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VOLUME I

The Scars Of War: The Pacific War Interpreted By Post-War Japanese Cinema

VOLUME II

Symphony no. 3 "Risen from the Ashes" - 灰から復活

A dissertation submitted in partial Satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Music

by

Mason Swan Lewis

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

VOLUME I

The Scars Of War: The Pacific War Interpreted By Post-War Japanese Cinema

VOLUME II

Symphony no. 3 "Risen from the Ashes" - 灰から復活

by

Mason Swan Lewis

Doctor of Philosophy in Music

University of California, Los Angeles, 2020

Professor Ian Krouse, Chair

The inspiration behind this dissertation stems almost exclusively from my Japanese heritage and ancestry, in tandem with my passion for history. Naturally, this union of interests yields a more focused dedication: a steadfast determination to garner a thorough knowledge of Japanese history, both pre-modern and modern. The dissertation consists of

two volumes. The first volume is an essay analyzing the depictions of World War II using two notable cinematic examples: Grave of the Fireflies (1988) and Kuroi Ame (1989). Key areas of focus in the analysis include a study of the accompanying musical score determinant on it having a significant role in the narrative or serving a noteworthy thematic purpose. Further areas of focus consist of a careful analysis on themes and motifs within the films, as well as the graphic, and in many cases, horrific depictions of the events in which the various plots detail. In addition, the first volume includes a detailed account of the final months of the Pacific War, serving as context to the background and story of each of the four cinematic examples. The second volume is the full score to my *Symphony no. 3* "Risen from the Ashes". Rather than require a vocalist to narrate the composition's storyline, a solo violinist leads the orchestra through approximately fifty minutes of evolving music. A wordless oratorio of sorts, the symphony recounts the remarkable comeback of the Japanese nation following a war of such titanic proportions. While the roots of both volumes exist in two different realms, that is, cinema and concert music, they are nevertheless linked together by their subject's respective abilities of storytelling. It is my hope this dissertation can provide valuable insight and perspective for any individual seeking to immerse himself in the vast catalogue of post-war Japanese dramas, particularly those that center around the Pacific War.

The dissertation of Mason Swan Lewis is approved.

Munir Beken

Movses Pogossian

Neal Stulberg

Ian Krouse, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2020

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In addition, I want to thank my parents for their endless love and support throughout my entire life. They have both embraced my passion for music, despite having successful careers in vastly different fields. I owe them a debt of gratitude for the many piano lessons and for supporting me emotionally and financially.

Finally, I want to thank my late piano teacher, Edward Francis. He was a central figure in developing me into the musician I am today and is a major reason why I am studying at UCLA. Not only was he a great master of the piano, but he was also a great friend.

VITA/BIOGRAPHY

American composer Mason Swan Lewis began his musical endeavors at a young age. He began his first piano lessons at age three, quickly learning the staples of the piano repertoire. At age ten, Lewis won a national scholastic award - signed by then-president George W. Bush – for a requiem dedicated to the fallen American military personnel of the Iraq War. Despite the early successes in composition, Lewis primarily focused on the piano, participating in numerous local and national piano competitions, winning grand prizes in several. In 2012, he accepted full scholarship offers from the composition and piano performance departments of the Herp Alpert School of Music within the University of California, Los Angeles. In 2016, Lewis earned his B.A. in music composition. Two years later, he received his M.A. in music composition, also from the University of California, Los Angeles. With the completion of his dissertation in the winter of 2021, Lewis will receive his Ph.D. in music composition. In addition to his studies, Lewis also teaches composition, music production, and piano to a private studio of students in Manhattan Beach, California.

CHAPTER ONE

Preface: The Final Months of the Pacific War

Throughout the course of world events, war has been a prominent component in the shaping of history. It has contributed to the establishment and dismantling of nations, the drawing and re-drawing of borders, changes in culture and ideology, all at the cost of thousands, and in some cases, millions of lives. The myriad of historical testimonials and documents existing today often assign a victor to any armed conflict. However, it is all too rare that any nation victorious in war not bear the physical and emotional wounds of resulting consequence.

The Second World War was the single deadliest conflict in human history, resulting in seventy to eighty-five million fatalities. Genocides such as the Holocaust, death from starvation and disease, scorched earth campaigns, and other massacres largely accounted for the civilian casualties, which in turn represented approximately sixty-two percent of all deaths in the war. Statistically, the European theater was the bloodiest of the entire conflict. This was largely due to the scale and complexity of battles such as Stalingrad and Normandie, the aforementioned genocides, the geography of the European continent, the overall lopsided ratio of naval and land battles, and the density of population.

¹ Gailey, H. (1996). War in the Pacific: From Pearl Harbor to Tokyo Bay (First Edition). Presidio Press.

² Gailev. H. (1996)

The Pacific War is not to be discounted, however. While the Asian theater lacks – to a certain degree – globally recognizable and infamous figures such as Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, it does contain two elements not seen in the European theater. The first was an immense firebombing and nuclear warfare campaign against infrastructure and civilians. The second was a planned – yet unrealized – amphibious invasion that, had it taken place, would have been the largest amphibious operation in history. Both the firebombing and the amphibious assault occurred (or would have occurred) in the final few months of the Pacific War. Due to the highly complex and controversial nature of these final months, it is most necessary to provide a thorough background of the events that inspired and influenced the countless examples of dramatic films in the post-war era.

Operation Downfall

The capitulation of Nazi Germany in May 1945 was expedited by favorable geography to the Allies, as both the United States and the Soviet Union were effectively able to surround the remnants of the Third Reich from all sides. The favorable geography in conjunction with the dwindling war machine of the German military made the capture of

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³ Giangreco, Dennis M. (2009). Hell to Pay: Operation Downfall and the Invasion of Japan, 1945-1947. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press

Berlin a certainty. Once the Flensburg Government – essentially the remnants of the Third Reich – accepted the terms of unconditional surrender, the Allies turned their full attention to defeating the Empire of Japan.

At the point of German surrender, Japan was fully engaged in a vigorous defense of its home territories. At the beginning of the Pacific War, the Imperial Japanese Navy was – in tandem with the Royal Navy – the most powerful navy in the world⁴, however by 1945, the IJN ceased to be an effective fighting force. The British military historian J.F.C. Fuller, in his *The Decisive Battles of the Western World*, wrote:

"the Japanese fleet had ceased to exist, and, except by land-based aircraft, their opponents had won undisputed command of the sea." 5

With the naval threat diminished, the United States military began securing the seas surrounding Japan. The methodology included, but was not limited to, submarine warfare, air superiority, and the placement of mines in high-traffic shipping lanes. In February to March of 1945, the United States captured the strategically important island base of Iwo Jima. In the following months, Okinawa and the remaining Ryukyu islands were also secured. The capture of these islands was of the highest strategic importance, as they would serve as

⁴ Fuller, J.F.C. (1956). The Decisive Battles of the Western World – Volume III. London: Eyre & Spottiswoode.

⁵ Fuller, J.F.C. (1956).

staging areas for a potential invasion.⁶ Nevertheless, the efforts in capturing both Iwo Jima and Okinawa resulted in some of the bloodiest battles of the entire Second World War, with Allied casualties approaching 100,000. For additional perspective, the ratio of Allied casualties suffered per every square mile of land captured was amongst the highest in recorded history.⁷

Up until 1945, Japanese military tactics were largely based on the *Bushido* code, or the "way of the warrior". In the perspective of Bushido, surrender was unacceptable, and those not willing to fight to the death forfeited their honor.8 Mass suicide in the face of certain defeat, in tandem with banzai charges, were the most notable examples of the Bushido code in Japanese military procedures. This is evidenced by high fatalities, yet few non-fatal casualties and captures.

In the Battle of Iwo Jima, General Tadamichi Kuribayashi developed a defense strategy of guerilla warfare and the large-scale abandonment of tactics based on the Bushido code. Rather, Kuribayashi implemented a code of his own design:

"The strength of each of you is the cause of our victory. Soldiers of the Courage Division, do not crack at the harshness of the battle and try to hasten your death. We will

⁶ Skates, John Ray (1994). The Invasion of Japan: Alternative to the Atomic Bomb. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press.

