, 8.

³⁰ Harrison, 67.

Andante amoroso (Tempo rubato)

F#: V⁷/V V⁷ V¹³ V⁷/V V⁷ V¹³
=A: V¹³/vi

Ex. 14: Liszt, *Inferno*, mm. 354-355
reduction with harmonic analysis

Resolution is still postponed, as the $3^{\wedge}-2^{\wedge}-1^{\wedge}$ line does not complete with tonic harmony for some time. The musical foreplay continues as the material is repeated, continually modulating upward—first to A, then to C, and back again to F-sharp. Here, the leap of a perfect fifth becomes that of a major sixth (see Ex. 15). Now a cadence in the high register follows a $3^{\wedge}-2^{\wedge}-1^{\wedge}$ line over V^{13} - I_6 harmony, with a slowly resolving suspension at the tonic, depicting unbearable delight. The cellos, basses, and bassoons help by imitating the violin melody in the low register, also featuring the passionate leap of a major sixth.

This leap occurs again in m. 364, both in the high register of the violins and of the cellos, followed by gracefully descending lines in “the most obvious harmony of two persons”—parallel sixths. The music does not come to rest yet; it is too busy relishing the ecstasy. After the material repeats—varied and re-orchestrated—a $3^{\wedge}-2^{\wedge}-1^{\wedge}$ cadence in the middle register is attempted. If it were achieved, with the tonic in root position, there would be a sense of finality. Instead the music meanders, giving way to soft, non-tonal material, and the first horn utters the hateful *Lasciate* theme, ushering a harp glissando that leads to the second A-section.

359 VI, woodwinds $\hat{3}$ *3* *rinf.* P S R $\hat{2}$ $\hat{1}$ *3* *ret.* *3*
 hp, vla *3* *rinf.* P S R *3* *ret.* *3*
 Vc, Db, Bs *3* *ret.* *3*
 V^7 V^{13} I_6 V/vi

361 S R *3* *cresc. e molto appassionato* *cresc.*
 I_6 V/vi I_6

363 *rinf.* *3* *rinf.* *3* *3*
 ii_6 I_6 vii_7/V

Ex. 15: Liszt, *Inferno*, mm. 359-365,
 reduction with analysis

Tonal resolution was once possessed in all its sweetness, like the love of Paolo and Francesca; and it is still earnestly craved, but its memory only makes the present misery worse. Again, “No greater sorrow than to remember days of joy while in misery.” The A-music that follows is sardonic, and the inebriated *Andante amoroso* only serves to make the *Inferno* more sinister.

The motivic unity between the B-music and the A-music contributes significantly to the idea that the former ultimately pays tribute to the latter. For example, the Andante amoroso melody bears motivic similarity to the descending chromatic and violento themes. The ornamental, weak-division triplet followed by two eighth-note-divisions in the Andante amoroso is a diminution of the same rhythm in the descending chromatic theme (see Ex. 16).

(Abstracted rhythm)

Andante amoroso

Descending Chromatic theme

Ex. 16: Comparison of rhythmic motive

Also, the last two notes of the phrase recall the basic unit of the violento theme, only now neither chromatic, nor frenetic, nor aggressively articulated, nor repeated contortedly by inversion. The similarity is even more clear in mm. 383-385 (see Ex. 17). Here also is a familiar dotted rhythm leading to a descending motion on the downbeat, just as in the opening phrase of the symphony.

384

similar to violento theme

similar to opening phrase

3 3 3 3

Ex. 17: Liszt, *Inferno*, mm. 384-385

The next A-section begins with a soft, slowly gathering march rhythm, featuring very low registers, after which the violento theme is presented in the violas and clarinets in m. 406. This time Liszt provides a footnote: “This entire passage is intended to be a blasphemous mocking laughter, very sharply accentuated in the two clarinets and the violas.” This music is self-consciously opposite in character to the preceding *Andante amoroso*. The melody is very simple, repetitive, slowly developed, and “*marcato molto*,” it is ostentatious and deliberate. Liszt’s ability to portray malice is remarkable.

The music gradually builds to a tutti at m. 465, where the material of mm. 87-162 is recapitulated verbatim. New material appears in mm. 541-571: the A-themes are frenetically developed, chromatic and dissonant as ever, as the music intensifies, until in m. 572 the descending theme that in the first A-section was in harmonic-minor-mode-five on B now appears in D minor (see Ex. 18).

571

fff

sf

Ger⁶

I⁴

577

p

f

tp VI

3

3

Ex. 18: Liszt, *Inferno*, mm. 571-582, reduction

This thematic re-appearance in a different key recalls sonata form. Also, it is the first time in the A-music that a diatonic set is to be found. The relative tonal certainty adds rhetorical power to the A-music. However, the tonic chord is in second inversion, as before. There is tonal certainty, but not a complete sense of resolution, because there is more to follow.

Soon the descending chromatic theme appears in augmentation, bringing the relentless tutti to a temporary close. In the next section, marked *Più moderato*, the music is thinly scored with soft tremolo strings and bass drum, and ever more certain with the theme in augmentation, and the tempo slower. Disjunct tritones reign supreme as the melody gathers. The energy builds, and non-functional triadic progressions ensue, leading to G-sharp minor, which is sustained for a rhythmically intensifying fanfare, *fff*, which the brass announce in mm. 622-630. The triumph of the Gates of Hell only begins to be celebrated when the low strings and low brass state the 5[^] to 1[^] theme of Example 18, now in G-sharp-minor. This is a direct allusion to the opening of the symphony, in which the similar instruments tonicized G-sharp-minor in m. 11.

Next, the G-sharp-minor chord is alternated confidently with a D-minor chord, as if mocking traditional dominant-tonic tonality. In place of I-V-I there are two minor chords separated by that significant interval, the tritone. The following tutti explosion of the *Lasciate* theme, marked *Adagio* and featuring stark open fifths on D, is uncompromising. It presents itself even more forcefully than at the end of the first A-section. The entire orchestra is represented, playing *fff* (see Ex. 19). The first violins, flutes, and piccolo reach as high as A6.³¹ An inexorable chromatic scale slowly climbs as

³¹ The octave-identification system employed here is that which identifies the lowest C on the piano as C1, middle C as C4, the D a second above middle C as D4, etc.

the first utterance of the theme completes, resulting in harsh dissonance and more non-functional triadic progressions. Meanwhile the percussion achieve an overwhelming climax that makes one shudder. The movement closes with one last assertion of the theme, declaring open fifths on D.

Adagio

637

The musical score is a reduction of Liszt's *Inferno*, measures 637-646. It is marked **Adagio**. The score includes percussion parts (Timp., Cym., B. D., T.-t.) and piano accompaniment. The vocal lines are also present with the lyrics: "La - scia - te ogni spe - ran - za voi ch'en - tra - te". The dynamics range from *p* (piano) to *ff* (fortissimo). The tempo is **Adagio**. The score is divided into two systems, with measure numbers 637 and 642 indicated at the beginning of each system.

642

Ex. 19: Liszt, *Inferno*, mm. 637-646, reduction

Liszt's music proves the initial proclamation of the Gates of Hell. Each recurrence of the brass section's *Lasciate* theme is increasingly forceful. The continual denial of tonal resolution, and the sardonic subsumption of tonal bliss constitute the power of Liszt's argument, culminating in a final and irrefutable declaration.

Dante's poem is an allegory intended to motivate people to eschew evil and embrace good. In the *Inferno*, the motivation for this is the fear of torment. Liszt's musical depiction may likewise be heard with fear and trembling. But it is also possible to identify with thoughts of power rather than humility, in the same exact music. This is true of the listener, and especially the performer—who participates in recreating the sounds of violence. The paradox evinces the complexity of the art, which admits two contradictory interpretations, and is completely logical from either perspective.

Liszt's hybrid form has been able to sustain some nineteen minutes of music without rambling or sacrificing musical unity—an impressive feat. What one listens for in much of this music is how pathos is evoked through harmonic non-resolution. Such absence of tonality is a remarkable feature for a nineteenth-century work. Kenneth Hamilton observes:

Liszt's inheritors have so overused certain effects from his works that some highly original passages now either teeter on the brink of cliché or fall headlong over it. This is especially true of the tempestuous chromatic writing in "Inferno" of the *Dante* Symphony. If we are able to ignore associations built up in our own century, "Inferno" can hardly fail to make a vivid impact.³²

Perhaps if the *Inferno* was written some sixty years later, it would have employed a yet freer approach to dissonance, and the ugliness of damnation. But regardless, the pathetic quality of continual non-resolution, the contrasting awesome quality of the *Lasciate* music, and the overall musical unity together reflect profound compositional skill.

³² Hamilton, 158

Movement II: Purgatorio

Barricelli notes that the Purgatorio movement “takes only a few thematic cues from the poem, shaping moods (“spiritual moments”) more than events...”³³ The tempo is marked *Andante con moto quasi allegretto; Tranquillo assai*. Static, consonant harmony softly features a first inversion D-major chord. The clear, gentle tonality creates the utmost relief, and restores the hope that the Inferno had so decisively demolished. Against the softly undulated strings and harp appears a horn call, and a solo melody in the oboe and just after in the English horn. Everything is diatonic, and $3^{\wedge}-2^{\wedge}-1^{\wedge}$ lines are gracefully stated, establishing the key (see Ex. 20).

The musical score for Liszt's Purgatorio, mm. 8-13, reduction, is presented in three systems. The first system (mm. 8-10) shows the Oboe 1 (ob. 1) part with a melodic line, the Harp and strings (hp., strings) part with a hemiola pattern, and the piano reduction part with a hemiola pattern. The second system (mm. 11-13) continues the melodic line in the Oboe 1 part, with the harp and strings and piano reduction parts maintaining their hemiola patterns. The score is marked 'p' (piano) and 'molto espr.' (molto espressivo). The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 3/4.

Ex. 20: Liszt, Purgatorio, mm. 8-13, reduction

The softly undulating low-to-middle register strings and harp feature hemiola, and are contrasted with the soft but piercing oboe in the higher register. The major-mode

³³ Barricelli, 14.

melody of the winds suggests the concept of light; and the contrast in timbre, texture, and rhythm lends itself to the idea that the wind melodies belong to a different realm. This material has been linked to Purgatorio I.13-21:

A sweet color of oriental sapphire,
 which was forming in the clear sky,
 pure from the zenith of the horizon,
 restored delight to my eyes
 as soon as I came out of the...air
 that had afflicted both by eyes and lungs.
 The beautiful planet which prompts to love
 made the whole east smile
 veiling the Fishes that escorted her.³⁴

The material consists of entirely static D-major harmony through m. 27, as the harp arpeggiates its high register, closing the section. The music repeats, transposed up a semitone. This transposition, and the variation of color, is clearly perceived as the melodies repeat, and thus the idea of slow but gradual ascent—the essence of Purgatory—is introduced.

A different mood prevails beginning at m. 56, where a new section begins with the tempo indication *Più lento*. Now that hope has been reestablished by consonant harmony, there is a musical depiction of the pain of deep remorse. The thematic material alludes to that of the *Inferno*, but here it is merely sorrowful rather than tortured, with short breather descending phrases that sound like groans. The following sections of the movement feature liturgically associated styles, chorale and fugue, as well as arioso and recitative styles.³⁵ Short descending chromatic conjunct lines contribute to the tearful quality of the music. Measures 68-81 feature chorale style with isolated phrases employing strict control of dissonance, suspensions, and corresponding modulations.

³⁴ Dante Alighieri and Mark Musa, *The Portable Dante* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995), 196.

³⁵ As Brown has observed. cf Brown, 815.

Measures 82-105 feature alternating horn calls with short-breathed phrases of the lower strings that modulate up by a major third, as if slowly plodding forward, attaining gradual admittance to next tonal level. The material starts in B minor, modulates to E^b major, then to G major, and back again to B minor. When B minor is achieved again, one senses that ascent has been made, even though the key is the same as at the start. This is due to the fact that time has passed, and as the cycle continues again from B-minor, the woodwinds are included, which now participate in the continuing ascent.

128 **Lamentoso**

133

Ex. 21: Liszt, *Purgatorio*, mm. 128-136,
fugue subject & excerpt of first answer

Another liturgically associated style appears in m.129: a fugue, with the tempo/mood indication, “Lamentoso” (see Ex. 21). Reeves Shulstad calls this fugue a “symbol of endurance;”³⁶ Paul Merrick says it symbolizes “struggle,” and a process of purification.³⁷ This seems to be due to the chromatic, and rhythmically elliptical nature of

³⁶ Shulstad, 222.

³⁷ Paul Merrick, *Revolution and Religion in the Music of Liszt* (Cambridge University Press, 1987), 275. Merrick argues that Liszt’s use of fugue is always programmatic, as in for example, his *Faust Symphony*, *Prometheus*, and *Hunnenschlacht*. His fugues are even unified by a common expressive purpose: the effort or struggle associated with man’s separation from and aspiration for God. See Merrick, *Revolution and Religion*, 267-282.

the subject, along with the avoidance of decisive tonal satisfaction. After a complicated developmental process the music ascends to a confident E^b major, ending the fugue. The rhetorical procedure features highly chromatic material leading to purely diatonic material (see Ex. 22).

Ex. 22: Liszt, Purgatorio, mm. 201-206, reduction

But Mount Purgatory is not yet ascended. A stretch of quiet meditation represents the next level of purification. Hamilton's remark about the fugue's "all-too-realistic tedium" applies here as well. The gradually ascending chorale phrases are presented again, following the same tonal scheme as before: B minor to E^b major, to G major, to a half cadence in B minor. But gradual admittance now leads to the first rays of approaching sunshine at m. 290, as the flutes ascend, and anticipate the coming

Magnificat theme. Restatements of this in higher keys create the transition into the choir's entrance at m. 314.

Liszt captures the essence of Purgatory, which Pohl describes in the following words:

Through the refining and transfiguring process...[the soul] is gradually and continuously brought nearer the divine Presence until, completely freed from every darkening stain, it rises to real vision of that Presence. It lay in the power of music to extend the representation of this psychological process to a general comprehension of Purgatory.³⁸

Rather than focus on specific episodes of Dante's *Purgatorio*, Liszt created a "general comprehension" of it. The movement began with the restoration of hope depicted by clear and gentle tonality, and vision of distant light, depicted by soft but penetrating wind melodies. Gradual approximation to the source of light is depicted by slowly ascending modulations, as in the chorale sections, and the transition from chromatic to diatonic material, as in the fugue. The interspersing *arioso* and recitative styles represent the individual's penitent sorrow. Finally, the Magnificat represents the attainment of that light which was first apprehended in the beginning of the movement.

The Magnificat introduces the treble choir and harmonium; Liszt gives instructions concerning their arrangement in the concert hall:

The womens' or boys' choir is not to be placed in front of the orchestra but is to remain invisible together with the harmonium, or in case of an amphitheatrical arrangement of the orchestra, is to be placed right at the top. In places having a gallery above the orchestra, it would be suitable to have the choir and harmonium positioned there. In any case, the harmonium must remain near the choir.³⁹

The position of the choir and harmonium is to contribute to the feeling of ascension that this music depicts.

³⁸ Richard Pohl, "Introduction to Liszt's *Dante-Symphony*," trans. Max. M. Bryant (S.l.: s.n., 1896), 4.

³⁹ Franz Liszt, *Dante Symphony for Female Chorus and Orchestra*, ed. and trans. Imre Sulyok (London: E. Eulenburg, 1970), 151.

The *Divine Comedy* features many hymns and liturgical texts, but not the Magnificat. However, when Dante ascends through the spheres of heaven in Paradiso, and finally into the Empyrean, he sees Mary, the one who sang the Magnificat according to Luke's Gospel. Liszt's choice to set this text looks forward to the climax of Dante's triptych, without devoting a separate movement to the Paradiso. Furthermore, since Dante's visions concern the fate of souls, it is apt that the choir begins to sing "Magnificat *anima mea* Dominum." The entirety of the Magnificat does not appear; rather Liszt repeats the first two verses—"Magnificat anima mea Dominum, et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo,"—and intersperses "hosannas" and "hallelujahs."

The use of a choir here represents an awakening to a higher level of consciousness. The words of praise and the music to which they are set exude the long-awaited benevolence and joy that this symphony has been traveling toward. The music continues to create the sense of ever-increasing height by continual upward modulations. And the notion of heavenly radiance is achieved by bright orchestral colors, and diatonic melodies. The initial motive is very simple, featuring a pentatonic subset that recalls plainchant (see Ex. 23). In fact, the first three notes specifically derive from the Gregorian chant "Crux Fidelis," and have come to be known as Liszt's "cross" motive.⁴⁰ The composer himself describes the significance which he attributed to this motive: "The chorale 'Crux Fidelis' ...illustrates the idea of the final victory of Christianity in its effectual love to God and man."⁴¹

⁴⁰ Merrick, 284; Brown, 819. Liszt's use of this motive appears in many of his works including his symphonic poem *Hunnenschlacht*, and B minor Piano Sonata.