⁷ Skates, John Ray (1994)

⁸ Borch, Fred (2017). Military Trials of War Criminals 1946-1949. Oxford University Press.

finally prevail if you make the effort to kill just one more man. Die after killing ten men and yours is a glorious death on the battlefield. Keep on fighting even if you are wounded in the battle. Do not get taken prisoner. At the end, stab the enemy as he stabs you."

These changes took the United States by surprise, exponentially increasing the number of Allied casualties. The pattern of guerilla warfare and the resulting casualties forced the commanders of the Allied militaries to take note. To avoid the inevitable high cost of an invasion of Japan, the United States, United Kingdom, Republic of China, and the Soviet Union issued the Potsdam Declaration. The terms called for an unconditional surrender of Japan and for the elimination "for all time of the authority and influence of those who have deceived and misled the Japanese people into embarking on a world conquest." In addition, the Allies were to designate "points in Japanese territory" to be occupied, and that "Japanese sovereignty shall be limited to the islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku, and such minor islands as [the Allies] determine". 10 Overall, the language of the Potsdam Declaration seemingly allowed for the Japanese national identity to remain largely intact, with the assurance of a full withdrawal of occupying Allied forces at the conclusion of the term period. However, if Japan did not accept the terms of the declaration, they would face a "prompt and utter destruction". 11

⁹ Kakehashi, Kumiko (2007) [2005]. So Sad to Fall in Battle. Random House.

¹⁰ Potsdam Declaration – Birth of the Constitution of Japan. Ndl.go.jp. Retrieved October 14th, 2020.

¹¹ Ndl.go.jp. Retrieved October 14th, 2020.

True to centuries-old traditions, the Japanese military had no intentions of accepting any unconditional surrender¹². As a result, the various branches of the United States armed forces debated the methodologies necessary to bring forth a Japanese surrender. The Navy, weary of the guaranteed mass casualties, suggested a blockade of the country consisting of overwhelming air power and naval bombardment. Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz strongly believed Japan could not withstand such an assault for long. The Army, however, preferred a more expedient end to the war, suggesting that *Operation Downfall* was the only suitable solution.¹³ Ironically, by most accounts, an amphibious assault would prolong the war for years, possibly until 1947 or 1948.¹⁴

The geography of Japan made the Allies's plans obvious to the Japanese military. As a result of the impending invasion, the home armies mobilized their remaining five million troops to the coastal areas of Honshu and Kyushu, prepared to employ the guerilla tactics that garnered considerable success in Okinawa and Iwo Jima. Unlike Nazi Germany at the end of the European theater, the Japanese military still possessed considerable resources to prolong the war. Aside from the nearly five million personnel, the government was able to conscript thirty-one million civilians, arming them with rifles, *katanas*, and other lethal

¹² Skates, John Ray (1994)

¹³ Skates, John Ray (1994)

¹⁴ Giangreco, Dennis M. (2009)

weaponry.¹⁵ Furthermore, Japan possessed thousands of tanks, planes, and suicide crafts such as *Shinyō* suicide boats and *Okha* manned rockets. The forces Japan managed to keep intact at the point of an invasion worried Allied commanders. Major General Charles A. Willoughby reported to Douglas MacArthur on the Japanese troop strength on Kyushu:

"These divisions have since made their appearance, as predicted, and the end is not in sight. If not addressed, they will grow to the point where we attack on a ratio of one to one, which is not the recipe for victory" 16

The estimated Allied casualties vary according to the source, however historical consensus and the numbers discussed amongst the top Allied commanders settle on two to four million casualties, with 500,000 to one million fatalities. In one estimation, General Lauris Norstad of the US Army informed General Curtis LeMay that an amphibious invasion would cost the United States "half a million" soldiers. In another estimation, General Douglas MacArthur was informed the casualties after 120 days would approximate to 125,000 men against an assumed fighting force of 300,000 Japanese soldiers. ¹⁷ Unbeknownst to the United States, the Soviet Union planned a separate invasion of Hokkaido. However, with an overall lack of amphibious equipment, the presence of the

¹⁵ Giangreco, Dennis M. (2009)

¹⁶ Frank, Richard B. (1999). Downfall: The End of the Imperial Japanese Empire. New York: Random House.

¹⁷ Frank, Richard B. (1999).

United States military and shared worries of a protracted war with Japan, the Soviet Union would have likely refrained from committing to an invasion of Hokkaido.¹⁸

The Atomic Bomb

While the Allies were nevertheless determined to invade the Japanese home islands if necessary, the fear of significant casualties plagued the general high command as well as private citizens within the United States. As a result, large scale bombing campaigns were initiated in early 1945 to eliminate the Japanese war machine. Over the course of several months, squadrons of B-29 bombers dropped thousands of incendiary bombs over major Japanese cities, including Osaka, Nagoya, and Niigata. Arguably the most infamous of these bombing campaigns occurred on March 10th, 1945. Codenamed *Operation Meetinghouse*, the firebombing of Tokyo was the single deadliest air raid of all time with over 100,000 fatalities, a horrific number far surpassing the casualties of similar campaigns over Germany, namely in Dresden and Hamburg.¹⁹

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¹⁸ Frank, Richard B. (1999). Downfall: The End of the Imperial Japanese Empire. New York: Random House.

¹⁹ Frank, Richard B. (1999).

Despite the relentless firebombing campaigns, the Japanese government refused to accept the Allied terms of surrender. As the final months before *Operation Downfall* was to commence, scientists of the Manhattan Project successfully tested in the New Mexico desert the first atomic weapon ever developed. Codenamed "Trinity", the weapon produced a yield of 22 kilotons and a blast radius of 3.27 kilometers.²⁰ Following the success of "Trinity", two atomic bombs were manufactured: "Fat Man", a plutonium implosion-type nuclear weapon; and "Little Boy", an enriched uranium gun-type fission weapon.²¹

After deliberation between the ranking officials of the United States armed forces, Hiroshima, Kokura, Niigata, and Nagasaki were selected as targets for atomic bombings. Originally, the historic capital city of Kyoto was considered, however Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson intervened. He argued that targeting a city with "such historical and cultural significance" and containing no military targets of any kind would be the ultimate "crime against humanity". He further argued that an attack on Kyoto would be a deliberate targeting of civilians, and as a result, the United States would appear to the world as "blatant murderers". His position ultimately won the approval of President Harry S. Truman, and Kyoto was replaced with Kokura.

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²⁰ Alperovitz, Gar; Tree, Sanho (1996). The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb. New York: Vintage.

²¹ Alperovitz, Gar (1996)

²² Reischauer, Edwin O. (1986). My Life Between Japan and America. New York: Harper & Row

²³ Reischauer, Edwin O. (1986).

On August 6th, 1945, a single B-29 bomber dropped the enriched uranium "Little Boy" atomic bomb over the city of Hiroshima, resulting in 70,000 to 126,000 fatalities. The vast majority of those who perished were mostly civilians, including an heir to the Korean throne, although a sizeable portion of the military garrison stationed in Hiroshima also suffered considerable losses.²⁴ On August 9th, just a mere three days later, a second B-29 dropped the plutonium implosion-type "Fat Man" bomb over Nagasaki. Although more powerful, the mountainous geography of Nagasaki absorbed the force of the blast, thereby reducing the overall impact of the weapon. Nevertheless, 39,000 to 80,000 people lost their lives, many of whom died instantaneously.²⁵

Following the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Imperial War Council met to discuss the impact and nature of the weapons as well as the recent Soviet declaration of war.²⁶ While a considerable number of council members, primarily from the army, were wary of the new destructive power of the atomic weapons, they nonetheless advocated for a continuation of the war. The remaining members of the council believed the war swung heavily against the interests of the Japanese nation and people, and that Japan must accept the terms of the Potsdam Declaration. Prime Minister Kantaro Suzuki approached the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal to inform him off the council's deadlock, requesting that the

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²⁴ Frank, Richard B. (1999)

²⁵ Frank, Richard B. (1999)

²⁶ Frank, Richard B. (1999)

Emperor himself make the final decision. On August 12th, Emperor Hirohito announced to his family his decision to surrender, with a formal broadcast to the nation following three days later. Despite never using the word "surrender", the Emperor did inform the populace of his directive to the government to "accept the provisions of their joint declaration". Furthermore, he elaborated on the atomic weapon itself:

"Moreover, the enemy has begun to employ a new and most cruel bomb, the power of which to do damage is, indeed, incalculable, taking the toll of many innocent lives. Should we continue to fight, not only would it result in an ultimate collapse and obliteration of the Japanese nation, but also it would lead to the total extinction of human civilization." ²⁷

With the signing of the instrument of surrender on September 2nd, the hostilities between the Allies and Japan formally ended, marking the official end of World War II.

Justified, or a Crime against Humanity?

Since the end of World War II, there has been considerable debate on the ethical, legal, and militaristic grounds of using atomic weapons against civilian populations. Those in favor largely point to the refusal to surrender on the Japanese government's part, the

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²⁷ Kawakami, Kazuhisa (20 September 2020). Showa Emperor Jewel Voice Broadcast. Tokyo, Japan: Asa Shuppan

desire to save lives on both sides, the development of a Japanese nuclear weapons program, and the facilitation of a speedy end to the war. Those against the use of the weapons largely argue their merits on moral grounds, however some argue that the bombs were simply "militarily unnecessary."²⁸

Both positions have merit. The Japanese government did in fact have no intention to surrender, as capitulation was never compatible with national tradition. Up until the Second World War, Japan had neither lost a war nor been successfully invaded by a foreign entity.²⁹ In the twentieth century alone, Japan had successfully defeated the Russian Empire in the Russo-Japanese War, annexed the former Korean Empire, and occupied territories including Manchuria, Mengjiang, Indochina, Burma, Malaya, Indonesia, Formosa, and the Philippines. The United States held the position that only a sudden and brutal show of force could ever convince Japan to surrender, and ultimately, this position proved to be correct.

Despite the extensive firebombing campaigns on civilian centers, the United States nevertheless had a desire to save lives within not just their own military, but also within the Japanese population.³⁰ This claim seems somewhat contradictory, considering the amount of Japanese lives the United States was willing to take with the atomic bombings. However,

²⁸ Wainstock, Dennis D. (1996). The Decision to Drop the Atomic Bomb. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger.

²⁹ Wainstock, Dennis D. (1996).

³⁰ Murray, Williamson; Millet, Alan (2000). A War To Be Won. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press

if *Operation Downfall* were to have taken place, civilian casualties were estimated to be in the tens of millions.³¹ While this number troubled senior officials in the United States government and military, many high-ranking officials of the Japanese military were largely unphased by the estimates. The government planned to commit the entire population to resisting the invasion, initiating a propaganda campaign known as the "Glorious Death of One Hundred Million".³² Former Japanese pilot Mitsuo Fuchida, in conversation with Paul Tibbets, the pilot of the *Enola Gay*, confirmed the expected resistance:

"You know the Japanese attitude at the time, how fanatic they were, they'd die for the Emperor... Every man, woman, and child would have resisted that invasion with sticks and stones if necessary... can you imagine what a slaughter it would be to invade Japan? It would have been terrible. The Japanese people know more about that than the American public will ever know."³³

Despite the Japanese government's expectations, many within the military ranks were unwilling to commit to such a sacrifice, as they considered it to be a senseless waste of lives. Even within the Imperial family, there were several notable anti-war proponents. In two prominent examples, Empress Dowager Teimei privately worked behind the scenes with

Murray, Williamson; Millet, Alan (2000). A War To Be Won. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press
 Murray, Williamson; Millet, Alan (2000).

³³ Davis, R., & Winn, D. (1999). Clear Conscience: The Atom Bomb vs. The Super Holocaust. Paduca, KY. Turner Publishing

Prince Higashikuni and Prince Asaka to remove Hideki Tojo and the militarists from power, while the brother of Emperor Hirohito, Prince Takamatsu, urged the Emperor as early as 1942 to make peace with the United States.³⁴

The primary argument against the use of atomic weapons largely point to the morality of such use. Those closest to Ground Zero were immediately incinerated, and any individuals within one mile of the fireball were severely burned. Many who managed to survive the initial blast but nevertheless succumbed to their wounds were known as "antwalking alligators". For eyewitnesses, the sight of them was more horrific than words could describe. One first-hand account collected by author and historian Charles Pellegrino provides a grisly series of details:

"The skin had been seared from their skulls, leaving only the black, leathery substance without eyes or features. All that remained was a red hole where their mouths had been. They staggered about the outskirts of Hiroshima, avoided by the other survivors. The Alligator people did not scream. Their mouths could not form the sounds. The noise they made was worse than screaming. They uttered a continuous murmur – like locusts on a midsummer night. One man, staggering on charred stumps of legs, was carrying a dead baby upside down." ²⁵

³⁴ Murray, Williamson; Millet, Alan (2000).

³⁵ Pellegrino, Charles R. (2010). The Last Train from Hiroshima. New York: Henry Holt and Company

The most vocal opponents of the atomic bombs were renowned scientists, including Albert Einstein, Eugene Wigner, and Leo Szilard. Szilard, an accomplished physicist and member of the Manhattan Project, wrote:

"Let me say only this much to the moral issue involved: Suppose Germany had developed two bombs before we had any bombs. And suppose Germany had dropped one bomb, say, on Rochester and the other on Buffalo, and then having run out of bombs she would have lost the war. Can anyone doubt that we would then have defined the dropping of atomic bombs on cities as a war crime, and that we would have sentenced the Germans who were guilty of this crime to death at Nuremberg and hanged them?" 36

For months and years to follow, survivors continued to battle complications with their injuries, and many perished due to radiation sickness.

While the moral arguments against the atomic bombs carried the greatest weight in the debate, a small faction within the United States military argued the weapons were simply unnecessary. These arguments came primarily from members of the United States Navy, as they believed Japan could be forced to surrender through the continued use of conventional bombing and blockades. with the overwhelming evidence of Japanese persistence serving not to their favor, the opinion of the aforementioned military faction was drowned out

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³⁶ Leo Szilard, Interview: President Truman Did Not Understand". U.S. News and World Report. 15 August 1960. Retrieved 24 September 2020.

almost entirely. Nevertheless, some of the most famous military commanders in the United States military were against the use of the atomic bomb, most notably Dwight Eisenhower, Chester Nimitz, William D. Leahy, Curtis LeMay, and William Halsey, Jr. ³⁷ Of these individuals, Eisenhower presented an emotional account of his feelings in a 1956 letter:

"...when I learned that the first atomic bomb had been successfully tested in 1945 and that the United States planned to use it against a Japanese city. Never has a matter ceased troubling me"38

Conclusion

Without question, the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki remain one of the most tragic and controversial events in history. One could certainly argue that Japan was the one of the most difficult adversaries of any nation to face, considering what their people withstood and what they were willing to sacrifice in the defense of their nation.³⁹ The events of the Pacific War, in correlation with an evaluation of the resulting destruction

 37 Alperovitz, Gar (2004). Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam (2^{nd} edition). New York: Simon and Schuster

³⁸ Eisenhower, D.D. (1956, August 6). [Letter to Mr. Cousins]. The White House, Washington D.C.

³⁹ It cannot be discounted, however, the many other nations in World War II that suffered immense casualties, both military and civilian, most notably the Soviet Union and China.

and the subsequent allied occupation of the home islands, influenced Japanese culture, arts, and politics for decades to come.

CHAPTER TWO

An Introduction to Post-War Japanese Cinema

Immediately following the end of the Pacific War, Allied forces occupied Japan with the goal of restoring the nation and establishing a democratic system of government in the mold of a constitutional monarchy. General Douglas MacArthur was appointed military governor of Japan by President Harry S. Truman and given the task of overseeing the reconstruction of the Japanese homeland as well as the prosecution of war criminals. While acting on the orders given, MacArthur was further motivated by establishing Japan as a powerful, anti-communist barrier against the growing influence of the newly minted communist nations of China and North Korea. He believed that Japan needed to maintain the necessary traditions to function, therefore allowing the Emperor to keep his throne and ensuring that the Japanese people would have a significant role in the rebuilding of their country.⁴⁰

In 1951, Japan and the United States signed the Treaty of San Francisco, effectively ending the occupation and restoring the full sovereignty of Japan to its people. From there, the country embarked on a massive campaign of economic growth and cultural influence. From 1952 onward, Japan established itself as major global and economic political power,

⁴⁰ Theodore Cohen; Herbert Passin (1987). Remaking Japan: The American Occupation as New Deal. New York: Free Press

creating the second-largest economy in nominal GDP, as well as developing a modern military and infrastructure.⁴¹ Presently, the capital city of Tokyo is the largest and wealthiest city in the world with a GDP of approximately two trillion dollars.⁴² In addition, it boasts by far the most Michelin star awards of any city in the world, and it consistently ranks as the most desirable and safest large metropolis. All of these figures point to one of the most successful comeback stories in history, largely due to the dedication and determination of the Japanese people.