⁴¹ As quoted in Merrick, 285 (trans. Constance Bache).

Magnificat
L'istesso tempo $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$

314 *dolce*

A. Ma - - - gni - fi - cat

pp dolce

B: V IV I

316 *p*

A. a - - - ni - ma me - - a

vi ii vi ii

318

A. Do - mi - num

I

Ex. 23: Liszt, Purgatorio: Magnificat, mm. 314-319, reduction

The music could not be more consonant; it stands in the most extreme contrast to that of the Inferno. Measures 375-382 feature an orchestral tutti, articulating the

Magnificat theme with forceful brass, stating a $3^{\wedge}-2^{\wedge}-1^{\wedge}$ melody over I-V-I harmony in B-major (see Ex. 24).

375

S.

A.

(Orchestral tutti)

ff

B: IV ii I V I₆ ii I₆ V vi

380

S.

A.

f *p*

et e-xul - ta - vit spi - ri - tus

et e-xul - ta - vit spi - ri - tus

(Vc solo)

mf

V iii V 6 V⁷ I

Ex. 24: Liszt, Purgatorio: Magnificat, mm. 375-382, reduction

This righteous music stands in contrast to the power of the Gates of Hell. But it subsides so that the ethereal music may continue. The symphony ends as the first violins reach and sustain the highest note of the work, B6, from mm. 422-431, while the B-major chord is gently elaborated, *ppp*, by the orchestra.

An alternate ending was written with the encouragement of Princess Wittgenstein (the woman Liszt intended to marry but never quite managed to). This music is optionally to be performed directly after the gentle conclusion of m. 431. It is marked “Più mosso, quasi Allegro,” and features powerful brass, *fff* hallelujas, and ascending scales that repeat through a modulatory process starting and ending in B major. Critics despise it. It fails not because the music is inferior, but because the transition to it is desultory. As a result it appears a forced attempt to depict the triumph of the Church.⁴² When Wagner heard Liszt play the work from the score, he responded adamantly to the “mistaken ending,” being confident that Liszt understood he loved the rest of the work: “No!...not that! Away with it! No majestic Deity! Leave us the fine soft shimmer.” Wagner notes this in his personal writings, and continues that Liszt remarked, “You are right...I said so too; it was the Princess who persuaded me differently. But it shall be as you wish.”⁴³ Other sources confirm that in later life Liszt endorsed the quiet ending.⁴⁴

Wagner loved the Dante Symphony; on this level it succeeds. But history has not shared his enthusiasm. According to Humphrey Searle, the absence of a Paradiso movement destroys the balance of the symphony;⁴⁵ Harrison says that to omit a thorough treatment of it is to omit “the point of the whole work.”⁴⁶ Sachaverell Sitwell remarks, “If [the work] was much shorter, and was confined to the Infernal Regions, it would be among the most extraordinary originalities in music.”⁴⁷ The Magnificat remains a

⁴² cf. Weingartner, 135.

⁴³ Williams, *Liszt: Selected Letters*, 330.

⁴⁴ Hamilton, 159.

⁴⁵ Humphrey Searle, “Franz Liszt,” in *The Symphony*, ed. Ralph Hill (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1949), 197.

⁴⁶ Harrison, 65-66.

⁴⁷ Sachaverell Sitwell, *Liszt* (London: Cassel, 1955), 169.

remarkable attempt by Liszt to balance the symphony, while working within the limitations imposed by respect for his friend.

Furthermore, the *Dante Symphony* beautifully demonstrates the significance of tonality. In the A-sections of the Inferno, extreme chromaticism and tonal ambiguity were used to depict continual denial of relief from suffering, and the opposing tonal certainty contributed decisively to the triumph of the Gates of Hell. That tonal certainty was achieved not by perfect authentic cadences, or cadences of any kind, but by triadic stasis and melodic juxtaposition of 1[^] and 5[^]. Meanwhile, in the B-section, clear tonality and rewarding tonics skillfully demonstrated the ardor of Paolo and Francesca before they were “executed.” Purgatory began with a serene vision of light, depicted by purely diatonic, tonal music; the following journey depicted chromatic ambiguity yielding ultimately to tonal certainty. All this confirms the notion that tonality is a mechanism by which music represents emotion; and that tonal certainty or uncertainty represents satisfied or unsatisfied will. The tonic symbolizes “what is desired,” and perceived proximity to it, emotional condition. “Possession” of the tonic translates to emotional satisfaction. In the Inferno, relief was desired, but continually denied; meanwhile the bad will of the Gates of Hell proved triumphant. In Purgatory, clear tonality illustrated the pleasure of desired heavenly light; chromatic struggles, the process of patient purification; and consonant modality in the Magnificat, the attainment of heavenly peace. In all this, various musical devices conspired to generate the specific quality of each state of consciousness.

Liszt wrote that music is “the art at once both satanic and divine.”⁴⁸ Merrick

explains this comment in reference to Liszt’s approach to composition:

If music is divine, then the purpose of men is to use it to return to God. The path to the divine is blocked by the Devil, who must be overcome. In Liszt the Devil is the explanation for man’s seduction away from God, which in turn explains God’s anger, and why men are cursed. The sense of being cursed derives from the desire for restoration to an imagined former estate. In biblical terms, redemption is preceded by the Fall of Man brought about by Satan.⁴⁹

Liszt skillfully portrays the Satanic in the Inferno; in Purgatorio, he depicts a gradual transition toward the Divine, culminating in the glimpse of it provided in the Magnificat. Incomplete as the work is, it is an inspiring precedent to my composition, the *Symphony of Creation*.

⁴⁸ Merrick, 298.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 301.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF HILDING ROSENBERG'S "REVELATION OF ST. JOHN"

Hilding Rosenberg (1892-1985) was the first Swedish composer to assimilate the modernistic styles of mainland Europe. His contrapuntal technique developed through the study of Bach and the teachings of Hindemith, and his earlier style especially shows the influence of Schoenberg. He wrote eight numbered symphonies between 1917 and 1974, plus a *Symphonie Concertante* and a *Symphony for Wind and Percussion*.

His symphony-oratorio the *Revelation of St. John* was written in response to the atrocities of World War Two. Although Sweden maintained neutrality throughout the war, Rosenberg felt compelled to express his concern for the victims of war, and for the fate of humanity. In the composer's own words, "For me, 'Johannes Uppenbarelse' is a vision of mankind's distress, agony and struggle through time, and of its confirmed belief in a final victory."⁵⁰

The *Revelation* is a large-scale work that incorporates various musical styles. Despite its high artistic quality, the work is not well known beyond Sweden. German musicologist Gerd Schoenfelder suggests three reasons for this: it was written during a time when the preoccupation of a world war restricted the "public exchange of opinions"

⁵⁰ Peter Lyne, *Hilding Rosenberg* (Stockholm: Swedish Music Information Center, 1978), 12.

to the “local, or at most national reach;”⁵¹ second, it is a difficult work to produce, being seventy-five minutes long and calling for a large orchestra with two choirs and a baritone solo; and third, in the years immediately after its completion, serialism and avant-gardism became predominant in the world of composition, and works were slighted that bore any resemblance to those of the past. But Schoenfelder maintains that this work is an important musical achievement of twentieth-century Europe. Moses Pergament, Swedish composer and critic, offers great praise: “I do not hesitate to describe this work as one of the most significant in the international musical literature of the twentieth century. In spirit and purpose, magnificence and artistic power it has yet to find its equal among sacred compositions of today.”⁵²

Schoenfelder states in his analysis, published in 1993, that the *Revelation* is a synthesis of the tone poem, oratorio, and symphony—a feat Rosenberg accomplished in effort to achieve the most universal statement. While Schoenfelder’s essay is illuminating, more remains to be said of this great work.

Movement I

The beginning of Rosenberg’s *Revelation of St. John* summons attention with a deep fortissimo drone on C, bold strikes of the orchestra bells, and melodic units of gradually ascending fourths in the strings and winds. Meanwhile, the brass section conducts a gradually intensifying fanfare, featuring what becomes a chord consisting of superimposed fourths: C-F-B^b-E^b-A^b-D^b-G^b (see Ex. 25).

⁵¹ Lyne, 52.

⁵² Moses Pergament, *Hilding Rosenberg: A Giant of Modern Swedish Music* (Stockholm: Nordiska musikförlaget, 1956), 12-13.

1 **Largamente** ♩ = 66

ff

3

5

Ex. 25: Rosenberg, Movement I, mm. 1-5, reduction

This fanfare climaxes at m.6 with a crescendo to a startling tutti, *triple-sforzando* chord, complete with percussion, introducing the chorus. The first violins make ascent to E6 in this local climax. From the opening instant of the piece, with the low C drone, to the introduction of the chorus at m. 6, a single trajectory is depicted, traversing from low

to high, loud to louder, and thin to thicker texture. Schoenfelder describes these bars as depicting ascent from “the depths to the heights.”⁵³

In mm. 1-3, the ascending fourth figures usher a modulatory process that gradually encompasses the successive flat-systems of the circle of fifths;⁵⁴ the first beat of m. 1 suggests C centricity; the second, B-flat centricity; and subsequently E^b, A^b, D^b, and finally G^b centricity. The entry of the chorus arrives with a new sonority unrelated to the previous harmonic material, as the first violins and flutes ascend a semitone to A, yielding an A-minor triad at m. 6 (see Ex. 26).

The musical score for Ex. 26 shows the vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. The vocal parts enter in measure 6 with the lyrics "This is now the re-ve-lat-tion of Je-sus Christ, one that". The piano accompaniment features a brass section (trumpets and trombones) playing a triplet figure in measure 8, marked with dynamics *mf*, *ff*, and *fz*. The piano part also includes a triplet figure in measure 6.

Ex. 26: Rosenberg, Movement I, mm. 6-8
chorus with orchestral reduction

This new harmony commands attention with urgent words: “Detta är eb uppenbarelse från Jesus Kristus” (This is now the revelation of Jesus Christ). The text is

⁵³ Gerd Schoenfelder, “Revelations of New Music, Hilding Rosenberg: Johannes Uppenbarelse,” in *Contemporary Swedish Music through the Telescopic Sight: Nine Analytical Studies of Key Works by Hilding Rosenberg*, Sven-Erik Bäck, Ingvar Lidholm, Jan Carlstedt, Lars-Gunnar Bodin, Eskil Hemberg, Daniel Börtz, Anders Eliasson and Karin Rehnqvist, ed. Gerd Schoenfelder and Hans Åstrand (Ödeshög, Sweden: Edition Reimers, 1993), 38.

⁵⁴ By “system” is meant “specific transposition of the diatonic pitch set.” The two-flat system, for example, is the diatonic system that might represent B-flat-major, G-minor, C-Dorian, etc.

declaimed upon the open-fifth chord A-E, and punctuated with the conjunct-fourth ascent, F[#]-B-E.

The choral material in this movement consists largely of syllabic declamation on a single chord, introducing what is to follow. The text here is the most important feature, and music as an independent element is employed in its service. That listeners understand it is thus essential. Although it was written in Swedish, an English adaptation has been made.

At m. 24 the chorus sings melismatic points of imitation on the word “blessed,” continuing with a syllabic setting of “is he that readeth the words of very prophecy” (see Ex. 27). The melisma directs one’s focus for a moment to pure music, since only when it ends is the extra-musical idea—in this case the word “blessed”—understood; in the meantime, pure melody occupies the attention. Although commonplace, this hints at an important poetic theme of the work: complete understanding comes only through the passage of time.

The chorus comes to a pianissimo close in which a descending effect corresponds to the words “the time is now coming.” This descent contrasts with the opening ascent. The fact that it corresponds to the words “the time is now coming” suggests a connection between the idea of ‘being lower’ with the present. Conversely there is a connection between the idea of height and broad vision, specifically vision into the future. The association of height with broad range of vision is self-evident; but here the association includes perception of future events that “must come to pass.”

24 *p* *f*

S. Bless

A. Bless

T. Bless

B. Bless

27 *ff*

S. - ed is he that read-eth the words of ve-ry pro-phe-cy.

A. - ed is he that read-eth the words of ve-ry pro-phe-cy.

T. - ed is he he that read-eth the words of ve-ry pro-phe-cy.

B. - ed is he he that read-eth the words of ve-ry pro-phe-cy.

Ex. 27: Rosenberg, Movement I, mm. 24-29, Chorus

This introductory choral-orchestral section ends where it began with an ascent from the depths culminating in a tutti climax: but this time there is a rhythmic climax as well, as the trumpets double in speed. The A-minor chord that is reached repeats with ominous silence between.

The recitative that immediately follows begins with “I, John, who also am your brother...was in the isle that is called Patmos.” The melodic style of this music,

unsurprisingly, features common components of the recitative: repeated notes, and preoccupation with the delivery of text rather than the development of motives. In this recitative, the pitch sets at any given time are diatonic subsets. The diatonic systems however, change frequently and unexpectedly as John tells the story of his vision of “one like unto the Son of man.” Meanwhile the harmony, complementing the various diatonic sets, consists of non-triadic, quartal, open-fifth, and occasionally triadic chords.

Rosenberg added the recitatives in 1949 to the then nine-year old work, replacing the spoken recitation of the text. The recitatives demonstrate more chromatic melody, and later in the work, more dissonant harmony. This recitative of movement I is the most consonant of them all—which is fitting because the dramatic conflict has yet to unfold.

Here John sings, “and behold a throne was in heaven. And before the throne was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and I beheld and I heard a voice of many angels round the throne, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.”⁵⁵ The word “heaven” is strongly emphasized with a long melisma. The following movement is a tone poem on this vision of heaven.

Movement II

Marked *Allegro moderato*, this movement begins very softly, immediately featuring a range that spans over seven octaves, from the double basses’ drone on C1, to the first violins’ sustained harmonic on E7. The music is entirely diatonic, with the drone remaining unchanged. Also, the first violins, which are divided, form a quintal chord D-A-E, and sustain it as long as the drone. Meanwhile the divided basses and cellos intersperse low-register Gs and Es at a regularly recurring rhythmic interval of two bars.

⁵⁵ This is an adaptation of Revelation 4:2, 6 and 5:11.

While the drone and high harmonics are static, the interspersed Gs and Es possess rhythm, although they progress slowly.

A three-part round soon begins, featuring the higher registers of the woodwinds, glockenspiel, celesta, and divided second violins playing artificial harmonics, *con sordini*. These timbres, along with the bright pitch-sets they play, are celestial. The very name of the celesta welcomes this perception, which literally means “celestial.” Revelation 4:3 describes a rainbow circling the heavenly throne.⁵⁶ Rosenberg’s clever use of the colors of the orchestra aptly invoke this spectrum of light.

The first four pitches of the round feature set 4-23, which also was used in Liszt’s *Magnificat* theme (see Ex. 28). Both melodies feature the pentatonic scale as they unfold, but set 4-23 is prominent. In relation to the continuing C-drone, this set creates a bright Ionian sound. Schoenfelder describes this music as “luminous.”⁵⁷

The image displays two musical staves. The top staff is for Rosenberg, *Mvt. II, round theme*, in 3/2 time. It shows a sequence of notes with brackets above and below. Above the staff, three brackets labeled 'Set 4-23' span the first four notes, the next four notes, and the final three notes. Below the staff, two brackets labeled 'Pentatonic' span the first four notes and the next four notes. The bottom staff is for Liszt, *Magnificat*, in 4/4 time. It shows a sequence of notes with brackets above. Two brackets labeled 'Set 4-23' span the first four notes and the last four notes. Below the staff, a bracket labeled 'Pentatonic' spans the first four notes.

Ex. 28: Comparison of sets used in Rosenberg, *Mvt. II*, and Liszt’s *Magnificat*

Rosenberg’s round is consonant, predominantly featuring perfect intervals (see Ex. 29). Although it creates rhythmic motion, it is still relatively slow, consisting almost

⁵⁶Although this verse is not actually set in this work, it is part of the vision described in the recitative of movement I, and next to Revelation 4:2 which is included.

⁵⁷ Schoenfelder, 44.

entirely of steadily pulsing unit-beats (see Ex. 28). It functions essentially as accompaniment, like the drone and sustained harmonics, to the melody that begins in m. 11. This is a chant-style melody played by the violas, English horn and solo trumpet *con sordino*; it is faster moving, and rhythmically varied, adding rhythmic dimension to the music (see Ex. 29). It is through-composed, without motivic development, and purely diatonic.

11

3-part round

Chant
mf cant.