As a result of the large-scale abandonment of militarism during the post-war era, the arts and cultural centers of Japan began to flourish, in particular, cinema. Even in the present day, Japanese cinema remains amongst the most influential in world cinematography, as animé and manga have become two of the most popular forms of entertainment in the world. Companies such as Studio Ghibli have garnered the admiration and following of millions with their successful films Spirited Away, Castle in the Sky, and Kiki's Delivery Service. While the general public usually associates Japanese cinema with animation or dramatic films such as Godzilla, some of the most poignant and emotional examples of cinema anywhere in the world are Japanese interpretations of the Pacific War.

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⁴¹ Dower, John W. (1999). Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II. New York: W.W. Norton & Company

⁴² Tokyo Statistical Yearbook. www.toukei.metro.tokyo.jp. Retrieved September 30th, 2020.

Cinematic Depictions of World War II: Uncensored or Censored?

Countries that have experienced large-scale tragedy and warfare have grappled with a choice: attempt to veil their past or narrate it with fastidious attention to detail. Some nations, such as Germany, have largely avoided creating films about controversial events – such as the firebombing of Dresden – due to an overall negative public perception of the events surrounding or involving World War II. Japan, however, did not shy away from the opportunity to present its perspective of the events in the Second World War, with hundreds of films dedicated to the suffering and woes of the Japanese people.

These films account for some of the darkest imagery ever realized in cinematic history. The most famous examples are often set to a storyline involving the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, while others have included the firebombing of Japanese cities and the Japanese point-of-view in certain Pacific War battles. Aside from diversity in their plots, Japanese filmmakers employed diversity in genre. Despite the often-used stereotype regarding animé as bright, innocent, and fantastical, there exist several prominent, animated films that explore the realm of a dark/horror - drama. The subsequent chapters will explore and analyze two films – one live action and one animated – that are universally regarded as "staples" in postwar Japanese drama.

CHAPTER THREE

Grave of the Fireflies (1988) - 火垂るの墓



Despite *Grave of the Fireflies* and *Kuroi Ame* all sharing the common setting of the Japanese homeland in 1945 and all consisting of characters enduring similar struggles and hardships, it is the former that features a notable difference. *Grave of the Fireflies* does not involve the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, nor is it even mentioned. Nevertheless, the subject matter is equally poignant, focusing on the long-term effects of devastation caused by conventional bombing.

The origins of the film trace not to a screenplay written exclusively for picture, but rather a short 1967 semi-autobiographical short story by Japanese author Akiyuki Nosaka. The story is based on his experiences before, during, and after the firebombing of Kobe in 1945. While the characters of the film have different names and backgrounds, they are still nevertheless loosely based on personal family members of the author. 43 The story was initially published in Japan as a feature of the monthly literature magazine Oru Yomimono ("All for Reading"). The story – along with three others written by Nosaka – were highly praised by readers and critics alike, with Grave of the Fireflies garnering the author the Naoki Prize for "Best Popular Literature".

The success of the short story anticipated the praise given to the film adaptation, as the 1988 animated feature received universal critical acclaim. Roger Ebert of the Chicago Sun Times considered the film one of the most powerful war films of all time, while the review aggregate "Rotten Tomatoes" - as of 2020 - reports a 100% approval rating based on thirty-nine reviews from critics. 44 Due to the overwhelmingly heart-wrenching atmosphere and powerful themes centered around the tragedy, Studio Ghibli released the film alongside Hayao Miyazaki's light-hearted My Neighbor Totoro, which like Grave of the Fireflies, received universal critical acclaim.

⁴³ The Animerica Interview: Takahata and Nosaka: Two Grave Voices in Animation. Ghiblicon.blogspot.com. Retrieved October 10th, 2020.

⁴⁴ Ebert, Roger. "Grave of the Fireflies". Rogerebert.com. Retrieved September 30th, 2020.

Storyline

The film begins on September 21st, 1945 as a teenage boy, Seita, dies of starvation in a Kobe train station. A janitor comes across a tin of "Sakuma Drop" hard candies in the boy's possession and discards it in a field. The small remnants of bone and ashes spill out and the spirit of Setsuko – Seita's younger sister – emerges from the tin. She is then joined by Seita and the two board a train. From the train, they witness the nighttime firebombing of an unnamed city.

The plot then flashes back to months earlier, when Seita and Setsuko's home is destroyed in the firebombing of Kobe. Both manage to avoid death in the ensuing chaos; however their mother perishes from severe burns. With no immediate family remaining, as their father is serving in the Japanese Navy, they move in with a distant aunt. As supplies become scarcer, the aunt persuades Seita and Setsuko to sell their remaining possessions for food. Eventually, she becomes resentful towards her nephew and niece, claiming they do nothing to earn the food and care she provides.

At this point in time, Seita and Setsuko leave their aunt's home and move into an abandoned bomb shelter near a lake. For light, they capture fireflies (hotaru) and release them in the shelter. In the days that follow, Setsuko begins to fall ill from the effects of malnutrition. Desperate to avoid exhausting all their supplies, Seita begins to steal supplies

from homes and crops, eventually getting caught. No longer able to rely on stolen goods and crops, Seita withdraws all the remaining money in their mother's bank account. He then learns Japan has surrendered to the Americans – implying the present setting of August 1945 – which causes him to realize his father likely died in combat.

Seita returns to the shelter with food and supplies but finds Setsuko hallucinating. As he rushes to feed her, she passes away. Seita cremates Setsuko's body in a large, woven makeshift casket and carries her ashes in a "Sakuma Drop" tin. The film concludes with Seita and Setsuko's spirits arriving at their destination, overlooking modern-day Kobe surrounded by fireflies.

Analysis of Imagery

Grave of the Fireflies is almost universally regarded as one of the greatest anti-war films ever made, as well as one of the saddest. While most animated films lack realism in their imagery, Nosaka at the time believed in the opposite. When approached about the prospect of a live-action depiction of his short story, he concluded that no actor or setting could ever capture what transpired in the story's plot, therefore only animation could

replicate the grim environment.⁴⁵ In the analysis of film imagery, several factors come into consideration: the setting, use of color, and detail.

For the majority of the film, the audience is exposed to a stark juxtaposition of urban decay against the largely unscathed Japanese countryside. Regardless, the film's main ambience of tragedy works its way into even the most serene backdrops, as ironically, some of the saddest moments occur in the peaceful rural settings. The urban environments within Grave of the Fireflies portray a desolate, lifeless landscape marred with lifeless bodies and crumbling structures. Even in moments depicting areas of Kobe that remained largely untouched by the bombings, the brief appearance of an abandoned, burnt-out structure never fails to appear. By contrast, the Japanese countryside is presented in its true form: lush greenery, scenic country villas, and flowing rivers. But – as mentioned previously – while these locations may serve as a contrast of setting for cinematic purposes, they do not provide any emotional relief for the audience. For example, it is at the lakeside bomb shelter where Setsuko finally succumbs to her malnutrition and is cremated. In addition, the deceptively "serene" settings are the locations where Seita and Setsuko finally come to terms with reality and experience "the death of innocence" for themselves.

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⁴⁵ The Animerica Interview: Takahata and Nosaka: Two Grave Voices in Animation. *Ghiblicon.blogspot.com.* Retrieved October 10th, 2020.

Color and the use of detail are largely linked in *Grave of the Fireflies*, since color does not play a thematic or symbolic role as it does in other post-war dramatic films, notably Kuroi Ame. Thus, the animators rely on color as a tool to portray a sense of realism. This is achieved in two ways: first by making color largely absent or more androgenous, and second by oversaturating scenes with color. Predictably, the use or absence of color follows the narrative closely. In scenes of desolation and destruction, the palette is muted, consisting mainly of browns and greys. In the countryside, the palette dramatically shifts to bolder greens and blues. While these colors are to be expected in depictions of the natural countryside, they are nevertheless exaggerated as natural foliage cannot have such consistent boldness of color. This likely serves as a counterweight against the film's primary themes: the vivid landscape versus the darker, more sinister motifs. Color also serves as a way to enhance graphic imagery. Arguably the most prominent example of this arrives shortly into the film, when Seita is finally able to find his mother at a temporary hospital. In this scene, she is portrayed wrapped in what was originally white, now scarlet bandages, stained with blood.

Analysis of Themes

Throughout Grave of the Fireflies, the audience is introduced to several themes and motifs. These include the "death of innocence", themes of discrimination, and the differences between the classes. The "death of innocence" is the most complex of these themes, as its meaning evolves over the course of the film. By introducing Seita's death at the beginning of the film, the "death of innocence" seems to imply a physical death, that is, the death of a young teenage boy. However, innocence can take the form of a physical body and what the mind is able to perceive. At the chronological opening (that is, before the firebombing of Kobe commences), Seita and Setsuko are preoccupied by burying a capsule of necessities, their state of mind not set in fear. It is likely they both never experienced death and destruction on a mass scale, therefore rendering them "innocent" of the grim realities of warfare. As the film progresses, this psychological "innocence" slowly dies off, as the two main characters interact with their cold and emotionless aunt, Setsuko learning of her mother's demise and witnessing a corpse on the beach, and both coming to terms with their homelessness and loss of parents. This "death of innocence" finally comes to full light at the end of the film with the death of Setsuko. Not only does this final manifestation of the theme effect Setsuko, as she physically dies, it serves as the ultimate psychological and physical "death of innocence" for Seita, as he loses his sister and witnesses her demise.

The theme of discrimination is the first theme to appear in the film. In the beginning sequence set to a dimly lit Kobe train station, a dying Seita is largely ignored by passengers and is even subject to scorn and ridicule. As janitors discover his corpse, they express very little remorse and even discard his possessions. Later in the film, Seita and Setsuko interact with various members of society, including a doctor, police officer, and bank customers. When Seita brings Setsuko - now dying of malnutrition - to the doctor, he dismisses her sufferings as "she [Setsuko] simply needs some food" and prescribes no medicine or supplements. Later, Seita is caught stealing crops and is brought to a local police precinct. While the officer takes pity on the ailing Seita and dismisses the charges brought by the farmer, he does nothing to aid the boy. A final instance of discrimination occurs at a bank towards the final chapters of the film. When Seita overhears a man announce the surrender of Japan and the destruction of the Japanese fleet, he desperately grabs onto the individual with the hopes he may have information about his father. Instead, the man dismisses Seita and pushes him aside. While the film does not directly provide an explanation for the dismissive attitudes towards Seita and Setsuko, it is nevertheless implied that their status as homeless had an effect on people's perception of them.

A more minor theme involves the differences between the classes and their social status. As often portrayed in film, and even seen in real applications, those who are poor and underprivileged tend to receive the cruelest blows of fate. As unguided incendiary

bombs cannot distinguish wealthy households from poorer ones, it is likely that both examples of residences were destroyed in the film's depiction of the firebombing. However, *Grave of the Fireflies* does emphasize the gap between the wealthy and poor in other ways. In one of the most dramatic juxtapositions, a scene portrays wealthy girls in fine clothing entering a large villa. They are then shown on a balcony overlooking a lake, praising the beautiful view. The "camera" pans to the right, revealing the lake to be the same one where Setsuko and Seita had established their temporary bomb-shelter residence. Finally, the audience is shown the remnants of the children's camp, consisting of cutlery, a broken swing, and Setsuko's spirit playing on the lakeshore. Although short, this powerful scene clearly portrays the good fortune of having wealth and status, as the girls of the villa seem almost out of place in the film, appearing to have never witnessed the carnage seen by Seita and Setsuko.

Analysis of Symbolism

Symbolism serves as an important tool of storytelling in *Grave of the Fireflies*. The most notable symbol of the film, fireflies, is given away in the title. Fireflies are shown in different settings: hovering around in the background of a scene, fully illuminated, or in one of the most touching moments, when Seita and Setsuko use them as a source of light in

their bomb-shelter home. The film does not make a concerted effort to explain who or what the insects represent, however it is eventually implied the fireflies represent the spirits of the deceased. There are several moments that serve as evidence. The morning after Seita and Setsuko release the fireflies in their shelter, Seita wakes up to find Setsuko burying the now dead insects in a hole. Rather abruptly, the scene then switches to soldiers tossing bodies into a mass grave. This parallel depiction is accompanied by no dialogue, yet none is necessary, as the metaphorical nature of the scene is quite clear. In addition to the cinematic portrayal of the title, any setting with Seita and Setsuko in their spirit form are always accompanied by the fireflies. Considering the likely vast quantity of deceased civilians not shown on screen, the correlation between fireflies and the dead has considerable merit. Interestingly enough, in Japanese folklore, the lights of the fireflies are thought to be the altered form of souls of soldiers who have died in war.⁴⁶

Conclusion

Through use of vivid imagery, themes, and character development, director Isao

Takahata reconjures a world almost unbearable to witness. Despite differences in plot to

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⁴⁶ Abe, Namiko. Why the Firefly (Hotaru) Is Important in Japan? Thoughtco.com. Retrieved October 30th, 2020.

the other cinematic examples analyzed in subsequent chapters, the similarities in themes and imagery are striking. As a result, Japanese post-war dramas – *Grave of the Fireflies* included, present a realistic alternative to first-hand accounts documented in text, due to their consistency and detail.

CHAPTER FOUR

Kuroi Ame (1989) - 黒い雨



Similar to *Grave of the Fireflies* a year beforehand, *Kuroi Ame* or "Black Rain" portrays the struggles of a family as a result of bombing. Set against the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, the film is a noteworthy example of a Japanese live-action drama intended to depict the horrors of atomic weapons and the long-term consequences of its use on civilians.

Like many post-war Japanese dramas, *Kuroi Ame* is the cinematic adaptation of preceding literature, in particular, the 1965 novel by Ibuse Masuji. Masuji's account of the atomic bombing is not based on his own personal experiences, but rather the first-hand accounts of survivors. The novel itself is a haunting meditation about trauma, sickness, death, and of course, the actual atomic bombing itself. Despite the grisly subject matter, the novel, as well as the film, depict the Japanese people in a positive light as hardworking and determined to persevere through the ensuing challenges. Above all, the contrast between the shocking scenes of a devastated Hiroshima with quiet, introspective moments featuring Shizuma and his dying friends account for not only the physical scars of war, but also the emotional scars.

Storyline

Kuroi Ame alternates between scenes set in Hiroshima in 1945, and the "present day", which in reality is 1950. In the film's opening, a young woman named Yasuko is seen on the back of a truck, returning to her aunt and uncle's villa. Yasuko's uncle, Shigematsu, makes his way to work while her aunt, Shigeko, remains on the property. The camera focuses

on a clock at a Hiroshima train station, reading 8:13 AM, foreshadowing the impending doom (8:15 AM was the actual time of detonation). Meanwhile, the atomic bomb is released by the Enola Gay and immediately incinerates the city center. Shigematsu, however, is spared from a majority of the bomb's carnage due to other individuals surrounding him, shielding him from the blast. Nevertheless, he receives many burns, cuts, and bruises. Shigeko and Yasuko witness the blinding light and subsequent atomic cloud from their villa and immediately make their way to the city by boat. On the way to the city, a torrential "black rain" soaks Yasuko and Shigeko, exposing them to contaminated water. Eventually, they reunite with Shigematsu amidst the devastation.

Following the opening sequence, the timeline fast forwards five years to the story's present, 1950. Shizuma and his family have now relocated to a rural village outside Hiroshima. While they desire for nothing more than peace and solace, Yasuko, Shigematsu, and Shigeko grabble with their haunted past due to persistent reminders of the prior horrors. With approximately half the population of their village suffering from some form of radiation sickness, death is omnipresent and the past seemingly inescapable. Yasuko, meanwhile, desires to get married, as this will help put the past behind her. Unfortunately, she is unable to find a suitable groom, since many are suspicious of her health. As more villagers die from radiation, Yasuko's prospects of marriage grow thinner.