Drone & slow rhythm
ppp

15

Ex. 29: Rosenberg, Movement II, mm. 11-18, reduction

The composite effect of all the layers—the static drone and harmonics, the slow rhythms of the notes in the lowest register, the pulsing round, and the flowing chant—together forms a rhythmically multi-dimensional music. Example 29 clearly distinguishes these layers. However, the rhythmic energy has yet to increase.

Sometimes the melody suggests Aeolian mode, while the C-drone continues. This is due to the emphasis of E and A as the notes that start and end phrases. The chant gradually ascends, and a crescendo leads to a new idea in m. 32: an unexpected B^b-minor-major-seven chord, the first sonority outside the previous diatonic scale. The ascent to this unexpected chromatic note recalls the same in movement I when the chorus was introduced. Just as in movement I the chromatic surprise is followed by new sonorities, so here it is followed by the introduction of the full woodwind and brass sections. When these are unleashed, the rhythmic and dynamic energy increases, and a forceful fanfare ensues (see Ex. 30). The music is again purely diatonic, now suggesting a Mixolydian sound context.

The musical score for Example 30, Rosenberg, Movement II, mm. 32-34, is presented in 3/2 time. The tempo is marked 'Più mosso' with a metronome marking of 92-100. The score features a piano part with a treble and bass staff. The dynamics range from *ffz* to *mf*. The music includes a series of chords in the right hand and a rhythmic pattern in the left hand. The score ends with a 'molto stacc.' marking.

Ex. 30: Rosenberg, Movement II, mm. 32-34

This material is the second theme of the movement, after the chant which is the primary theme. In this Rosenberg creates a twentieth-century adaptation of sonata form. The rest of the movement will show how this adaptation unfolds.

After the fanfare, the rhythmic energy yet increases at m. 46, as the violins and violas feature steadily moving eighth-notes—considerably rapid in this tempo and meter (see Ex. 31). In the context of this purely diatonic music, chromatic material stands out—which the chord on A^b in m. 50 illustrates very well. Here, the juxtaposition of A^b and A-natural reflects a contrast between light and dark. Furthermore, Schoenfelder describes the descending chromatic scales in mm. 54-56 as “a plunge into the dark depths.”⁵⁸ This melody does not gracefully descend, but suggests downward motion by force. The darkness of this chromatic material represents an obstacle to diatonic unity, and the brightness of heaven. But when it is overcome, the first violins resume high register, diatonic exultation, featuring A-natural, and the luminous set 3-7, which is a subset of 4-23 (see Ex. 31).

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system (mm. 46-47) is in 3/2 time, marked 'ff'. The second system (mm. 48-49) is in 3/2 time. The third system (mm. 50-58) shows a key change to 2/2 and then 3/2, with chromatic material in the upper staff and diatonic material in the lower staff.

Ex. 31: Rosenberg, Movement II, mm. 46-58, reduction
(continued on next page)

⁵⁸ Schoenfelder, 44.

Ex. 31: Rosenberg, Movement II, mm. 46-58, reduction
(continued from previous page)

After set 3-7 expires in m. 59, developmental material ensues, featuring previous material, isolated and repeated in various tonalities. This signifies the beginning of a development section. Bar 73 marks a faster tempo, *Allegro*, and sustained material in D-minor. Isolated fanfare phrases are interspersed among fast-moving, gradually ascending strings. This material represents the fastest rhythm yet of the movement, and leads to the recapitulation at m. 94.

At this moment the chorus enters, adding words to what previously had been pure music: the round, sung by twelve solos, and the following chant melody, sung by the rest of the chorus: “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who shall be” (Revelation 4:8). But this recapitulation is in A minor, although the round and chant are untransposed. This is notable for two reasons: (1) it is an inventive and liberal adaptation of sonata form, and (2) the concurrence of clearer tonality and musical text represents, as in Liszt’s *Magnificat*, an awakening to a higher level of consciousness, and here, one in which reality is apprehended with more certainty than before.

Sporadic fast-ascending cellos, double basses and bassoons provide the needed low-register support to the otherwise continually high-register music (see Ex. 32). Also, these scales span some two octaves, and thus contrast the low and high registers of the bass instruments.

99

4 S. migh - - - ty Ho - - - ly,

4 S. Lord God, Lord God Al -

4 T. Lord God Al - migh - - - ty

S. A. T. B. Ho - - - ly,

ff cant.

ff cant.

Ex. 32: Rosenberg, Movement II, mm. 99-100,
chorus and piano reduction

The chant melody ascends, as in the exposition, and new text is added: “O Lord, thou art worthy to have glory, honor, and power, for thou hast made all things.” The culmination of this phrase coincides with the unexpected chromatic note, B^b. New text follows, now clearly delivered in syllabic style: “For thy holy pleasure they were so created.” The rise to the unexpected chromatic note, as in movement I, is again followed

by declamatory text that reveals something. The chromatic note seizes the attention and what follows is revelation.

The secondary theme occurs again in Mixolydian mode, but the sense of unity common to recapitulations is maintained since the diatonic system remains the same as that of Aeolian. The climax of the movement occurs when the chorus reaches the A-natural sonority, coinciding the text “for thou hast made all, all.” The descending chromatic scales of the exposition are omitted. The music gradually comes to rest rhythmically and dynamically, cadencing on A-minor at m. 149. The movement concludes with the opening material, the low-C drone, high quintal string harmonics, and now the 12 solos softly singing “Helig” to the round.

Overall the movement is a sonata form with voices added in the recapitulation. This is highly effective, and suggests again that the significance of the past is not consciously understood but with the passage of time. The excitement that follows the addition of voices, leading to the climax at m. 142, and the gradual coming-to-rest after, creates a very logical and attractive formal shape.

The vision of heaven contained things that at first were not understood, but were assimilated as understanding increased, as revelation was attained. On earth, where church services are held, and the faithful aspire to what was just heard, there is “fire” and “terror.” These subjects constitute the text of the subsequent chorale.

The style of this *a capella* music is described by Rosenberg himself: “In church, I should like to mix together the sounds of Gregorian chant, Palestrina and Bach...But there must be no question of reconstruction or imitation, it must be an expression of our

innermost being.”⁵⁹ Gullberg’s poems constitute the text of the chorales of the whole symphony. These were written for the purpose of expressing, in Rosenberg’s own words “modern man’s reaction to the biblical text.”⁶⁰ The music is consonant, syllabic, and modal.

The chorales represent people on earth who hope for the perfection of heaven. This is evident in the immediate juxtaposition of the Heaven Music of movement II and following chorale. The contrasts between these two sections of the second movement are extreme. The chorale is homogenous rather than colorful, consisting of a *cappella* choir; and it uses a very narrow range, both within each voice, and as a whole. Although variation in dynamics is used as an expressive device, this music is not rhythmically multi-dimensional: the limited rhythmic independence among the voices recalls that of church hymns, and in comparison to that of the Heaven Music, is virtually dimensionless. All this depicts an earthly perspective.

The text confirms an earthly perspective, with the words, “we hear a roar above,” (alluding to the bombers of World War II); and “thou John who walked among *our earthly region...*” (emphasis added); and with the closing supplication, “lift up our spirits from a darkened region to the revelation of all revelations now.” This chorale of movement II depicts the sadness of the text with slow, minor-mode sonorities, and postponed tonal resolution. The musical style aptly reflects ideas of faith and supplication mixed with sadness amid hell on earth. But hell on earth is not musically depicted until the third movement, which immediately follows this chorale.

⁵⁹ quoted in Lyne, 12.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Movement III

The movement opens with fire: a confusingly fast ascending line in the violins, violas, woodwinds, and piano, and conjunct tritonal fanfare motives in the trumpets. The thematic material that follows is derived from the opening motive of Movement I (see Ex. 33).



Ex. 33: Movement I, opening motive

Here in movement II this motive begins on a weak beat, descends rather ascends, proceeds at a frantic pace, and continually repeats (see violins I and II in Ex. 34). This material bears some resemblance to Liszt's violento theme in its semitonal descent, frenetic repetition, and contorted intervals.

[**Allegro con brio** ♩-96]

Ex. 34: Rosenberg, Movement III, mm. 6-9, string section

Schoenfelder describes the opening of this movement as consisting of two realms of expression: “the fire, the flaming devastation, the threat to humanity,” and “the cry of fear and lamentation in the emerging distress.”⁶¹ The baritone solo enters at m. 15, interrupting the fire music, and urgently announcing a vision: “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.” As this recitative proceeds, the orchestration quietly complements the idea of heavenly images with very high-register harp and piano, along with tremolo violins and triangle, and muted trumpets—all very soft, creating an aura of static E-major tonality. Heaven is briefly depicted here by harmonic stasis, variety of color, high registers, and diatonicism.

The subsequent text describes the woman in heaven: “heavy with child, she cried aloud in travail, and pained to be delivered.” The baritone melody corresponding to this text is expressionistic, employing leaps, chromatic turns of melody, and the high register of the baritone’s range, reaching E^b 4. The melodic and harmonic language of these two phrases of the baritone are starkly opposed to one another.

So far this movement has featured the chaos of war, a vision described by the solo Baritone depicting more heavenly music, as well as expressionism. This is the first time in the work that such extremes are juxtaposed within the same movement, let alone within the space of twenty-five fast-moving bars. The rest of the movement continues the contrast of extremes. In m. 26 the chorus proceeds with “Joy, O Joy, all ye heavens, and all ye that dwell therein.” The melody attached to these words is given to the sopranos

⁶¹ Schoenfelder, 45.

and altos, and resembles the chant melody of movement II in that it is rhythmically through-composed, and diatonic (now suggesting Dorian mode).

Meanwhile the harmony features the contrast between flat-6 and natural-6 (see Ex. 35, mm. 27-30). This alludes again to the struggle between light and dark. The subsequent text corroborates this idea: “Woe, earth and ocean.” The Woe-Music features the male voices, low orchestral registers, a descending melody in mm. 32-33, and uncertain tonality until m. 34. The heavens are joyful, the lower regions are woeful. But the joy of the heights occurs simultaneously with the woe of the depths. As a result, the “Joy music” is not completely purified of chromatic elements, which compromise tonal unity.

[Allegro assai ♩=120]
ff *molto espr.*

S. A. Joy, O joy, all ye heavens, and
T. B.
ye that dwell there in
Woe, earth and ocean!

Ex. 35: Rosenberg, movement III, mm. 26-34,

chorus with orchestral reduction

The baritone now continues to describe a dragon in heaven confronting the pregnant woman. The corresponding music introduces martial sounds: the snare-drum and trumpets, along with the suffering motive of earlier in the movement (cf. Ex. 34), and a theme shown in Example 36, which Schoenfelder calls the Leitmotif of the dragon. The association with the dragon is clear in this and in subsequent movements. But it is not the first time it appeared. The rising grace-notes allude to the same featured in the opening motive of movement I (cf. Ex. 33). Also, the theme appeared as momentary chromatic material in movement II (cf. Ex. 31, mm. 54-56).



Ex. 36: Rosenberg, movement III,
mm. 35-37, "Dragon Theme"

Schoenfelder likens this theme to the slithering of a serpent;⁶² a meet characterization of the Dragon, who later in John's Apocalypse is referred to as "that old serpent."

The rest of this movement continues to alternate between solo recitative and choral refrain. In the recitatives John tells the story of the conflict between the Dragon and the woman, the Dragon's battle with the archangel Michael, his defeat and expulsion from heaven, and continued attempts to harm the woman and her offspring, who are now on earth. As each recitative propels the narrative, the chorus enters with the refrain, "Joy, O heavens..." and "Woe, earth and ocean." The significance of these words is now clear,

⁶² Schoenfelder, 45.

since it is understood that the troublemaking Dragon was cast out of heaven and onto earth.

It is not until the story is complete that the rationale for the refrain is understood. This complements earlier ruminations: like the melisma on “blessed,” and like the addition of words to once pure music in the second movement, so here complete understanding is not attained until time passes and events unfold. This also applies to the occurrence of Dragon’s leitmotif in the second movement: a grave, chromatic obstacle that was soon overcome. Also, the text about the pregnant woman represents an important narrative theme that applies to the entire work: a painful process is endured before deliverance is achieved.

In total there are four recitative-strophes and choral refrains. Each time, the “Joy” part of the refrain becomes more rhythmically animated, and thicker in texture, until in the last refrain it is ecstatic, with fast-moving triplets creating a highly embellished melody, unfolding imitatively in the chorus. But the “Woe” music remains virtually unchanged, until the final statement closes this section of the movement with an emphatic tutti chord on C-minor. Both the text and the music establish the conflict.

The chorale which follows *attacca* features female voices only. Representing womankind, they lament the travail they have endured through the ages not only in childbirth, but in seeing the Dragon either destroy their children or recruit them to destroy others. The melodies proceed in almost entirely conjunct motion throughout, and some moments of semitonal descent very poignantly create the effect of weeping. The chorale begins in A minor and ends on D minor.

The recitative which follows the chorale *attacca* features trombones and timpani accompanying the solo baritone. The music opens with a tritone in the trombones, and remains dissonant and chromatic, as John describes his visions of woe: a blasphemous Beast rising out of the sea who exacts worship and exercises power over everyone on earth, followed by another beast who helps force all into submission to the first. The music of the recitative opens with an atonal melody, gradually rising in pitch and dynamic, and in rhythmic animation (see Ex. 37).

Bar. Solo

p *cresc.* *3* *3* *ff*

And I saw a wild beast rising up out of the sea.

Tbn. I & II

p *mf*

Tbn. III & Tba.

p *mf*

Timp.

3 *tr* *p* *mf*

Ex. 37: movement III, Recitative, mm. 1-3

The effect of this gesture is fear at the realization of danger. The complexity of the harmony in this recitative is offset by the clarity of parallel phrases, as in mm. 8-10, where the soloist describes the boast of those who worship the Beast (see Ex. 38). As in Liszt's opening melody to the *Dante Symphony*, so here the poetic parallelism is complemented with musical parallelism.

8 *f espr.*

Bar. Solo

"Who_ is like un-to the beast and who is ab-le to make war with him?"

Tbn. I & II

mf

Tbn. III & Tba.

mf

Timp.

mf

ffzpp

Ex. 38: movement IV, Recitative, mm. 8-10

The recitative ends with a forceful proclamation of the Beast's number: "sex-hundra-sextio-sex." Movement IV proceeds, again, *attacca*; the transition to it is through pounds of the timpani, increasing in loudness and speed, ushering brutal sounds.

Movement IV

Schoenfelder says that while movement III exposed the "possibilities in the struggle between Good and Evil, hope and fear, life and pain," movement IV becomes actual "battle music," an embodiment "of disharmony, of hate and fight, of dark threat, of passions set free, of aggression, of defiance and hardness."⁶³ Example 39 shows the opening bars of this movement.

⁶³ Schoenfelder, 47.

1 **Allegro moderato energico** (♩=92)

Bsn. *ff*

Hn. *ff*

Tpt. *a2 con sord. ff*

Tbn. I & II *a2 ff*

Tbn. III & Tba.

Timp. *non troppo forte (accompagnando)*
f bacch. di tambure
f non troppo forte (accompagnando)

S. D. *f non troppo forte*

Vc. *ff*

Db. *ff*

senza ped.

V

Ex. 39: Rosenberg, Movement IV, mm. 1-5

Immediately the Dragon theme springs up. The accompanying percussion plays “belligerent rhythms,”⁶⁴ which are extremely repetitive and assaulting, despite the indication *non troppo forte*. The extreme low registers of the tuba and double basses are menacing at this dynamic level. The harmony is dissonant, featuring rapidly alternating sonorities A-A^b-D^b, and A^b-D-F; perhaps this may be heard as one highly dissonant set: A-A^b-D-D^b-F (set 5-21).

The combination of extreme repetition, loudness, dissonance, and the low register creates the violent war music Schoenfelder described. Also, the abrupt changes in meter create a jarring, capricious effect and contribute to the violent effect.

This material continues until m. 29, where a secondary theme of contrasting character begins, dominated by a high-register melody (see Ex. 40).



Ex. 40: Rosenberg, Movement IV, mm. 29-32, reduction

From mm. 33 onward, this through-composed melody gradually ascends, gaining by semitone, until the first violins reach a piercing B^b 6 at m. 44. As it rises, the rhythmic energy increases, with eighth-notes predominating. This upward motion and increasing restlessness recalls the fear gesture of the preceding recitative. The contrast in timbre and tessitura of this material to the opening War Music places it in an opposite realm of expression—one of terror, and even desperate supplication. But in m. 47, the high-register material is inexorably drawn downward, and the Dragon music continues.

⁶⁴ Schoenfelder, 47.

In m. 67 these fearsome sounds halt, and the chorus interjects in unison/octaves on A, declaiming what may be heard as an answer to the desperate supplication of the high-register material: “If any give captivity, he shall have captivity; if any strike with the sword, he must be with sword stricken” (cf. Revelation 13:10). The musical idea that follows is parallel to this text: a rising melodic idea, followed by a falling one, and a strike with the cymbals, accented with piercing winds. The inversion of a melodic idea corresponds to the inversion of the textual idea; and the strike of the cymbal is clearly analogous to the text.

Schoenfelder describes the choral interjection as “a thunderous word of eternally governing justice.”⁶⁵ The chorus, throughout this work, always represents the forces of good, never the Dragon. The malevolent music is left to the orchestra alone. Perhaps it would be inappropriate to ask the chorus to sing the curses that this malicious music would seem to inspire.

The choral declamation continues, now with two-part counterpoint: “Here is the patience, the faith of all the saints.” The text is repeated, and the chorus cadences on D. What follows, beginning at m. 81 is a soft, but gradually building bi-tonal section in which a gentle melody is presented in D minor against imitations and sequences of the Dragon theme in the cellos, double basses, clarinets and piccolo. The D-minor music features a sustained tonic-and-dominant drone on D and A (see Ex. 41).

⁶⁵ Schoenfelder, 47.

Ex. 41: Rosenberg, Movement IV, mm. 89-93

The D-minor material is non-threatening in its gentle timbre, clear tonality, and parallel phrase construction—exactly what the Dragon music is not.

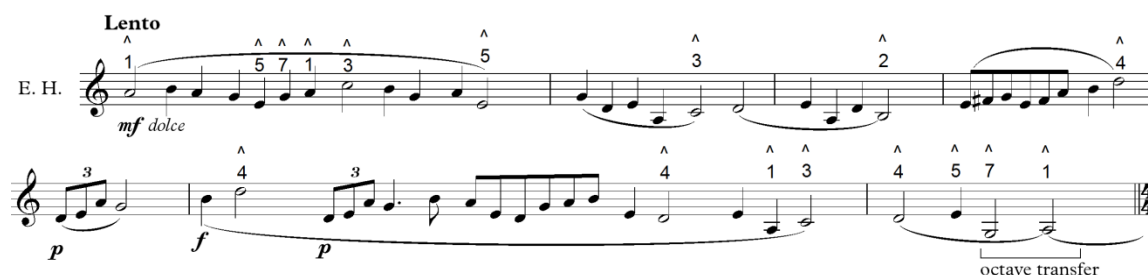
After this music gradually builds, previous material is recycled, and the music marches to violent conclusion as the percussion, now with bass drum and cymbals, and the marking *cresc. possibile*, reach and repeat a merciless *ffz* chord.

But the subsequent chorale, the third now in the piece, begins confidently with the whole chorus singing four-part harmony together *fortissimo*: “Here is wisdom fulfilled, here the count of the beast...six hundred and sixty six.” The text continues, “And we reckon on...till hairless and wan, and one evening Death comes with his tricks. But the saints all believe: He who kills with the sword shall be conquered and killed with the sword. It is written and spoken and sealed with a nod...” Schoenfelder calls this chorale the “focal point” of the whole work: everything before leads to it, and after, follows from

it.⁶⁶ This is because the text is repeated “he who kills with the sword shall be killed by the sword”—an idea that addresses the outcome of the unfolding conflict. The mere fact that these words are repeated after the malevolent music implies its permanence. The rest of the symphony will show how they are fulfilled.

Movement V

Rosenberg notes in the score that a short intermission may be held before this movement. The music begins with a solo English horn playing a Lento, *dolce* chant in Aeolian mode. This melody is similar to the chant in movement II: both are in Aeolian mode, and feature the melodic line shown in Example 42, $5^{\wedge}-7^{\wedge}-1^{\wedge}-3^{\wedge}$.



Ex. 42: Rosenberg, Movement V, Solo English Horn (sounding as written), Introduction with added scale degrees

The music is expressive, with dynamic variation, and unhurried. The repeated reaches to the high register 4^{\wedge} conspicuously lack the tonal resolution that the absent 5^{\wedge} might offer. Instead, the music slowly cadences in the lowest register of the instrument. The cadence occurs an octave down with a $5^{\wedge}-7^{\wedge}-1^{\wedge}$ melodic motion as in the beginning of the melody.

⁶⁶ Schoenfelder, 47.

This downward octave coupling to the slow flat-7-to-1 cadence ends the melody with a sense of melancholy resignation. This conditions the mood of the Baritone solo, who sings a gentle recitative: “And these things saith he that hath the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.” This mysterious reference is expressed by chromatic notes outside the established Aeolian mode. But the phrase starts and ends on A and E, thus containing the chromaticism within clear tonal construction. This is fitting because despite the enigmatic text, the simple purpose is that someone is going to say something. The conclusion of this phrase on E creates that sense of anticipation that dominant sonorities do so well.

But where words are expected sheer music follows; and the new material, marked *Andante tranquillo*, creates an entirely different mood: E minor yields to E major, and an ingratiating theme is introduced by the flutes, and echoed by the clarinets (see Ex. 43).

Andante tranquillo

Fl. *p dolce*

Ob. *p dolce*

Cl. *p dolce*

Bsn. *p dolce*

Hn. *ppp*

e: i I IV

Ex. 43: Rosenberg, movement V, mm. 1-10, with harmonic analysis
(continued on next page)

Fl. [^] 6 [^] 7 1

Ob. octave transfer

Cl. *p dolciss.*

Bsn.

Hn. *pp*

vi₁₃ vii₅ I IV₄ IV₅ IV

Ex. 43: Rosenberg, movement V, mm. 1-10, with harmonic analysis
(continued from previous page)

This new E-major theme is soft, and marked *dolciss.* There is a sustained tonic pedal, offering tonal clarity, and thirds moving in parallel motion. These elements create a sense of gentle benevolence. Schoenfelder remarks on this new theme:

The promise of the turn from fight to conciliation, from war to peace, from insurrection to calmness, from clamour to silence, releases an angelic music beginning with the major third and descending in sheer thirds. He who knocks at the door, asking to be admitted and entering the house, arrives in love and conciliation.⁶⁷

The theme ends with a downward register transfer, completing an ascending line from raised-7-to-1. This recalls the downward register transfer from flat-7-to-1 in the English horn solo. What was once flat-7 is now raised-7. For the moment, this alleviates the melancholy. But the upward turn of this melody to the tonic coincides with submediant harmony; and when the theme is repeated by the clarinets, the corresponding

⁶⁷ Schoenfelder, 49.

melodic turn is harmonized by the subdominant. In both cases, the harmony is like, yet actually not the desired tonic, but creates a sense of proximity to it.

This new music prepares yet a different mood for what the mysterious messenger has to say. But first there is a change of mode back to E-minor at m. 11. Then the sopranos and tenors sing: “At the door I stand ever knocking; if any man hear my voice and open the portal, I will enter his chamber and I will break bread with him there, and he with me.” As the music begins, the mode turns out to be not E minor, but E harmonic-minor (see Ex. 44). That this mode is unexpected highlights the fact that the language of the text is metaphorical. The process of apprehending the new mode is analogous to that of apprehending the language about a one “at the door...ever knocking.”

11

Hn. *pp*

S. *pp dolciss.* 3 At the door I stand ev - er knoc - king

T. *pp dolciss.* 3 At the door I stand ev - er knoc - king

Vln. I *pp* con sord.

Vln. II *pp* con sord.

Vla. *p* *dolciss.*

Vc. *p* *dolciss.*

E B \flat D \flat F A \flat B C Harmonic minor on E

Ex. 44: Rosenberg, movement V, mm. 11-13

The tonality shifts to Dorian for a moment at m. 15, but the following progression is ambiguous: whether it remains in Dorian or shifts to Aeolian is unclear. This corresponds to the text “if any hear my voice and open the portal, I will enter his chamber...” The tonal uncertainty of the harmony reflects the uncertainty of the text, in that: (1) the person’s entry is conditional, and (2) his business is yet unclear. But with the text “and I will break bread with him there...” the music returns with relief to E-major. The one who holds seven stars does not intend any harm, but wants to share a meal. Rosenberg creates in this as extreme a contrast as possible with the preceding violence of movement IV.

Despite the tonal ambiguity, each phrase ends with some form of E triad: a second-inversion minor triad at “portal”; a second-inversion minor triad with an added seventh at “chamber”; and a second inversion major triad at “break bread.” Relative tonal clarity coincides with the end of phrases, and this corresponds to the mental apprehension of the text; the meaning is not understood until each phrase completes, and the ultimate meaning of the phrases are not understood until the entire sentence is completed.

From m. 20 the altos and basses repeat the text, but the melody and harmony is skillfully varied. The music cadences on A major in m. 28 (albeit with a soft D2 in the cellos, sustained from the previous bar, making the cadence less certain but not unclear).

That the choral music here is given first to the sopranos and tenors, and then the altos and basses complement the idea of gentle entreaty: the higher timbres of the former, marked *pp* and “*dolciss*” preclude the remotest sense of threat. Only after this do the lower voices take up the song, likewise very gently with *pp* and “*dolcissimo*.”

The solo English horn returns again, and repeats the melancholy Aeolian music that opened the movement. The Baritone solo again follows, using the same melodic formula as before, uttering: “These things saith he that is holy, he that is truth, he that hath the key of David.” Now the Andante tranquillo music proceeds in A-major, and the strings participate with the major-mode theme, now marked *mf*. Transition is made to new musical material presenting the same text, “At the door I stand ever knocking.” The mere fact that this text repeats expresses its content.

Furthermore, the music is new: the altos alone sing E-minor music with a regular phrase rhythm, and bouncing bass line, creating a folk-music style (see Ex. 45). The repetitiveness of this music, with the ever-present tonic, and simple bass-line, is balanced with contrapuntal complexity: the violins, clarinets, along with the voices each present a different melody. This balance between unity and variety further distinguishes the repetitiveness here with that in the war music of movement IV.

49 A. S.

At the door I stand ev-er knock - ing the

Harp

Vln Cl Bs

e i ii^{o7} i iv⁷ i ii^{o7} i ii^{o7}

Ex. 45: Rosenberg, movement V, mm. 49-52,
reduction with harmonic analysis

The ambiguous tonality of the first “at the door” is balanced by the firm tonality of the second. When it repeats, it is familiar, and the clear tonality reflects this.

The regular repetition of the tonic, and the repetition of the same text among the female voices continues to express, “At the door I stand ever knocking.” The music modulates to D minor as the tenors and basses take turns. Each time, the melody is varied, contributing to the continuous variety amid the continuous repetition. A substantial time of meditation is given to the “ever knocking” text. The music always retains a gentle quality, the dynamic level *pp*, the tempo “tranquil,” and the harmony consonant.

The chorus sings together to complete the text, “and if any man hear my voice...” Each phrase is sung in a different minor/Aeolian key, and separated by statements of the descending-third theme. The text concludes happily in E major, but soon yields to Aeolian, ushering the last section.

The baritone sings the same melodic introduction, now with the text: “These things saith the first and the last, he which was dead and is alive.” A low dominant pedal is sustained in the violas and trilling timpani while new text is presented: “Lo, I quickly come; and hold what thou hast, that no one may take thy crown.” This text is presented slowly, *pp*, diffracted among the chorus voices, and against static second inversion A-minor harmony. The sense of anticipation is clear.

The English horn solo melody is presented again, now abbreviated. The motion toward the higher register is omitted, and the melody cadences again with the octave transfer to the flat-7-to-1 cadence, ending the movement with punctuating pizzicato strings, and gentle strikes of the orchestra bells.

The solo music is thus unchanged in mood, despite the previous material. This suggests that the E-major music, which never cadences decisively, is only a possibility. It is conditioned upon acceptance of the gentle entreaty, as well as upon the heeding of the warning to “hold what thou hast.”

Also, the lack of a decisive cadence on E major, along with the prevailing mood of the English horn seems to be an expressive response to the current condition of the symphony: the evils of movement IV have not yet been purged; salvation has not yet come, the strike of retribution has not yet been delivered. It is still a matter of time before the evils of movement IV are removed.

The formal structure of this movement is inventive, consisting of three sections: the first features an English horn solo, followed by a recitative that introduces the descending-third theme, and choral-orchestral material. This formula is repeated in the second section, with the descending-third theme transposed a fourth up, and new folk-material constituting the choral-orchestral material. In the third section, the recitative ushers new choral material, and the English horn solo closes. In all this the recitatives function as refrains, but also as introductions to the choral material. The variations of key amid the persistent Aeolian mode of the English horn, which closes the movement, result in an effective rhetorical form.

As opposed to the violence and forced submission of the previous movement, this one reflects the gentleness of polite entreaty. The tonality of this movement, particularly the major-mode tonality of the descending-third theme, contributes much to the mood of benevolence.

Gullberg's text featured in the subsequent chorale confirms the sad ending of the English horn: "From wailing and from sorrow no power can thee deliver. Be faithful till death's morrow and on thy head life's crown shall shine forever." Death is a consistent theme throughout all the chorales so far. Whether this is merely depressing, or a brave recognition of suffering, or an empathetic tribute to the victims of war may be decided by the listener.

The accompaniment of the following recitative now consists of trumpets as well as trombones and tuba. The harmony is quartal, triadic, and non-triadic. As in previous recitatives, the melodic and harmonic complexity is offset by clear parallel phrase structure; and the chromaticism and dissonance is symbolic of the "revelation" of perplexing visions. The intellectual effort exerted to understand the melodies and harmonies is analogous to that exercised to understand the visions. The text describes the sweep of a large sickle from heavenly heights that gathers the grapes of wrath from the whole earth. The text ends with "and every island fled away, and the mountains were not found." The narrative purpose is to emphasize the power of the forces of good, which hairpin-marked fifths and octaves in the deep register of the low brass serve well to express. The next movement proceeds *attacca*, and like previous movements, depicts the text of the recitative.

Movement VI

The style of this Scherzo recalls Shostakovich, featuring highly chromatic, fast-moving, sequential melody, and the use of forceful percussion. This movement musically represents Divine power, as clearly indicated by the preceding recitative. It stands in

contrast to the demonic power of movement IV, and modifies but does not contradict the gentle image of divinity in movement V.

The Scherzo begins with a rhythmically animated presentation of a repeated chord, which serves as accompaniment to the melody played by the violas, cellos, clarinets and bassoons (see Ex. 46).

Allegro con fuoco (♩.=126)

The musical score is for a piano reduction of a section from movement VI of a work by Arnold Schoenberg. It is in 3/4 time and marked 'Allegro con fuoco' with a tempo of 126 beats per minute. The score is divided into two systems. The first system (mm. 1-7) shows a piano accompaniment with repeated chords in the right hand and single notes in the left hand, both marked 'ff'. The second system (mm. 8-14) continues the piano accompaniment and introduces a melodic line in the right hand, marked 'sfz'. The score is written for piano and includes a double bar line between the two systems.

Ex. 46: Rosenberg, movement VI, mm. 1-20, reduction
(continued on next page)



Ex. 46: Rosenberg, movement VI, mm. 1-20, reduction
(continued from previous page)

Throughout the Scherzo, the harmony consists of both triadic and non-triadic sonorities, and plays a subordinate role to rhythm, texture, timbre, and melody.

Furthermore, the repetition of musical ideas, unlike the Beast music, is not obsessive and violent, but creates musical organization in the absence of tonality; the repeated phrases are not micro-motives as in the Beast music, but longer phrases with variation.

But the percussion is used in its full force. At m. 68 there is a galloping rhythm in the snare and bass drums with the trumpets, followed by a staggeringly rapid melodic ascent in the violins and winds to a powerful tutti chord, dominated by *ffz* strikes of the percussion. When another tutti chord occurs a few bars later at m. 85, the horns, trombones and tuba react with simultaneous ascending and descending chromatic scales, *mf*, ending with a widely-spaced first-inversion B^b-major triad (see Ex. 47). The immense weight of the brass helplessly flee in reaction to the percussive tutti, as if God were making sport with islands and mountains.

85

Bsn. *ffz mf*

Hn. *ffz mf ff*

Tpt. *ffz*

Tbn. I & II *ffz mf ff*

Tbn. III & Tba. *ffz*

Timp. *ffz ff*

S. D. *ff*

B.D. & Cym. *ff*

Ex. 47: Rosenberg, movement VI, mm. 85-89

The concept of action and reaction continues, as the galloping-music-leading-to-percussive-tutti is answered by woodwinds helplessly capering away in mm. 94-99 (see Ex. 48).

90

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Tpt.

Tbn. I & II

Tbn. III & Tba.

Timp.