The film returns to the Hiroshima carnage, this time expanding on the graphic depictions of the hibakusha, or survivors, and those who survived the blast but were permanently disfigured (known as ant-walking alligators). The subsequent scenes often veer close to a typical household drama, but the atmosphere always returns to the darkness so firmly established. The family is introduced to a man suffering from PTSD, named Yuichi, and slowly Yasuko develops a fondness for him. Eventually, the fondness becomes mutual, as both Yasuko and Yuichi realize they may be the only people suitable for each other in life.

Shigematsu visits friends of his who are slowly succumbing to radiation sickness, with one friend confessing that "the bomb finally got [him]". The past is further thrust on him when, days later, the radio announces the potential use of an atomic bomb against the North Korean army. He simply says in dismay "human beings know nothing." Shigematsu begins to come to terms with his likely fate of death by radiation poisoning, while Yasuko begins to notice more visible signs of her illness as her hair begins to fall out. She grows sicker by the day and is finally carried to an ambulance by Yuichi. On the truck, Yuichi comforts Yasuko while Shigematsu watches it drive away, staring blankly towards the road.

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⁴⁷ Shohei, I. (Director). (1989). Kuroi Ame [motion picture]. Japan: Toei.

Analysis of Imagery

Shohei Imamura's use of imagery in the film serves as an enhancement of the narrative and provides a sense of the story's timeline. Despite the production of *Kuroi Ame* in 1989, well into the days of colored film, the black and white composition harkens back to an earlier time, perhaps paying tribute to older films of similar acclaim set to the atomic bombings, for example, the 1952 classic *Children of Hiroshima*. The black and white spectrum used in the film likely serves an additional, thematic purpose: a visual representation of one of the prevailing symbols, the color black.

As with many Japanese post-war dramas, the portrayals of the bombing-induced carnage in *Kuroi Ame* exceed what most audiences are capable of withstanding. Victims of the blast are seen wandering the remnants of the streets, skin dangling from their bones. Many are depicted without eyes, as they have been seared away, and those who died immediately are shown as charred figures amongst the rubble. In one particularly grim scene, a young boy approaches his brother, yet his brother is unable to identify him due to the severe disfigurement the boy sustained. It is not until the boy provides him his name and school does the brother realize this now mutilated child is his sibling. A brief interlude between the storyline of the main characters, it nevertheless serves as a reminder that the

majority of victims in Hiroshima were not soldiers, but rather ordinary civilians: men, women, and children.

The latter half of the film largely steers away from the events of 1945, instead focusing on the cinematic present date of 1950. The graphic imagery of the prior scenes is largely avoided, and Imamura uses the countryside setting as a portrayal of solitude, a direct antithesis of the prior material. The rural location not only serves as a physical depiction of isolation, but a thematic one as well. While also removed from an urban lifestyle, Yasuko and her family are removed from society in general, with those who are healthy ostracizing them for being exposed to the black rain. As such, the rural setting further enhances the discrimination against the central characters.

Analysis of Themes

Throughout *Kuroi Ame*, themes of suffering and discrimination prevail in the storyline. Nevertheless, the theme of time – or more specifically, the uncertainty of time – is the most prominent in the film. This theme not only affects the main characters, but also manifests outside the world *Kuroi Ame* creates, effecting the cinematography itself.

Throughout the film, the audience is transported back and forward in time; and without warning, the gruesome imagery of the Hiroshima bombing returns. In this regard, not only are Yasuko and her family subjected to the merciless uncertainty of time, but the audience as well. Those viewing the film are essentially suspended in time, as the scenes never truly progress chronologically, but rather, they regress back to the source of suffering. As mentioned previously, time essentially dictates the lives of the central characters. Both Yasuko and Shigematsu live every second of their lives in a state of uncertainty, unable to know for certain their fate. So often throughout Kuroi Ame, the characters begin statements and inner thoughts with "if I die ... when I die ...". One of the most curious statements in the film comes from Shigematsu, who states at a funeral "today is already yesterday." ⁴⁸ A rather metaphorical statement, it nevertheless conveys a message that is quite clear. For Shigematsu, and by extension, his wife and niece, 1950 is still essentially 1945. Their "today" of 1950 hasn't erased the cold memories of their "yesterday", the year 1945. Their suffering and uncertainty of death still linger, as for them, time is suspended.

Consistent with the overall darkness of the film, the themes of suffering are amongst the most omnipresent forces in *Kuroi Ame*. There is not a single character in the film, main or supporting, that is not suffering from a certain issue or ailment. Despite not experiencing

⁴⁸ Shohei, I. (Director). (1989). Kuroi Ame [motion picture]. Japan: Toei.

the atomic bombing for himself, Yuichi suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, forcing him to attack any moving vehicle, as he believes them to be military tanks. Yasuko and Shigematsu consistently suffer both from the memories of their past (connecting their suffering to the theme of time) and from the radiation poisoning of the black rain. The misery and anguish envelopes Yasuko's village like a plague, as dozens fall victim to radiation sickness over time. Many villagers are pained with a "side-effect" of suffering, in particular, a feeling of helplessness. One elderly man asks Shigematsu why the Americans used the bomb when they were winning the war. Shigematsu responds that they sought a quick end to hostilities. Not convinced, the man wonders why Hiroshima was targeted rather than Tokyo. Both he and Shigematsu are unaware of the reasoning behind Hiroshima's targeting, and the man ends the discussion with "how can we die without knowing the truth?" Today, we know the reasoning behind the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, despite all the moral arguments against the bombs use. However, the conversation between the elderly man and Shigematsu point to a final variation of suffering in Kuroi Ame: an inability to comprehend the reasoning behind such horrible atrocities.

Much like *Grave of the Fireflies*, the theme of discrimination plays a central role in the lives of the main characters, most notably Yasuko and Yuichi. Throughout the film,

⁴⁹ Shohei, I. (Director). (1989). Kuroi Ame [motion picture]. Japan: Toei.

individuals outside her family approach and interact with her cautiously, as her exposure to the black rain is anything but a secret. Initially, Yasuko is unable to understand why she receives such treatment, as her doctor clears her of any illness. However, she begins to feel the signs of radiation sickness as the film progresses, eventually resulting in clumps of her hair falling out and her hospitalization. The discrimination Yasuko receives is one the central challenges of her storyline, as she is unable to find a spouse for herself. Yuichi, on the other hand, faces discrimination for a mental illness, post-traumatic stress disorder. His depiction in the film mirrors that of a "village idiot" character in a novel, as a majority of those who encounter Yuichi dismiss or scorn him. Yasuko and her family are the only ones who treat him well and with any sort of compassion, eventually leading both Yuichi and Yasuko to develop a relationship. While an overall negative theme in the film, it is possible to view discrimination with a somewhat positive light, as it is the only factor that allows Yasuko to find a companion and Yuichi to find an individual who truly cares for him.

Analysis of Symbolism

It is impossible to evaluate the hidden meanings within *Kuroi Ame* without raising the question: what does the "black rain" represent? As it serves the title of both the film and the novel, the understanding of black rain is essential. From a scientific perspective, it is most associated with nuclear fallout, since radioactive particles interact with the moisture in the atmosphere, triggering showers. The "black" color of the rain is a result of earth thrusted into the atmosphere, tinting the water dark with contaminated particulates. In the film, the black rain falls on Yasuko, Shigeko, and the others making their way to the devastated city, and is portrayed as a thick, almost blood-like substance. Considering black is universally regarded as the color of death, the black rain falling on Yasuko represents death marking its primary victim of the film. Initially, both she and her uncle are ignorant of the long-term effects the rain has. When they encounter each other in the burning remains of Hiroshima, Shigematsu wonders if Yasuko was simply exposed to an exploding oil tank.

Aside from the titular main symbol of the film, the secondary prevailing symbol is the clock. Clocks make three noteworthy appearances throughout *Kuroi Ame*. The first appearance occurs almost immediately, with the camera focusing in on a train station's main

clock as Shigematsu boards the railcar. This clock is functional and reads 8:13 AM, a mere two minutes before the atomic bomb's detonation. In the remaining two appearances, the clock is by default dysfunctional. As Yasuko and the others make their way to Hiroshima after the blast, a man pulls a scorched clock from the water. The clock's hands are seared, frozen at 8:15 AM. The final noteworthy appearances (note the plural) happen throughout the remainder of the film. Yasuko is tasked by Shigematsu to wind the kitchen clock every morning to prevent the hands from coming to a halt. She is reminded multiple times throughout the film.