S. D.

B.D. & Cym.

ff

ff

ff

ff

ff

p

ff^z

ff

p

ff^z

p

tr

p

ff^z

ff

ff^z

a. 2

Ex. 48: Rosenberg, movement VI, mm. 90-97

Some contrast of mood is presented in m. 118, where the strings—*ppp*, but still restless—feature unison-octave chromatic melody, treated sequentially, and gradually

bringing the orchestra back to a powerful tutti chord at 168. Rosenberg plays with these ideas until m. 305, where the music recapitulates, orchestrated anew with continual eighth-note motion (extremely rapid in this tempo), and the theme powerfully presented an octave lower by the cellos, basses, and low brass.

At m. 364, the chorus enters on a C-minor triad, proclaiming “Fear the Lord!” This text is repeated with orchestral interludes. The text continues, “And give to him glory, for the moment of his judgment cometh; and worship him that created heaven, and earth, and sea, and waters’ fountains” (cf. Revelation 14:7). This is encouragement to those afflicted by the Beast. Without this movement, the symphony cannot proceed, because it demonstrates the ability of the forces of righteousness to outlast and overcome those of the devil. The laughter in this music is concomitant with the exercise of omnipotence. This is now holy power-intoxication, and reflects a verse from an oft-quoted Psalm in the book of Revelation: “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision” (Psalm 2:4). In writing this Scherzo, Rosenberg helps justify the designation “symphony,” while making theological commentary on God’s sense of humor.

The next chorale does not fail to speak of woe, as the devout patiently wait and earnestly pray for the sickle representing Divine retribution to sweep. The sheer length of this symphony, perhaps beginning to be felt as this again moody chorale follows the Scherzo, depicts the longsuffering to be endured before justice is done. But the following recitative proclaims the turning point of the conflict: the “Word of God” returns from heaven to earth on a white horse, followed by the armies of heaven on white horses; the

Beast and False Prophet are cast into a lake of fire, and their army is defeated. The decree is now fulfilled: the slayers are slain, and the captors taken captive.

This recitative is accompanied now by the flutes, clarinets, and first bassoon. The opening features the text, “And I saw heaven opened,” and begins with the higher-registers of these woodwinds. But the harmony is highly dissonant, the first chord being E-B^b-D-G[#]-B (set 5-28; see Ex. 49). This colorful chord sounds like a strained gaze at a peculiar sight in heaven. That Rosenberg so exquisitely depicts such an idea in this accompaniment is to his credit.

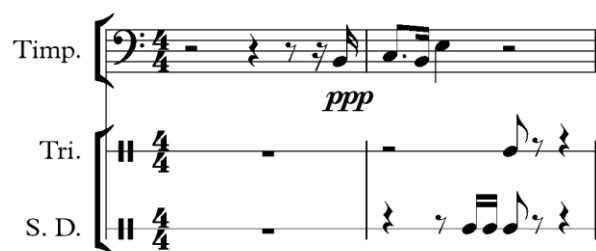
The musical score for Ex. 49 is written for a Baritone Soloist and three woodwinds (Flute, Clarinet, and Bassoon). The time signature is 5/4. The lyrics are: "And I saw Heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and he that sat up - on him was call'd Faith - ful and True". The woodwinds play sustained chords in the upper register, while the bassoon plays a melodic line in the lower register. The score includes dynamic markings like *pp*, *ppp*, and *p*, and articulation like *dolciss.* and *espr.* (espressivo).

Ex. 49: Rosenberg, movement VI, Recitative, mm. 1-4
(sounding as written)

The dissonance continues, occasionally resolving to triadic harmony, as in m. 12, which corresponds to the “Word of God.” To Rosenberg, direct reference to the Deity cannot be dissonant. Among the few other triads is the closing one on D-major.

Movement VII

Movement VII proceeds *attacca*, as usual, and once again depicts the text of the previous recitative. The tempo is marked *Tempo di marcia moderato*. Fragments of march material are echoed in isolation by the low strings, percussion, trumpets and horns (see Ex. 50).



Ex. 50: Rosenberg, movement VII, mm. 3-4, percussion

Against this the violins and violas direct the gaze upward with sustained, high-register artificial harmonic on F-sharp. This E-major, *ppp* material describes a march proceeding downward from heaven. Thus the extremely soft dynamic marking, which creates the illusion of distance, and the use only of isolated fragments, surrounded by silence as if by air. However, as the music proceeds, and the marching heavenly army gets closer, the dynamic level increases, and the intervals of time separating the fragments decrease. But the increase in energy leads to a momentary halt in m. 16, and a melody appears in the cellos and basses (see Ex. 51).

16

pp *dolciss.* *cantando*

$g^{\sharp 7}$ (subset of Octatonic 1-2-4) Dorian mode

20

$g^{\sharp 7}$

Ex. 51: Rosenberg, movement VII, mm. 16-24
reduction, “folk melody”

Peter Lyne likened this cantabile melody to the style of Mahler.⁶⁸ It’s folk quality comes from the fact that it is diatonic, has modal inflections, and features very clear phrase structure. Schoenfelder compares this tune to Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy,” stating that “its simple structure and melodious conduct alludes to the unification of mankind, its harmonization and conciliation.”⁶⁹ While the disparity of mode places Rosenberg’s melody in a different expressive realm than the “Ode to Joy,” its accessible folk quality, along with the fact that it is initially stated in the deep strings, support Schoenfelder’s comparison.

The folk melody and heaven-march alternate, developing each time they recur. This alternation between a march and its implication of war, and a folk song with its implication of camaraderie illustrates the intent of the heavenly hosts and their leader: they come to make war but love humanity. In this Rosenberg very effectively gives

⁶⁸ Lyne, 12.

⁶⁹ Schoenfelder, 51.

expression to the symbolism of the “white horse,” stated in Revelation 19—righteous war.

This orchestral music leads to another intervening chorale, a hymn of welcome to the armies of heaven. Unlike the previous chorales, this one starts and ends in E-Aeolian, creating unity. But the style remains ecclesiastical and reverent rather than triumphant and joyful. The celebration is reserved for later. This reflects the perspective of those who wait patiently for “final victory.”

The succeeding choral-orchestral music unleashes a confident, uninterrupted march in E-major. The choice of key, furthermore, is significant. In movement V a cadence in E-major was hoped for but not fulfilled; now it is fulfilled decisively in mm. 75-76 with a V^+ to I cadence (see Ex. 52). This tonal connection is not accidental. In movement V, E major was associated with the descending-third theme, which although appearing in various keys, was first and last heard in E major. This “heavenly” music, although encased in an overall Aeolian structure, inspired longing for major-mode resolution. While the energetic movement VI was essentially non-tonal, now in movement VII, Rosenberg remembers the previous need for tonal resolution, and resolves it firmly.

E: I iv I iv I iv I V^+ I iv I iv

Ex. 52: Rosenberg, movement VII, mm. 74-76

The march proceeds with the brass accenting the percussion on strong beats, and occasionally erupting with jubilant fanfares. Double-dotted rhythms in m. 80 onward add to the confident exultation. The chorus enters at m. 83 with hallelujahs.

At m. 113 the folk melody is now sung by the sopranos and tenors with the text: “Salvation, glory, honor, and power unto our God. For righteous and true are his judgments.” Although the dynamic is now very soft, the timpani, piano, harp, and double basses continue the march with steady unit-beats.

The folk melody and march are now simultaneous rather than alternating, creating a stronger sense of unity, and suggesting that the heavenly army is now marching on earth, with business to accomplish. The folk music is the song of righteous warriors, praising God as they march to destroy the wicked. Schoenfelder’s commentary corroborates this: he calls the Hallelujah music “not jubilant, but rather...anticipated joy.”⁷⁰

More words of praise take the melody to m. 130, where the whole chorus declaims, “For God the Lord the omnipotent, he reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give him honor.” The march resumes in its full force again at m. 142, with exuberant glissandi in the strings, winds, and harp accenting declamations of “Hallelujah.” The harmonic rhythm of the march doubles, and then doubles again, leading to the most triumphant moment in m. 146, as the chorus sustains a dotted-half-note on the downbeat (see Ex. 53).

⁷⁰ Schoenfelder, 51.

142 *f*

8 S. Hal - le - lu - ja! Hal - le - lu - ja! Hal - le - lu - ja!

8 T. Hal - le lu - ja! Hal - le lu - ja! Hal - le lu - ja!

S. Hal - le lu - ja! Hal - le lu - ja! Hal - le lu - ja!

A. Hal - le lu - ja! Hal - le lu - ja! Hal - le lu - ja!

T. Hal - le lu - ja! Hal - le lu - ja! Hal - le lu - ja!

B. Hal - le lu - ja! Hal - le lu - ja! Hal - le lu - ja!

ff

A: V⁺ I V⁺ I V⁺ I

145

8 S. lu - - - ja! Ha le - - - - - lu - ja!

8 T. lu - - - ja! Ha le - - - - - lu - ja!

S. Hal - le - lu - ja! Hal - le - lu - ja! Ha le - - - - - lu - ja!

A. Hal - le - lu - ja! Hal - le - lu - ja! Ha le - - - - - lu - ja!

T. Hal - le - lu - ja! Hal - le - lu - ja! Ha le - - - - - lu - ja!

B. Hal - le - lu - ja! Hal - le - lu - ja! Ha le - - - - - lu - ja!

V⁺ I V⁺ I V⁺ I V⁺ I Eb

Ex. 53: Rosenberg, Movement VII, mm. 142-146

This forceful climax leads to an ominous strike of the gong, with a *ff* timpani roll on F2. Meanwhile the tuba and piano sound a cavernous F1, while the strings sustain octaves on B. This tritonal harmony is unrelated to the preceding choral material. With these striking new sounds, the Beast and False Prophet are sent to perdition.

At m. 160 there is new material of an entirely different character. It is marked Andante, and begins with a serene B-major- nine chord (B, D-sharp, F-sharp, A-sharp, D-sharp) in the strings and slowly arpeggiating harp. An intimate solo violin and clarinet echo each other over the static, extended tertian harmony. The harmony soon changes to the subdominant of B-major; this is sustained and becomes the new tonic, E-major—the central key of the movement. The celesta brings the music to a close, repeating ever-slowing cadences on the tonic with an added 6th, against harp harmonics and high register, *ppp* violins. The serenity of this closing is sublime. But there is more to come.

In the next and final recitative of the symphony, John describes his vision of a new heaven and new earth, the union of God with men, and the elimination of tears, death, sorrow, and pain. The musical procedures are comparable to those of previous recitatives. This one includes trumpets, trombones and tuba. In the opening the melody is chromatic, and the harmony rather dissonant, consisting of seventh chords, non-triads, although an A-minor triad appears at m. 9. The complex music corresponds to the enigmatic text, which tells of how the old heaven and earth are passed away, and the new Jerusalem descends from heaven, “prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” But subsequent text—on God’s tabernacle being with men, and the healing of all wounds—is set with confident major triads in the brass that accent John’s words. The elimination of suffering is direct and universal, music to the ears of multitudes. The recitative ends with

the text: “for the former things are passed away,” punctuated with a C-major triad in the brass. The next section, “Chorale and Finale” proceeds without pause.

Chorale and Finale

Schoenfelder designates this last section “movement VIII,” but notes that Rosenberg did not label it as such. Doubtless Rosenberg’s choice to leave the last written movement-designation as seven reflects the significance of that number in the Biblical text, where it always corresponds to completion and conclusion. I will refer to this concluding material simply as Rosenberg did, “Chorale and Finale.”

The chorale begins confidently in E major. The tempo marking is *Maestoso*, with a half-note equal to 72—a paramount contrast to the slower tempos of previous chorales. This along with the key of E major, and a dynamic level beginning at *ff*, along with text about a new suffering-free creation, creates for the first time a happy chorale. The dynamic level gradually decreases to *piano* with the marking *dolce* as the text is uttered, “murder, persecution, shall henceforth be no more.”

The chorale modulates to G major, and the following choral-orchestral section once again gives expression to the words of the preceding recitative solo, as well as to the immediately preceding chorale, in which the same narrative theme was uttered: a new creation with no suffering. After the chorale, the ninth-chord music that ended the choral-orchestral section of movement VII appears, now in G major. The music modulates to E-major, which turns out to be E Lydian and soon G-sharp minor as the strings, clarinet, celesta, and harp play a serene pastorage, aptly giving expression to the idea of a new, untrammelled earth (see Ex. 54).

32 Strings *p dolce* *tr* Cl. Cel. Hp. $\hat{5}$ $\hat{4}$ $\hat{3}$ $\hat{2}$ $\hat{1}$ (Strings)

E Lydian: I vii vi iv° V vii iii (g#:) VI vii

g#: v i

37 *tr* (Cl. Cel. Hp.)

V/v V/v v =d#: V iv III

A# Mixolydian: iv v I

Ex. 54: Rosenberg, Chorale and Finale, mm. 32-40
reduction with analysis

The first notated examples of Pastoral style date from the seventeenth century. Rosenberg's application of it is faithful to its early practice: the strings represent a ripieno group, while the clarinet, celesta and harp form a concertino. This music is supremely consonant, featuring triadic four-part harmony void of non-harmonic-tones. This and the soft dynamic level, and predominantly conjunct motion evoke the utmost tranquility. The concertino gracefully descends, featuring unison/octave lines from 5^{\wedge} to 1^{\wedge} (as in mm. 35-36; see Ex. 54). The interaction of the ripieno and concertino creates contrast of rhythm, timbre, tessitura, and harmonic rhythm, as the ripieno punctuates each cadence of the concertino. The resulting balance of unity and variety paints an idyllic scene of the new heaven and earth, a place that is never boring, and always peaceful.

The string melody here recalls the chant of movement II: both are in 3-2 time, use similar rhythms, and feature phrases of melodic ascent followed by descent (see Ex. 55).

117 Chant, Movement II

Pastorale, Chorale and Finale

Ex. 55: Comparison of Chant of Movement II
and Pastorale of Chorale and Finale

The pastorale section leads to another chorale section, in which the choir sings, “Sorrow shall be no more, and no more dying...” That the choir sings these words after bewailing death and misery throughout the whole symphony is a poignant indication of final victory. This chorale, starting seemingly in B major, but turning out to be in G-sharp Aeolian, features a descending melodic line in the sopranos from 5[^] to 1[^], which is analogous to that of the concertino group of the pastorale. This is cadential music in the literal sense—a “falling” to resolution.

At m. 60, Rosenberg sets Gullberg’s text to expressive polyphony: “Thy prison now has opened, thou art free” (see Ex. 56).

Ex. 56: Rosenberg, Chorale and Finale, mm. 60-64

The pastoral music appears again after this verse, and musically depicts the same words. The freedom with which tonal space is traversed from phrase to phrase, as the music gently modulates, is analogous to the broad physical space of the new prison-free creation. Vocal music and instrumental music express the same idea in different ways. This demonstrates the value of comparing both in a choral symphony.

The text continues, “Behold, he cometh, he who shall remove all crying.” That this text uses the future tense —“shall remove” rather than “has removed”—suggests that the paradisaic vision is still hoped for but not actual. Schoenfelder comments, “Since it is vision, not yet arrival and completion, the monumental work ends in the expression of solemn, religious-devotee absorption in the tone of a prayer coming from supplication and thanks.”⁷¹

At m. 69, the chorale features the indication “*intimate dolce*” with a prominent melisma on the word “blessed” in the soprano. This is significant because it is the first time in a chorale that a melisma is heard; and also because it recalls the first melisma of the symphony, also on the word “blessed,” in movement I. Here the complete text is “blessed may he be,” (referring to the one who “shall remove all crying”; see Ex. 57). This expressive moment represents the attainment of that long-awaited, joyful redemption. It is a cathartic moment in which the chorale choir sings words of praise for the first time.

⁷¹ Schoenfelder, 51.

69 *intimate
dolciss.*

S. bless - ed may he be, and bless - ed may he be!

A. bless - ed may he be, and bles-sed may he be!

T. bless - - - ed may he be, may he be!

B. bless - - - ed, and bless - ed may he be!

Ex. 57: Rosenberg, Chorale and Finale, mm. 69-72

The pastorate then continues, this time completing the cycle of modulations back to E major. The chorale sings the final verse, set to the same music appearing at the beginning of the Chorale and Finale: “He built our God who builds throughout the ages, a new Jerusalem. Eternal day is there, is people’s wages, for God the Lord his light will shed on them. Praised be the book of life and he who turns pages within the book of life.” In m. 109 the music cadences, as before, on G.

At this moment the large choir joins, singing “Amen,” *pp*. Meanwhile the chorale choir sings words of laud from Revelation, *fff*: “Praise, glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might be unto our God forever and ever.” As this text continues, the large choir along with the strings and winds gradually increase in dynamic level and widen in range, joining the chorale choir in m. 121 to sing *ff* “Amens,” bringing the work to a close. The harmony features static G major tonality, with tonic and dominant drones continuing throughout.

The melodic material of the large choir and doubling strings is derived from the “blessed” melisma of m. 69-70. Specifically the soprano in mm. 111 sings the same melody that appeared in m. 70, now transposed from A-major to G-major, and repeated (see Ex. 58; cf. Ex. 57).

109

S. *pp* *cresc.*
A - - men, A - - men,

A. *pp*
A - - men, A - - men, A - - men, A - - men,


T. *pp*
A - - men, A - - men, A - - men,


B. *pp*
A - - - men, A - - - men *cresc.*


Ex. 58: Rosenberg, Chorale and Finale, m. 109-112, large choir

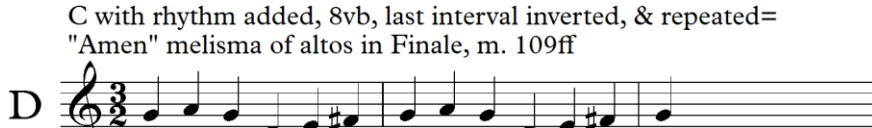
Furthermore, the alto melody starting in m. 109 bears close similarity to the “blessed” melisma of earlier in this movement; only the downward leap spans a fourth rather than a fifth. This is also closely related to the “blessed” melisma of movement I, which turns out to be the origin of this thematic material. Example 59 shows the evolution of the “blessed” melisma into the forms that appear in the Finale.

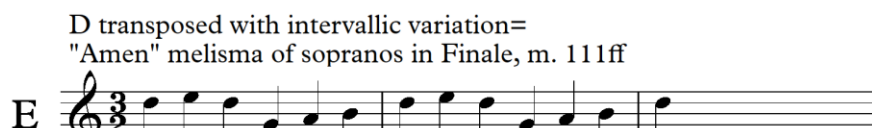
"Blessed" melisma of mvt. I

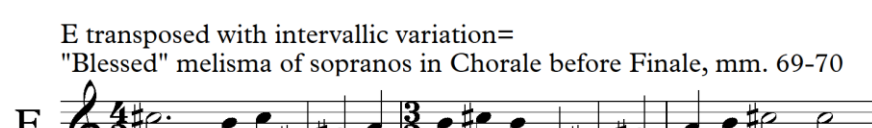
A 

B A with rhythms removed 

C B with selected notes removed 

D C with rhythm added, 8vb, last interval inverted, & repeated=
"Amen" melisma of altos in Finale, m. 109ff 

E D transposed with intervallic variation=
"Amen" melisma of sopranos in Finale, m. 111ff 

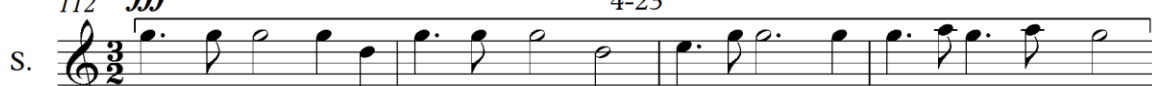
F E transposed with intervallic variation=
"Blessed" melisma of sopranos in Chorale before Finale, mm. 69-70 

Bless - ed may he be, and bless - ed

Ex. 59: Evolution of "Blessed" melisma of mvt. I
into various forms found in Finale

The pentatonic subset, 4-23, that appeared in movement II appears again in the concluding bars of the work (see Ex. 60).

112 *fff* 4-23

S. 

Praise, and glo - ry, and wis-dom, and thanks - giv - ing, and ho - nour, and power,

Ex. 60: Chorale and Finale, mm. 112-115
soprano, featuring set 4-23

The reuse of set 4-23, in combination with the drones, static harmony, wide range, high register, and complete diatonicism result in the long-awaited attainment of music parallel to the Heavenly style of movement II. The brass, percussion, and notably the orchestra bells contribute to a powerful conclusion.

Rosenberg's choice to conclude the work in G-major is effective because (1) it is a major mode, which like E major in movements V and VII, is used as a mode of benevolence and victory; (2) the cellos can play tonic and dominant drones on open strings, creating a special timbre; (3) the key has no links to earlier movements, as would E major, A major, or C major; and the "future vision" status of this work is symbolized by a different key which received no emphasis throughout the work; and (4) the sopranos can sing the high tonic G and upward-neighbor A with conviction and force, contributing to a strong sense of triumph.

Like the *Dante Symphony*, the *Revelation* achieves unity by means other than that of the traditional Classical symphony, but which are still effective. Dramatically, the work is about the disparity between the goodness in heaven and the evil on earth, and the final reconciliation between the two realms, between God and man. Musically, the first movement plants the thematic seeds that are taken up again in the Finale, as well as contrasting the high and low registers, loud and soft dynamics, thin and thick textures, and chromatic and diatonic melodies. The Heaven music of movement II is parallel to the pastorale and diatonic conclusion of the Finale. The contrast narrated in movement III is further explored in the extreme contrast between the violent style of movement IV and the gentle music of movement V. The sixth movement also contrasts with the fourth by demonstrating an energy and power opposed to that of the war music. This ushers

movement VII, in which a gradually intensifying march and folk-song lead to the strike of a gong, followed by serene ninth chords and intimate solos. In the Chorale and Finale, the chorale choir is purged of its sadness, as tonality creates a sense of peace and triumph. Throughout all this, the solo Baritone narrates the story, while the following choral-orchestral movements use the recitative text as their programmatic basis; and the chorales represent the earthly perspective of those who hope for the salvation of the Lord.

The *Revelation of St. John* is a masterwork that merges the symphony, tone poem, oratorio, and chorale/motet cycle. This and the wide variety of musical styles employed in it result in a universal statement which Rosenberg articulates with sensitivity and compositional prowess, justifying the high praise that Pergament and others have given it. Like the *Dante Symphony*, this work rewards close analysis.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE “SYMPHONY OF CREATION”

The *Symphony of Creation* is my first large-scale orchestral work. It was inspired not only by Biblical passages, but by J.R.R. Tolkien’s creation myth “Ainulindalë,” which I discuss in my Master’s thesis. The symphony consists of five movements, the first four being instrumental, with scriptural epigraphs, and the last introducing the chorus. The fifth movement may be performed as a separate piece. The text is taken from various scriptures, including the Psalms, Prophets, and Torah, and was selected to convey a single narrative about the creation, its subsequent subjection to futility, and final reconciliation back to the Creator. Like the works of Bach and Bruckner, this one is written for the glory of God. The title page bears the inscription “Soli Deo Gloria.”

Movement I: The Beginning

The epigraph of this movement is Psalm 33:6, which the Douay-Rheims translates: “By the word of the Lord the heavens were established, and all the power of them by the spirit of his mouth.” The opening melody, shown in Example 61, is a chant that represents things coming into existence “by the word of the Lord.” The music is

notated in 3/2 time, alternating with 2/2 time; the free-flowing rhythm results in an absence of regularly recurring downbeats.

[Sostenuto] ♩ = c. 45]
The tempo may be stretched, but never rushed
 (Vln. II & piano) *molto espressivo, legato*

3 9 14

p *mf* Vib.

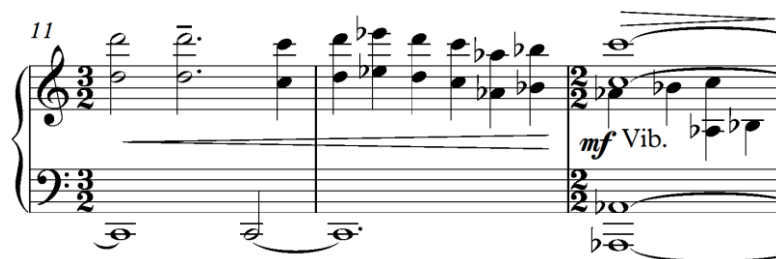
Ex. 61: Opening theme

The dynamic expressivity, rhythmic flexibility, and articulations are essential components. Without them the melody is meaningless. Its significance lies in the notion that there is more present than the mere physical sounds. The music is intended to be numinous, and its non-pitch elements are vital.

The chant is quasi-minimalistic, in that there is little variation in harmony and melody for some time. But something eventful happens until m. 10: a leap of a fifth, and the phrase that follows leads to new harmony in m. 12, where the vibraphone is

introduced. The melody comes to rest again where it started, following a Phrygian third-line from B^b to G.

Musical events condition subsequent musical events. The meditative material that precedes mm. 11-13 make the “new” phrase sound all the more new (see Ex. 62). This newness represents the conversion of non-material energy—the mind of God—into something else: the heavens.



Ex. 62: the “New” Phrase, mm. 8-12

The chant is the foundation for rest of the movement. After its first statement, it is restated at different pitch-levels, almost always a fifth up from the previous. In each variation, there is more rhythmic energy and contrapuntal complexity in the surrounding parts, and the “new” phrase introduces new harmony, melody, and orchestral color. The concluding third-line is a refrain.

In the second variation, eighth-notes are appropriated, and the chant is imitated canonically. In the third variation, the first violins play an undulating ostinato in sixteenth-notes and eighth-notes (see Ex. 63). Meanwhile, the chant is imitated by two canonic layers.

Ex. 63: Undulating ostinato

In the fourth variation, sixteenth-notes are maintained, but more widely distributed in the orchestra, and the featured ostinato is more complex (see Ex. 64). Also, the triple-canonic procedure is repeated.

Ex. 64: More complex ostinato

In the fifth variation, the chant is played in inversion in the low register. Sixteenth-note sextuplets play a “noodle” ostinato that derives from the chant, and are featured continually (see Ex. 65). The canonic imitation ceases.

Ex. 65: Fifth variation, mm. 55-56, reduction

Each time the rhythmic energy of the accompaniment increases, and that of the theme stays essentially the same, the music achieves a new level of depth. This recalls Rosenberg's Heaven music in which the simultaneous occurrence of fast and slow rhythms created the illusion of distance and dimension. By the fifth variation in this movement, that distance has reached its most extreme point. This rhythmic energy demonstrates the potential inherent in the chant from the beginning. In musical terms, this potential is contrapuntal; in extra-musical terms, it is cosmic energy.

Not only are fast rhythms juxtaposed with slower ones, but the latter feature very low registers. The slower moving, low register line seems large in comparison to the faster moving line. This invokes relativity. Things are only fast or slow, large or small when perceived from a certain frame of reference. There is no objective size or speed. This is critical in the study of the cosmos. In "The Beginning," the listener embarks on a "mighty voyage" into deep space.

"By the word of the Lord the heavens were established, and all the power of them by the spirit of his mouth." The Douay-Rheims translation uses the word "power" rather than "host" as in other translations. "Host" in modern English could mean the inanimate multitude of heavenly bodies; but "the power of [the heavens]" more clearly suggests supernatural conscious entities, such as the cherubim and seraphim referred to elsewhere in the scriptures. In the fifth variation, these "powers" come forth (metaphorically speaking), as the full brass section is unleashed with the "new" phrase.

After the brass are introduced with the "new" theme, the trumpets and trombones interrupt to play the chant themselves, while the rapid ostinato strings stand by slavishly (see Ex. 66).



Ex. 66: mm. 64-65, reduction

The brass conclude this statement of the chant with the help of loud percussion. Then the fifth variation proper continues in the low register instruments, concluding it with a crescendo and “rhythmic diminuendo,” leading to a tutti, *ff* climax in m. 99 (see Ex. 67).

Ex. 67: mm. 97-99, crescendo and “rhythmic diminuendo” leading to climax, string section

At m. 99, the mode changes to the fifth mode of harmonic minor, the same used by Liszt in the *Inferno*, and Rosenberg in the fifth movement of his *Revelation*. In the soaring climax of mm. 100-106, the woodwinds and brass are unconducted, playing free, unmeasured material within specified guidelines (see p. 162 of Appendix). This material represents the equal and opposite release of energy built up prior to m. 99. The freedom

given to much of the orchestra, and written variety in the string parts, creates a crowd-cheering effect. Gradually it diminishes to all but a soft and lonely solo flute, which ushers the final variation, a new section in itself.

It is marked *Andantino*, and the theme is played in inversion and embellished by a solo violin in the high register. The harmony suggests A^b major tonality. The harp and woodwinds play a freely adapted, slightly augmented version of the theme in counterpoint with the solo violin. The gentle timbres, dynamics, and thin scoring of this final variation present extreme contrast to the preceding. The movement concludes with the familiar Phrygian third-line, now on C. This cadence is sustained and the next movement proceeds *attacca*.

The harmony in this movement is largely consonant, and occasionally dissonant. Throughout the first five variations, the melodies prefer the dark color of Aeolian and Phrygian modes. Dramatically, this may seem questionable in light of the theory that the brighter diatonic modes better lend themselves to the depiction of heaven. To answer this, first, the dramatic purpose of this movement is to show that the powers of heaven had their origin, like everything else according to the Bible, in the “Word of the Lord.” The exercise of that power is depicted with darker music. Second, cosmology is conditioned in popular imagination by the photographs of the Hubble telescope, and indeed by the night sky, which show light in the midst of vast darkness. Also, scientists believe that dark matter comprises the overwhelming majority of matter in the universe. The Beginning reflects this view of the heavens. This explains the occasional use of bright sonorities amid the predominating dark ones in the first five variations, as well as the culminating explosion of harmonic-minor-mode-five—a scale that with its raised third

but lowered supertonic, submediant and leading-tone seems to intersperse light amid surrounding darkness.

Finally, the last variation is in major mode, featuring heavenly timbres and high registers. This endorses the Liszt-Rosenberg—i.e. the Biblical—image of heaven, a place of increased perception, unity, order, and clarity. But before elaborating on this, *The Beginning* ends with a sustained Phrygian cadence, creating a sense of less resolution as the symphony proceeds *attaca* to the next movement. Thus *The Beginning* marries science and scripture, but quickly looks forward to the symphonic development. The brief suggestion of the mystical image of heaven serves a rhetorical purpose that will become evident later in the symphony.

Movement II: The Corruption

The epigraph to this movement is Isaiah 14:12-14, which in the King James reads:

¹²How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!

How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

¹³For thou hast said in thine heart, “I will ascend into heaven,

I will exalt my throne above the stars of God:

I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

¹⁴I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.”

The music begins with material inspired by Schoenberg’s “Farben”—the third of his *Five Pieces for Orchestra*, op. 16. The woodwinds, strings, vibraphone and harp all play C, alternating in groups that form different mixtures of color. This creates the backdrop for the solo trombone which emerges in m. 6, playing a melody marked “*insolente*” (see Ex. 68). Soon the second trombone imitates, followed gradually by the rest of the brass section.

6 *insolente*

mf e - - le nai - an, - e - le nai - - an, e - le

11

nai - an - e - le nai - an, an - ca - lee ma, an - ca - eel ma, an -

15

-ca - lee ma, an - ca - lee ma a

19 *cresc.*

a a

cresc.

23

a

f

f

*Vocalise within instrument while playing: "e" as in "pet"; "ai" as in "eye";
 "a" as in "palm"; "ee" as in "street"; consonants merely suggest articulation.

Ex. 68: Movement II, mm. 6-19, trombones 1&2

This music is insolent because it is deliberately distinct from the color-mélange of the rest of the orchestra. Also, it presents itself as an alternative to the chant of movement I. Like the chant, it features Phrygian shades, a prominent leap of a fifth (now at the

start), motivic similarity, and predominantly conjunct motion. But “crude” parallel fifths, which were absent in the first movement, are flaunted here. Also, the rising contour of the melody, and gradual appropriation of the successive flat-systems of the circle of fifths, as in the introduction to Rosenberg’s *Revelation*, create the feeling of ascension. Also, the vocalizations within the trombones produce strange timbres, as well as the implication of consciousness, together depicting the rebellious spirit. The vocalizations are invented words.

This music provides a glimpse into the mind of Lucifer: an insolent thought arises as a single *mf* trombone, and far from being aborted with humility, is gradually reinforced as the rest of the brass enter, achieving a tutti climax at m. 47 in A Phrygian. It is as if the brass have been seduced by the pleasure of wielding power depicted in the first movement. Meanwhile the color-music of the orchestra continues, with modest variation. It remains as something stationary against which to measure the insolent ascension of brass.

In the following section, the texture becomes thin and the dynamics soft as the brass quietly ruminate on fragments of the insolent theme. The continuing orchestral color-music is more discernible. It so happens that the C of the orchestra complements the A Phrygian music of the brass; but when at m. 58 the brass sustain G Aeolian material, the resulting harmony features the chord G-C-D, which is set 3-9, and a rearrangement of the quintal sonority heard in mm. 8-12 of movement I. This harmony will later prove significant. But the rhythmic differentiation, more than the harmony, creates the sense of incongruity between the color-music and the brass; the former is in three, the latter in four.