The symbolic importance of the clock is linked with the theme of time – that is, frozen time – as it is a physical representation of the theme for the audience to witness themselves. Before the bomb, the lives of Yasuko and her family continued to move forward in the present, thus showing a functional clock. After the bomb, their lives seemingly come to a halt, unable to move on from their suffering. The burned clock from the bay water represents this reality. Even as Yasuko and Shigematsu attempt to restart their lives, they both are reminded of their past time and time again. The kitchen clock is a metaphor for the family's attempts to forget their past. Thus, *Kuroi Ame* presents three clocks for three different periods of time: the past, the train station clock; the present, the burned clock in the water; the future, the hand-wound kitchen clock.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion: Understanding the Japanese Post-War Perspective

It is truly impossible to fully comprehend a person's perspective on life and mortality, even if he narrates his experiences through film or literature. With the existance of films such as *Kuroi Ame* and *Grave of the Fireflies*, our modern society can bear witness to a testament to the Japanese people's tragedy without experiencing it. In the world today, millions of people suffer from famine and war, dictatorships and oppression. However, the effects of the Pacific War on the Japanese homeland cannot be replicated in modern times. A terrorist attack may claim the lives of dozens or even thousands of people. Yet, since 1945, no country lost over one-hundred thousand people in a single night by firebombing. Since 1945, no civilians of any country were incinerated in a mere second by an atomic weapon. Only one nation, in the entire chronicle of human existence, experienced such horrors. That country is – and will likely always remain – Japan.

It is for these reasons the post-war Japanese cinematic empire created films that rank amongst the darkest and most poignant ever produced. While some focus exclusively on the individual struggles to survive following the Japanese surrender, the bombing of Hiroshima attracted many directors' attention. Aside from *Kuroi Ame*, several prominent films centered in Hiroshima include *Barefoot Gen* and *Children of Hiroshima*. The former example sourced

from manga published in the 1970s to widespread publication and distribution. The cinematic adaptation of 1983 became famous for its extraordinarily graphic and frightening portrayal of the Hiroshima bombing, complete with focused shots of incinerated civilians and animated reconstructions of the "ant-walking alligators." The latter film, *Children of Hiroshima*, is largely a docudrama following the life of a teacher after the Hiroshima bombing, and her interactions with children scared from the war.

In the present day, films on the subject matter of Hiroshima and other wartime tragedies are becoming fewer and farther between. Instead, Japanese cinema has largely focused on non-war subjects, with animation, in particular, flourishing. While the decline in production of wartime dramas continues as the years progress, it is not because the Japanese people have largely disregarded their past. Rather, it is likely a testament to their resolve: to rebuild from the ashes and focus on more positive subject material. To use a metaphor from *Kuroi Ame*, Japan as a nation continues to wind its "clock", allowing the hands to move forward freely; and thus, the country progresses further from its darker past to a more prosperous future.

CHAPTER SIX

An Introduction to Symphony no. 3 "Risen from the Ashes"

At approximately fifty minutes in length and cast in four movements, my third symphony is the longest and most ambitious work in my catalogue of compositions thus far. The music narrates a forty-year period of time, from approximately 1945 to the late 1980s, that encompasses the remarkable resurgence of the Japanese nation. In tandem with my *Symphony no. 2 "Hai no Kage"*, the third symphony is the continuation of a story filled with both tragedy and despair, yet concluded with a feeling of optimism, hope, and resolve.

While composing my second symphony, I was simultaneously drafting the composition of a third in my head. As a result, I carefully crafted the second to avoid anything – musical motifs to themes – from appearing in the third and vice versa. This was necessary to preserve the integrity of both storylines as well as to give each symphony an individual nature. My second symphony is the darker of the two while the third is more dynamic and spontaneous in character. The most striking difference between the two, however, is the use of the soloist. Similar to Gustav Mahler's *Symphony no. 4*, a soprano appears in the final movement of my second symphony, while a solo violin performs with the orchestra throughout the entirety of my third symphony.

Symphony no. 3 "Risen from the Ashes" place in Contemporary

Repertoire

Where does *Symphony no. 3 "Risen from the Ashes"* fall within the history of symphonic writing? It was never my intention to attempt to redefine the symphony or expand on the well-known innovations of the twentieth century. My third symphony is very much rooted in long-established tradition, both structurally and in instrumentation. The first movement is in sonata form (albeit a loose one), the second movement is a fast scherzolike piece, the third movement is an adagio, and the fourth movement is similar in character to the first. The orchestra size and compliment are more in line with the contemporary symphonic repertoire; however my third symphony does feature a prominent novelty. This work is, to my knowledge, the first numbered symphony in history to feature a violin soloist.

My ambition is to continue a long-standing tradition in classical music: the writing of multiple symphonies. Not only does this type of composition display the full artistic palette of a composer, but it in many cases also serves as milestones in a musician's career. From Gustav Mahler to Ludwig van Beethoven, and from Krzysztof Penderecki to Witold Lutoslawski – the changes in style and maturity can be traced through each symphony. God

willing, I will hopefully be able to write more symphonies over the course of my life, with each one culminating a period of artistic expression.

The Relationship to Grave of the Fireflies and Kuroi Ame

My principal goal in composing is to be able to narrate a story through the music in a way that is both creative and accessible to an audience. Both my third symphony and the two films analyzed in this dissertation take place in the same realm: a dark, morbid, and cruel wartime image of Japan. What both films do not do, however, is present any evidence of Japan's remarkable post-war resurgence. With that in mind, I crafted the symphony to essentially become the third film within the dissertation: a movie without the visual media. This "film's" task is to complete the story of both *Kuroi Ame* and *Grave of the Fireflies*, albeit without the film's characters and setting.

I do this in several ways. There is a myriad of ways to tell a story in a film, but often, the most creative way is to use and develop themes and motifs. Both music and cinema share this commonality. The solo violin – I assume for most audiences – will be the obvious "narrator" of the symphony's story. However, like in both *Kuroi Ame* and *Grave of the Fireflies*, I use a very central theme to recount the plot: a direct quote of *Kimigayo* – the national anthem of Japan. The melody of *Kimigayo* represents the nation of Japan as a

whole within the symphony. At the beginning of the work, the melody is only a fragment, harmonized with dark and dissonant sonorities. These initial quotations depict a broken and fragile nation. As the symphony progresses, the melody of *Kimigayo* gradually becomes more intact and less melancholy. Eventually, by the end of the symphony, the melody is quoted in full: jubilant and punctuated.

An additional method of narration involves the order of the movements themselves. In the original score, I had assigned each movement a date, with the first set in 1945, the second in 1964, the third in 1975, and the fourth in 1988. The first movement is meant to resemble Japan immediately after their surrender in 1945, and as such, the music reflects the circumstances of the period. In 1964, Tokyo was a bustling metropolis and the largest city in the world, ready to display its grandeur in the Olympic games of that year. The second movement thus illustrates the everyday scenes of the city, including the traffic, Shinkansen bullet train, crowds of people, and even the calm of midnight. The third date, 1975, was reflective of my inability to settle on a year within the 1970s, as no particular year stood out. As a result, I chose the median date, representative of a decade in Japanese history that was prosperous yet relatively peaceful. This movement gives the audience a virtual tour of the natural beauty of the Japanese countryside, as implied by the spontaneously evolving musical styles. The final date, 1988, represents the height of the Japanese post-war recovery. Musically, the fourth movement is triumphant and jubilant, both in fast passages and the slower, hymn-like extended melodies. In the current published edition, I removed the dates from the movement titles but retained the accompanying subtitles. It is my hope the audience can visualize the story told and come to a conclusion on the timeline themselves without my intervention.

Conclusion

Aside from the purposes and the intention behind the genesis of *Symphony no. 3* "Risen from the Ashes" already stated, this work is the culmination of my studies at UCLA. When looking in retrospect to my first compositions from 2012 to the present day, this symphony truly puts my musical development into perspective. Among the many things worth celebrating with the completion of this symphony, I am most satisfied with the successful development of my own, personal voice. I looked to my cultural background and the composers I admired the most for the solution: the expressionism of late Gustav Mahler and Alban Berg combined with the modernism of Krzysztof Penderecki, rooted in the harmonic structures of Japanese contemporary music. These three characteristics are the main attributes that characterize my music, amongst other influences. With this palate as the template for the overall sound of my compositions, I look forward to developing and expanding upon the work I have done so far in the years to come.