The insolent theme continues again in full, and the brass turn ugly with deep registers in the bass trombone and tuba, and fluttertonguing dissonance in the second trumpet in mm. 65-68. The point of no return occurs at m. 73, where a violent gesture is depicted by the brass. Before this, they featured free polyphony; here, they unite to play as one (see Ex. 69).

73 Tr. 1, Hn. 1

ff

ffz

ff *violento*

Ex. 69: Brass, mm. 73-74

The D1 in the tuba is the lowest sonority of the movement, and draws attention to itself, as if something to be feared. Now the music modulates upward, and the first trumpet reaches a piercing C6 (sounding) at m. 81, and the first horn, F5 at m. 83. The *ff* music comes to a close with another “rhythmic diminuendo,” drawing comparison with the same in movement I—again, as if presenting an alternative. But instead of an equal and opposite explosion of energy, the brass’ long-held open-fifth chord on D expires to the soft sound of the orchestral color-music, which closes the movement. The impracticality of Lucifer’s attempt is underscored by the lack of consequence.

“The Corruption” is a picture of Lucifer’s absurd aspiration to “be like the most High.” The symbolism of this music may be heard as a serious threat; or it may be heard as a quixotic pipe-dream. One hearing triggers a furrowed brow; the other, a roar of

laughter. Sonically, the brass pose a significant threat to the serenity of the rest of the orchestra. But the brass, like the other orchestral timbres (except the initial piano-string partnership), were introduced successively by the chant-variations of movement one, illustrating the idea that everything has its origin in the “Word of the Lord.” It is impossible for the brass and what they symbolize to be more powerful than what caused them to be. If this is remembered, Lucifer’s ambition will be heard for what it is: a ludicrous sham. The game of the second movement is to listen for how convincing a case the brass can make that they can do what is obviously impossible: rival the source of their existence.

Movement III: Lament

It is unusual for a concerto movement to be placed in the middle of a “symphony.”⁷² But a solo cello can very poignantly give expression to the affect of Ezekiel 28:11-19 noted in the epigraph:

¹¹Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

¹²Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.

¹³Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.

¹⁴Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

¹⁵Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.

¹⁶By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the

⁷² Although it is not unheard of; compare, for example, Hadyn’s “Matin, Midi, Soir” set (Symphonies Six, Seven, and Eight).

mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

¹⁷Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.

¹⁸Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.

¹⁹All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.

Elsewhere in the book of Ezekiel cherubim are described as awesomely powerful

spiritual entities. This lamentation alludes to the moral corruption of a cherub who was in Eden. A tone poem on this text continues the narrative of the symphony.

The movement is marked “Grave ma non troppo lento.” It is a sarabande, being a slow dance in three, with occasional syncopations on divided second or third beats. The music seems weighed down with grief, with silence occurring on the second beats in the introduction, and articulations in the strings that make each note sound like it takes effort (see Ex. 70).

Grave ma non troppo lento ♩=c.72
quasi staccato

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass

p <> <> *simile*
quasi staccato

Ex. 70: Lament, mm. 1-8

The high register of the cello has a tearful intensity when it enters at m. 25. No other instrument can play the same notes and have the same effect (see Ex. 71).

Più mosso $\text{♩} = c.80$

25 *quasi staccato*

Cl. *p* *simile*

B. Cl. *p* *simile*

Vc. solo *mf* *lagrimoso*

Vln. I *mp*

Vln. II *mp*

Vla. *div.* *mp*

Vc. *mp*

Db. *mp*

Ex. 71: Movement III, mm. 25-32

Excepting the use of the cello's very high register, this music might have been written in the eighteenth century: parallel fifths and octaves are scrupulously avoided; the Neapolitan occurs in first inversion; parallel phrase structure is straightforward; the solo cello contrasts with the orchestra. The form of the movement is rounded binary with a cadenza and coda. This movement deliberately models eighteenth-century style.

This is intended to relate to the epigraph. The eighteenth century in Europe is known as the Enlightenment, and the Age of Reason, the time in which the scientific discoveries of such as Newton, Kepler, and Galileo had led to a re-evaluation of man's

position in the universe—as intelligent entities that can attain truth through the exercise of reason. Embracing this new view, humans made great strides forward in the realms of politics and economics, as well as science. Art was not neglected. Eighteenth-century music holds up the ideals of objectivity, persuasion, and logic. The clarity of phrase structure, the lucidity of varied repetition, and the rhetorical structure of form lend themselves to those ideals. And when done well, eighteenth-century music appeals both to the connoisseur and the amateur.

The “King of Tyrus” is interpreted by Christian theologians to be not only a historical figure, but a representation of Lucifer. Ezekiel says he was “full of wisdom” and “of perfect beauty.” Earlier in the chapter it is stated, “Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee.” To this person is attributed superlative intelligence and attractiveness. Who can testify to this with confidence but one with greater powers of perception? The fact that these are God’s words, according to Ezekiel, makes them not absurd. But the King of Tyrus lifted himself up in pride. Ezekiel says, “Thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness.” The best way to musically illustrate a lament for the one who was once the “brightest” is to emphasize the implied greater clarity of the one who laments—and for this the musical language of the Enlightenment volunteers itself.

Also, for reasons that do not become evident until later in the symphony, it is imperative that the idea of lamentation be depicted as clearly as possible—another reason why the accessible language of the eighteenth-century is appropriate. Lastly, the desired effect of this movement is vulnerability, something without which lamentation is

impossible; and what better way to depict vulnerability than with a style apt to draw some of the most vitriolic condemnation from a still significant number of new music critics?

After featuring an inversion of the opening theme in what first seems to be E-flat major, but actually is C minor, and further toyings with perceived tonal center, the exposition ends with the theme shown in Example 72, in the key of the minor-dominant, C-minor.

65

Cl. *mf*

B. Cl. *mf*

Timp. *p*

Vc. solo *appassionata*

Vln. I *mf*

Vln. II *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

Db. *mf*

rit. *molto doloroso*

p *p* *p* *p* *p* *p*

ad lib.

Ex. 72: Movement III, mm. 65-73 closing theme of exposition

In the second half of the rounded binary structure, the dynamic level is softened, and the clarinets play a more prominent role in the accompaniment. The brief major-

mode sections, with dignified dance steps in three seem to reminisce the days in which the “covering cherub” walked freely on the holy mountain of God. As the second half comes to a close, the music ends not with a perfect authentic cadence, but a half cadence on C-major. What follows is an orchestral introduction to a cello cadenza that reaches as high as C6, followed by a gradually accelerating chromatic scale that descends to F2. The orchestra stares at this spectacle with tutti chords that conclude the movement.

Movement IV: The Plan

The epigraph here is Genesis 50:20, which the New Jewish Publication Society translation renders, “although you intended me harm, God intended it for good.” The title of this movement changes the verb “intended” into a corresponding noun.

The movement opens with the low brass angrily playing a unison-octave theme (see Ex. 73).

Maestoso ♩=90

Trombone 1/2

Bass Trombone & Tuba

Ex. 73: Movement IV, mm. 1-4

This melody sounds like a combination of the opening phrase of Liszt’s *Dante Symphony* and Danny Elfman’s theme song to the Batman Movie by Tim Burton. But it accomplishes well the purpose of introducing the conflict which is to unfold.

The strings, piano, horns, bassoons, and English horn respond naively with serene pastoral music, featuring the chant of movement I, inverted and happily in major mode. This and the brass theme are differentiated in almost everything: tempo, dynamics, harmony, texture, tessitura. The brass continue to alternate with the pastorale, and each time the brass becoming more forceful, with rhythmic animation, wider overall range, and more complex melody; and each time the pastoral music continues unchanged, completing one phrase at a time. After the brass complete three phrases based on the opening one, they play the music shown in Ex. 74.

28 **Largo** ♩=66

f minacciando

32 (very slow glissando shared by alternating trombones)

Ex. 74: Movement IV, mm. 28-34, brass reduction

The pastoral music continues, pathetically oblivious, and tries to cadence in its undisturbed key of A-major. Instead, the brass instruments erupt with the material shown in Example 75.

Ex. 75: Movement IV, mm. 40-44, brass

The bass trombone in m. 41 plays D-E^b-F, a transposition of the same ascending motive of m. 28. This is the foundational motive of the violent music.

But this time, the pastoral music continues simultaneously. The alternation between these two musics in the introduction allows the following bitonal music to be more clearly understood. The brass continue to play “belligerent rhythms,” in which the downbeat of each bar featuring sixteenth-note-motion is anticipated with lust. This recalls a similar effect in Liszt’s *Inferno*. Meanwhile, the pastoral theme appears in augmentation, and is played by the strings, piano, and vibraphone. It remains in duple time, but is written in triplets of three half-notes per bar, so that the barlines of both the brass and the rest of the orchestra always coincide. This makes the piece considerably easier to perform than if it featured incongruous barlines.

The pastoral music is played softly, and with little variation in dynamics and orchestration. As a result, it functions like the color-music of movement II: backdrop material which amplifies the rebellious affect of the brass. The orchestration and spatial arrangement of the orchestra on the concert stage help the two musics to be distinguished, but the loudness of the brass predominates.

When heard as a whole, the music is chaotic. The harmonies that arise do so purely by chance. The clear parallel phrase structure of the previous movement is completely absent. The overall lack of unified repetitions among the orchestra as a whole precludes the sense of unified consciousness heard in movements I and III.

But viewed as a distinct entity, the brass are coherent, reflecting states of consciousness through varied repetition. But the repetition is extreme and violent. Meanwhile, the harmony frequently features open-fifth chords with added semitones above the “root” and/or fifth. The more dissonant moments of movement II have become the rule in this one. The violent repetition, fast-repeating staccato notes, loud dynamics, low registers, dissonance, and chromatic scales together result in the malevolent style heard in the Liszt and Rosenberg. The assertive repetitions, and the consistently-maintained extremely low register alludes to death metal music and the obsession with raw power.

At m. 65, the brass play a sinister parody the chant of movement I. Unlike the rest of the orchestra, the brass play the chant right-side up, and thus more directly recall the opening moments of the symphony (see Ex. 76)



Ex. 76: Movement IV, mm. 65-69, parody of opening chant

Since blasphemy is the intentional vilification of what is regarded as holy, music heard as blasphemous must have something “holy” in it so that it can be reviled. Here it is

the chant that symbolizes the “Word of God.” The deliberate dissonance and crudely simple rhythms void of dynamic shape make a mockery of the chant.

Next, the bass trombone and tuba, starting on E^b 1, play the ascending motive, as the trumpets intersperse ascending chromatic scales, and the horns announce the arrival of each downbeat, gradually rising in pitch until m. 87 where the *violento* motive of movement II is played, establishing D Phrygian. Meanwhile, the orchestra plays new material for the first time, having heretofore ruminated upon the inverted theme at different pitch levels and rhythmic groupings. Now the flutes and piccolo enter, and with the strings, harp and vibraphone play a descending line, harmonized with various triads, starting with C minor, and ending with C major in m. 88.

The *tutti violento* motive of the brass represents a seeming moment of triumph, after the ascending material that followed the vilification. Now the significance of D Phrygian becomes clear as the brass modulate with ease to G Aeolian. At m. 95, the opening theme of movement II is played triumphantly in the high register of the first trombone, along with the first and second horns. Next, all four horns play this theme in diminution in G Aeolian, concluding with a long-descending chromatic scale in parallel fifths.

The harmony of the brass after the *tutti violento* motive is no longer deliberately dissonant. The unresolved, long-maintained minor seconds and tritones yield mostly to perfect consonances. The violence that predominated before is not an end in itself, as it was not the case for Hitler, Stalin, or Bin Laden. Something else is envisioned for which violence is simply the means. Here Lucifer erects himself as an object of worship, as the

indisputable champion of the universe, etc. etc. Tonality and (relative) consonance lend what they have to offer to the representation of this: certainty, clearness, achieved will.

But meanwhile, the orchestra has initiated a new theme in C major, and triple meter. Starting at m. 91, the barlines coincide as the metric distinctions for both the brass as well as the rest of the orchestra. And the new theme is crafted to harmonize with parts of the exulting brass material, but in a different key. While the brass assert G minor (or G Aeolian), the orchestra plays a gentle melody in C major. The progressions are liberal, but the starting and ending of each separate music articulates these overall keys. As a result, the brass may be heard at moments to function within the larger atmosphere of C major. For example, in mm. 93-94, the brass play an elaboration of an F-minor sonority, while the orchestra plays a progression from F minor to C major (see Ex. 77).

Ex. 77: Movement IV, mm. 93-95, reduction

Both the brass and orchestra maintain independence, and sustained musical logic of their own, but at moments like this, they coincide, harmonizing as a whole. Also, in

mm. 101-103, the G-minor material of the brass subsumes into the extended tertian chords of the orchestra (see Ex. 78).

The musical score for Movement IV, mm. 101-103, is presented in a reduction with harmonic analysis. The score is in G minor and features complex textures with triplets and extended chords. The harmonic analysis at the bottom identifies the chords as C⁹, E^b₉, and A^b maj⁷.

Ex. 78: Movement IV, mm. 101-103,
reduction with harmonic analysis

The piccolo and flutes which soar high above the brass choir contribute to the perception of C-tonality. As the brass recapitulate the closing material of movement II, now in G minor, the “rhythmic diminuendo” occurs again, and the orchestra softens to allow the brass’ imagined triumph to be heard. At the moment of climax, the cadence is not on G, but C, with an added ninth, contributed graciously by the brass (see Ex. 79).

Timpani rolls contribute to the triumph of C-major. Next the most extreme contrast is depicted as the C-major material of the orchestra is gently played by solo winds with harp and pizzicato double basses. This gentle music following an explosive tutti recalls the same at the end of movement I.

111

ff

pp *cresc.*

ff

C: v

C: 9

Ex. 79: Movement IV, of mm. 111-115,
reduction with analysis

The repetition of the C-major melody allows it to be appreciated free of the clamoring brass. Its rhetorical function here is to depict extreme meekness and mildness in contrast to the extreme violence and malignance of previously. The movement ends with an intimate solo flute harmonized with the same C⁹ chord that formed the climax of the movement in m. 115—only now softly scored for harp, soft strings and vibraphone.

Movement V: The Word

The Finale opens with the altos singing a word that is not understood until after a long melisma. It turns out to be “By,” shortly followed by “the word.” The text is once again Psalm 33:6, but here verses 7-9 are included:

- ⁶By the word of the Lord the heavens were established
and all the power of them by the spirit of his mouth
⁷Gathering together the waters of the sea, as in a vessel
laying up the depths in storehouses
⁸Let all the earth fear the Lord
and let all the inhabitants of the world be in awe of him

⁹For he spoke and they were made
he commanded and they were created.

That the words unfold very slowly depicts a gradual transition from the preceding world of instrumental music to one in which text is added to music. Perhaps this indicates the gradual emergence of consciousness that took place on planet Earth over geological ages. Either way, the long melismas allow the voices to construct melodic-formal structures that rely primarily on musical rather than textual logic.

The harmonic rhythm is slow, the rhythm is free-flowing, and the predominant scale is the fifth mode of harmonic-minor. The recurrence of this mode alludes to the “Big Bang” tutti of movement I, which flung the rest of the symphony into existence. The emptiness that surrounds the altos as they begin this movement further recalls the opening of movement I. This Finale takes the listener’s imagination back to the beginning.

The piano plays a prominent role, as in *The Beginning*, both doubling the chorus, and contributing new counterpoint. This instrument, a mechanical marvel of human ingenuity, does well in evoking the ancient source of all intelligence. After verse six is completed, the chorus proceeds to sing verses seven to nine in recitational style, ending the section at m. 55.

This movement is like a cantata, in which various sections of vocal styles together form a unified whole. A new section begins with octaves on C in the timpani, harp and piano, the latter two reaching down to C1. The tempo is now “Allegro moderato,” compared to the “Moderato” of before. The bass drum creates an aura of restless energy with continual sixteenth-notes at a soft dynamic. Then four tenors enter confidently with the leap of a fifth, establishing E^b tonality, with text adapted from Psalm 93:

³The floods have lifted up, O LORD
 The floods have lifted up their voice
 The floods lift up their waves
⁴The LORD on high is mightier
 Than the noise of many waters
 Yes, than the mighty waves of the sea

The melody implies harmonic-minor-mode-five on E^b. When the text proceeds to verse four with “The LORD on high...” the music modulates up a major second to F, and the timpani enter, emphasizing downbeats. The tonality seems to be F Phrygian, but ends with a suggestion of the fifth-mode of melodic-minor on B-flat. The high and low contours of the melody depict the relative position of “the LORD” and “the mighty waves of the sea.”

This song is distinguished from the previous motet in that the text drives the music. The style is syllabic, and the textual ideas dictate to the musical ones. The noisy sea is below, and the Lord is above.

After this stanza, four sopranos enter to sing a refrain, setting the following verse of the Psalm: “Thy decrees are very sure. Holiness becometh thine house, O LORD, for ever.” The refrain ends with a 5[^] to 1[^] line in F minor.

In m. 80 the percussive strikes and bass drum aura seem to usher another verse, but instead the tenors enter with different material, accompanied by eerie natural-harmonic glissandos in the strings. The tenors sing psalm-tone music on G, the mediant of E Aeolian, with the marking “modesto,” words from Psalm 75:2-3, “When I shall receive the congregation I will judge uprightly. The earth and its inhabitants are dissolved: I bear up its pillars.” This line introduces a mysterious character who can sustain the pillars of the earth after it has been dissolved, and intends to judge uprightly.

The setting of this striking text to humble psalm-tone music is sardonic, and parallel to the “ironico” music of movement IV. This creates confrontational excitement .

The bass drum aura proceeds, now with the triangle ringing happily on downbeats, and the tenors proceed with the next verse, again establishing E^b. This tonality comes somewhat as a surprise, after the previous modulations and interspersed absence of harmony. The text continues an adaptation of Psalm 75:

⁴I said unto the fools, “Deal not foolishly”
And to the wicked, “Lift not up the horn.”

⁵Lift not up your horn on high
Speak not with a stiff neck.

⁶For promotion cometh neither from the east,
nor from the west, nor from the south

⁷But God is the judge
He putteth down, and setteth up another.

The imperative mood heightens the sense of conflict that the first stanza merely introduced. This is aggressive text, and the music supports it; the transition from verse five to six features a crescendo in the bass drum aura from *piano* to *ff*. This powerful instrument compels attention, and the tenor drum enters, adding dimension. Also four basses join to sing verses six and seven. Meanwhile, the bass drum has softened only to *mf*, and limits its activity to alternating eighths and groups of two sixteenths. This transformation suggests ascent to some new level of experience. The continual emphasis on strong beats sets this song apart from the style of the previous motet, and alludes to the power of authority suggested by the text.

These stanzas have been monophonic with the accompaniment of the percussion. When the basses enter, counterpoint is finally introduced; and the two-part music features mostly perfect intervals. When the refrain enters, the mode is again F minor, and sung by female voices. The contrast of mode, timbre, and range between the stanzas and the

refrains creates notable variety. This time the text of the refrain is varied: “Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks. Holiness becometh thine house, O LORD, for ever.” This merges verse one of Psalm 75 with the familiar one of Psalm 93. The highest note, reached again with the word “holiness,” is raised from what before was D^b now to E^b — a subtle detail, but one that will prove significant.

The final verse proceeds with the percussion accompaniment full and ever-varied.

Psalm 75 continues, freely adapted:

⁸For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup
 And the wine is red and fully mixed
 And he pours out of the same
 And all the wicked of the earth
 Shall drain it to the dregs
⁹But I will declare for ever
 I will sing praises to the God of Jacob
 We will sing praises to the God of Jacob
¹⁰All the horns of the wicked I will cut off
 but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted

With the words, “and he pours” in verse eight, the basses descend to E^b 2, a striking timbre, with the low-register piano and harp, and the deep resonance of the tam-tam. When the music modulates once again to F, the rhythmic animation of the percussion increases with the words “And all the wicked of the earth shall drain it to the dregs.” This song is the beginning of a reckoning that the symphony demands after the long-sustained conflict between the orchestra and the brass.

The text specifically addresses the brass. Earlier in the song, when the tenors commanded “lift not up your horn on high,” the trombones and first two horns played a pathetic minor-second chord, like a dog cowering before an angry owner. Here, in the last stanza, the tenors proclaim the exaltation of “the horns of the righteous.” With these words, the full brass section erupts immediately with a sixteenth-century cadence

suspension in major mode. The brass are thus reinstated. Since movement two they represented corruption and evil, but with this new text, and their obedient outburst of happy consonance, they can be heard without the association of conflict. The brass are too important to be silent for the rest of the symphony.

F-sharp-major mode corresponds to the words of praise. The dark Phrygian color is replaced with bright major-mode inflections. The sopranos and altos respond antiphonally to the tenor's cheerful text with a repetition of the phrase. The following "horn" text and response of the brass firmly establishes F-sharp-major with the cadence suspension, but then immediately yields to percussive octaves on F, which usher the last refrain in F minor. This abrupt change in tonality underscores the peculiar indication written in the score over the brass, "rejoice with trembling"—a brilliant oxymoron taken from Psalm 2. The brass rejoice out of obedience, and then hold their breath at the resonating strike of the percussion.

As the sound decays, the four sopranos and four altos sing a varied translation of Psalm 93: "Thy decrees are fully confirmed. Holiness becomes thine house, O LORD, for ever." This time the refrain reaches F5 with the word "holiness," and features four-part harmony among the *divisi* singers. The refrain now follows an 8[^]-to-1[^] line that concludes the song with a diminuendo, ritardando, and Picardy third at the cadence in m. 145.

This song exemplifies the Davidic hatred of wickedness, and zeal for justice. Its presence here answers the brass' malignant music in movement IV, as will that which is to follow.

The next section of the cantata is marked "Largo," and features a slow but gradual intensification that lasts through m. 173, a significance stretch in this tempo. The

mechanism is an ascending chain suspension that occurs over a repeating chord progression that establishes alternating major and minor keys (see Ex. 80).

147 **(Largo)**
strings, tbn.

a: VI V i e: VI V i b: VI V i

C: vi V I G: vi V I G: vi V

Ex. 80: Movement V, mm. 147-152, reduction
ascending chain suspension modulation scheme

The keys always modulate upward by alternating major and minor thirds, and every newly-tonicized chord becomes the pivot chord for the next modulation. In this manner, all forty-eight major and minor keys are tonicized without any being duplicated until the cycle has completed. The result is a continual sense of upward motion.

In the meantime, the orchestration becomes gradually more colorful, the dynamic level gradually louder, the range gradually wider, and the contrapuntal texture gradually more thick. The immense potential of variety belonging to the orchestra enables this process to sustain continual development throughout the large cycle. Also, the chorus participates with wordless counterpoint. Finally the music leads to a rhythmically augmented 4-3 suspension cadence in C-major, and an upward rushing line in the strings and winds. The first violins reach as high as C7, and the piccolo ascends to G7.

The ascending chain suspension is a remarkable device of counterpoint. Mozart was fond of it; it appears in his D-minor String Quartet, K.421, and his F-major Piano Sonata, K.533. Also, Howard Shore uses it in his film score to Avatar, in a scene where the hero flies for the first time on the back of a Pterosaur-like creature. The contrapuntal

device very effectively depicts the feeling of liberation from gravity. And so does the chord progression that accompanies it in *The Word*. But neither is *this* device new. Beethoven used it in his Op. 109 Piano Sonata in E-major. Furthermore, the ascending scales that march upward with staccato steps, and culminate in new harmonies recall a similar procedure in the introduction to Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. While much of the material of this Largo section of *The Word* is not new, the combination of everything evokes continual ascension to an extent perhaps never achieved before.

This feeling of ascension, of liberation from gravity presents itself in contrast to the "grave" music of movement III. In that movement, notes proceeded as if with great effort or pain, and the descending chromatic scale concluded the Lament. The gravity of that movement is answered with the levity of this one.

With the climax at m. 174, the cadence on C arrives with a new tempo, *Tranquillo*, and the indication *subito piano* in all the parts that continue to play. The flutes, clarinets and bassoons play a new theme in major mode (see Example 81).

Tranquillo

Ex. 81: Movement V, mm. 174-177, reduction,
"Tranquillo theme"

Before this new theme is developed, the percussion and brass emerge with a heraldic Presto fanfare that initiates the tenors, who announce words from Genesis 3:14, “The Lord God saith unto the serpent...”⁷³ What follows is a choral recitative, marked “Maestoso,” sung by God.

In many choral works, the chorus represents humanity, which addresses God with prayers and praises. Here the chorus represents God, and he addresses “the serpent.”⁷⁴ This approach reflects a conception of God as one with the multitudes that return his love. The brass double the voices, adding intensity to the declamation.

The harmony features open fifths, recalling the Introduction to Rosenberg’s *Revelation*. The words are freely taken from various books, starting with Ezekiel 28, “Thou hast said, ‘I am God, I sit in God’s throne in the midst of the seas,’” followed by Exodus 9:16: “But in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power.” The silence that separates phrases is rhetorically significant. With the word “up,” the melody turns downward a tritone. And with the phrase “my power,” the quintal sonority that dates back to the beginning of *The Beginning* is heard, C-G-D.

The remainder of the recitative is adapted from Isaiah 45:6-8, which says:

⁶That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west
That there is none beside me
I am the LORD, and there is none else
⁷I form the light, and create darkness
I make peace, and create evil
I the LORD do all these things.

With the words, “I form the light,” the sopranos and altos feature a curious upward resolving suspension; this contrapuntal innovation recurs at mm. 205-206 (see Ex. 82).

⁷³ Young’s literal translation uses the present tense “saith.”

⁷⁴ The *Symphony of Creation*, however, is not the first work to represent Elohim with a chorus; Schoenberg’s opera *Moses und Aron* does it, with the chorus half-singing and half-speaking.

The word “evil” in m. 208 corresponds to a diminished-seventh chord followed by silence. The tritonal harmonies of this chord seem to beg to be set to the word “evil.”

Liszt apparently thought so too.

201

S. I form the light and cre - ate dark - ness

A. I form the light and cre - ate dark - ness

T. I form the light and cre - ate dark - ness

B. I form the light and cre - ate dark - ness

c-minor: iv ii° VI⁷ vii^{°7} i⁶₄ V

Harmonic minor, mode 5 on G: vii v° II⁷ vi° iv⁶₄ I

205

S. I make peace and cre - ate e - vil.

A. I make peace and cre - ate e - vil.

T. I make peace and cre - ate e - vil.

B. I make peace and cre - ate e - vil.

I make peace and cre - ate e - vil.

VI⁷ (passing chords) ii^{°7}

II⁷ vi^{°7}

Ex. 82: Movement V, mm. 201-204, chorus only,
with alternative harmonic analysis

The lowered scale degrees of this music create a dark quality, even though the words “light” and “peace” are set. This is because it is assumed that God creates these things, and the point of this text is that he claims authorship of darkness and evil as well. The lowered scale degrees aid in this overall expression.

Isaiah’s divine explanation is very similar to that which appears in Tolkien’s “Ainulindalë,” when Ilúvatar, the Creator-figure, addresses Melkor, the devil-figure:

And thou, Melkor, shalt see that no theme may be played that hath not its uttermost source in me, nor can any alter the music in my despite. For he that attempteth this shall prove but mine instrument in the devising of things more wonderful, which he himself hath not imagined.⁷⁵

This idea of divine omnipotence seems to contradict of the suggestion of movement III, that the Creator laments. The incongruity is as dissonant as the upward resolving suspension; but resolution is perhaps within reach. In any case, my intention is to soberly and candidly emphasize the apparent contradiction of the scriptures. This is why the Lament of movement III needed to be expressed so urgently and unequivocally, in a more accessible musical language.

But further indication of Divine empathy follows in the very text of Isaiah, which immediately continues with a benediction:

⁸Drop down, ye heavens, from above
And let the skies pour down righteousness
Let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation
And let righteousness spring up together
I the LORD have created it.

The music accompanying this benediction is now triadic, and in major mode. The tempo, furthermore, is marked “Andante grazioso.” The tonality shifts before cadencing firmly, but the harmony is always consonant.

⁷⁵ J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*, ed. Christopher Tolkien (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004. Orig. publ. George Allen & Unwin, 1977), 5.

In piecing together various verses from the Bible, a single speech emerges through God's recitative. After some orchestral reaction depicting the joy of rain, the cantata proceeds to a chorale, which revisits Psalm 75:1, "Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare."

Before these words of thanks appeared in the refrain of the confrontational song, "The Floods." The character of those refrains were reserved; they allowed the female voices to accede how objectively fearful indeed and worthy are the Lord's judgments. Now in the chorale, the perception of God is not merely an objective, intellectual concession of his worthiness, but a subjective, emotional response to it.

The music is Lento; the strings double the voices. At m. 262 the text ceases but the music continues. Again, music does not need words to mean something. The wordless choir continues expressing thanksgiving with ornamentation and simultaneous ascending and descending diatonic scales. Following this is a setting of Psalm 29:9 (adapted from Young's Literal Translation) "And in your temple everyone says..." But here again, words turn to sheer counterpoint, and the music ascends with the familiar chain suspension (now with different harmony), while two solo violins and a solo viola play an octave above the other string parts. This leads to the familiar rhythmically augmented 4-3 suspension, with a diminuendo, as the violins and violas fade into silence when the cadence arrives.

This cadence recommences the tranquillo theme of earlier, played by the woodwinds and piano, and sung by the chorus. The word "Holy" completes the elided phrase of Psalm 29:9. The cellos, double basses, contrabassoon, and bass clarinet, and horns play deep static drones on C. Meanwhile, the piccolo and first flute reach as high as

A6. The extremely wide range, drones, colorful orchestration, pure diatonicism, and emphasis of the raised submediant recalls the Heaven music of Rosenberg's *Revelation*.

The percussion section erupts in between phrases of the tranquillo theme. The alternation of the forceful percussion and gentle tranquillo music invites comparison with the antiphonal material that opened movement IV. In that movement, the irascible brass alternated with pastoral music until both merged resulting in "the noise of many waters." In the Finale, the percussion and the tranquillo music are contrasted with each other, but harmonize. In movement IV there was variety without unity; in movement V, there is unity in variety:

The tranquillo theme is in a slow duple-compound meter, while the percussion play material in fast duple-simple meter. All is notated with the same meter signature, but the tempo markings provide a clue to the contrasting rhythmic perspectives: a half-note equals thirty-nine (applying to the tranquillo music), *and* a quarter-note equals seventy-eight (applying to the percussion). Despite the disparity, the timpani outline chords that complement the harmony of the tranquillo music; when both are merged, the result is unity. Also, the layers of rhythmic dimension—the static drones, slow tranquillo theme, and fast percussive music—result in the multi-dimensional effect that Rosenberg used to depict heaven.

The percussion then introduce a fanfare, as before, which is now played by the full brass section, accompanied by cogent percussion, and bolstered with loud drones and staccato chords on downbeats in the orchestra. The featured harmony is the quintal chord on C. When the first and second trumpets reach G5, a crescendo leads to a tutti C-major triad, with the chorus singing, "Amen," bringing the symphony to a close.

The aesthetic goal of this piece is that everything that happens should condition what happens after. It is like a game of chess: in the beginning there is a vast number of possibilities, but decisions are made, and moves are committed to, and the subsequent unfolding is conditioned by ever-increasing complexity until checkmate. The turning point of this symphony is the tutti climax on the C-major-nine chord in the fourth movement. The events that preceded led to it, and those that followed led to the reckoning of movement V.

The work depicts a theological paradox that God is the author of evil as well as peace, darkness as well as light, but at the same time is benevolent and laments over evil things that happen in his creation. While I have my own thoughts about this, I leave it to the listener to contemplate. Suffice it to say that the *Symphony of Creation* may initiate theological reflection.

The work is comparable to Scriabin's First Symphony—a composer's first effort in the genre, and an ambitious work of substantial length with a mystical choral finale. While Scriabin's work is a paean to Art, the *Symphony of Creation* is a panegyric to the God of Jacob. This new work was also inspired by Beethoven's Ninth. In that monument, the composer invoked the Deity with profound music to the words "and the cherub stands before God," and "surely above the starry vault a loving father must dwell." In doing this Beethoven brought God into the concert hall. Hearing this, I felt compelled to envision a divine response, and the *Symphony of Creation* is the result.

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APPENDIX

SYMPHONY OF CREATION

Instrumentation

Piccolo
 2 Flutes
 2 Oboes
 English Horn
 2 Clarinets in B^b
 2 Bassoons
 Contrabassoon
 4 Horns in F
 3 Trumpets in B^b
 2 Trombones
 Bass Trombone
 Tuba
 Timpani
 3 Percussion:
 Crash Cymbals, Suspended Cymbal, Triangle, Tam-tam,
 Tenor Drum, Bass Drum, Antique Cymbals, Vibraphone
 Harp
 Piano
 Chorus: SATB
 Solo Violoncello
 Strings

* The Tenor drum may be substituted with a snare drum with snares off

** The Antique Cymbal and Vibraphone parts require a bow

***Half the Double Basses require a low C extension or scordatura