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VOLUME II

Symphony no. 3 "Risen from the Ashes" (2020)

The following score is a facsimile

of the original published edition

MASON SWAN

LEWIS

COMPLETE CRITICAL EDITION EDIZIONE CRITICA COMPLETA 直筆サインテキスト版

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Symphony no. 3 "Risen from the Ashes"

Sinfonia N. 3 "Risorto dalle Ceneri" 第3交響曲「灰からの復活」

VOLUME 3 LIBRO 3 第 3 巻

PREFACE

The contemporary classical musical scene certainly provides no lack in diversity in style or format of composition. Composers of the present have largely reinvented the definitions of "traditional ensemble" and, in many ways, deviated from centuries-old structures. Yet, forms such as the concerto and ensembles of string quartets and string trios largely remain fashionable.

While there are no shortages of concerti composed today, its grander and soloist-absent cousin, the symphony, is by and large becoming obsolete. Despite this trend, the few "holdouts" are some of the most well-known, respected composers alive today, notably Krzysztof Penderecki and Philip Glass. These individuals continue to label their compositions as "symphonies" rather than opt for a single title of their own creation. A second group of composers today create works that are arguably "symphonies" based on their structures and musical content, however they chose to designate their works with a unique title rather than use the traditional namesake. John Adams, arguably the most prominent example of such as composer, has written two works falling in this category: City Noir and Scheherezade.2. The final and rather large group of modern composers ignore the symphonic name and structure altogether.

With my third symphony and the two others that precede it, I hope to keep the tradition of symphonic composition alive. Nevertheless, it is most essential to maintain the variation and creativity of ensemble established in the twentieth century.

This work – and the *Symphony no. 2 "Hai no Kage"*– hold a very special place in my catalogue of works, as they are tributes to the Japanese nation and people: a civilization I admire and love so much. Unlike the darker, melancholier *Symphony no. 2*, the third symphony is characterized by a brighter, more optimistic tone. Essentially, I tell the story of one of the greatest comebacks in history, as a nation "rises from the ashes" and becomes the world's second largest economy. The defining hallmark of the composition is a violin soloist: the narrator of the story. This is not the first

instrumental symphony in existence, as notable predecessors include the aforementioned Scheherezade.2 by John Adams, the Cello Symphony by Benjamin Britten, and the Sinfonia-Concertante of Sergei Prokofiev. This is, to my knowledge, the first "violin symphony" designated as a numbered symphony. The music is set to four movements, with each representing a certain period of time in post-war Japanese history, ordered chronologically. While the exact years are not specified in the movements' title, each represents a certain decade, thus allowing for a very individual character and tone.

By far the longest of the four movements, the first begins with a powerful four note rhythmic motif. The music is strikingly reminiscent to the second symphony in tone and character, implying a time frame of approximately 1945. The orchestral forces arrive at a climactic episode and introduce a second motif: the melody of Kimigayo. This quote/motif is subtle, as only the first few notes are revealed. Eventually, the climax withdraws to reveal the entrance of the solo violin. From there, the soloist and string orchestra perform a derivative of the prior music, arriving at a similar climatic episode. Rather than retreat quietly as before, the first motif reemerges violently, sustained by an F pedal tone. With the fate of the movement in question at this point, a surprising change occurs: a lighthearted, scherzo-like series of passages arrive. I intended for this moment to function as somewhat of a flashback to the days before the war, with the accompanying music to provide a respite from the emotional content of the previous material. At the conclusion of the "flashback", the cellos and contrabasses introduce a dark, sinister bass melody, eventually joined by the violins and violas. From there, tension builds until the arrival of the main climax.

With the full orchestra now engaged, the main themes and motifs from the first movement are thrust into a violent, argumentative musical whirlwind. A developmental recapitulation of sorts, each of the themes and motifs are either quoted directly or modified to a varying degree. The orchestral *tutti* then comes to an abrupt halt, with the violins holding a single pitch that dies away slowly. A slow funeral song emerges, fulfilling the movement's designation as a "threnody". Eventually, two

new members of the orchestra enter, an offstage piano and violin, performing a ghostly variant of the "flashback" from minutes prior. Building on the new, spectral imagery, the onstage piano, harp, and violin reintroduce the *Kimigayo* motif over broken *gagaku* rhythms and a pedal chord. Despite the haunting atmosphere of the current music, the movement concludes rather peacefully with a shimmer of optimism, offering a forecast to the movements to follow.

The second movement, titled Toccata, Intermezzo, and Chorale is a stark departure from the first. Immediately, the woodwinds and high strings introduce a highly rhythmic and accented pattern of fast notes. Representative of Tokyo in the 1960s, the charged and exuberant interactions between the soloist and various sections of the orchestra convey an image of a bustling metropolitan environment. When composing this movement, I envisioned taking the audience on a virtual tour of Tokyo during the 60s, as it was a very exciting time for the city. Not only was Tokyo the host of the Summer Olympic games during the decade, it experienced the fastest economic growth of any city in the world and hosted numerous technological advancements, including the Shinkansen bullet train. All of these various feats and achievements are musically represented in the toccata.

After the initial toccata comes to a lively climax, the music withdraws into a peaceful intermezzo. The solo violin takes the lead during much of this new contrasting section, yet never overshadows the orchestra. This slowly develops into a chorale-like passage, again based on the Kimigayo motif. While subtle and withdrawn at first, the chorale builds in intensity to a bright, hymn-like culmination: a musical metaphor for the subtitle "Risen from the Ashes".

At this point, the *toccata* returns in full force, although with the previous musical ideas truncated. The movement's primary climax arrives with a rhythmically driven flurry of notes. Rather than end the movement with several, thunderous chords, I decided to surprise the audience with a rather mystical sounding finale. Similar to how the ending of the first movement anticipates the jovial second, this ending anticipates the third movement.

Claude Debussy's book of piano preludes was the inspiration behind the structure of the third movement.

Titled *Images*, the movement consists of several orchestral preludes in succession, with seamless transitions. Similar to Debussy, I placed the titles of the individual "pieces" at the end of each as to give the audience some room to imagine the setting for themselves.

The first "piece" is simply titled *Prelude*, as it serves as an introduction for the coming music. While the melody is of my own creation, the overall sound and concept is based on a Japanese lullaby from the 1930s. As expected, the harmonies are pure and basic, while extremely warm and inviting. The *Prelude* then transitions rather seamlessly into a much darker – but never sinister – realm. Immediately, the harmonies go from pure to complex, with elements of bitonality. An ascending scale from the piano reintroduces the violin in one of the starkest moments of the entire symphony, as the ensemble shrinks to just the harp, piano, and solo violin. The concluding bars of the second "piece" reveals the title *Night* my interpretation of the moon's reflection on a lake within a Japanese forest.

Yet again, a seamless transition yields a very different character from the previous music. The third "piece" consists of a continuous, mobile texture of the strings and piano under a rather serene, simple melody from the violin. Every so often, the flute and oboe enter with subtle embellishments. The mobile texture slowly comes to a halt, only to immediately remerge after a short, two bar interlude. This time, the passage extends itself through rapidly changing harmonies and meter, growing into a rather surprising, menacing climax. Nevertheless, the sinister ambience quickly recedes, leaving an almost deathly calm atmosphere. Again, the audience is greeted with the familiar mobile texture – albeit much slower – that characterizes this "piece", a musical representation of the wind dancing through the grass.

The fourth "piece" depicts a peaceful, cliffside setting overlooking the ocean. Despite the oceanic influence, I chose not to invoke musical motifs representing water, but rather focus on serenity. Consistent with the orchestration of the movement thus far, the ensemble is small and intimate, with the violin performing most of the melodies. Just as nature's canvas is always evolving within a set image,

the music flows freely while nevertheless adhering to a simple, two chord "question and answer" motif.

Eventually, the music returns to the lullaby-inspired first "piece", however this time, the strings and solo violin in tandem build in passion and emotion towards a heartwarming, bright culmination. As the movement comes to a close, the caressing harp and piano motif returns followed by a plagal cadence to conclude.

Something I have always admired in Ludwig van Beethoven's Symphony no. 9 is how he presents his musical idioms in the final movement. Essentially, it highlights elements of the previous three movements while including new and organic material. I was inspired to do the same in the fourth movement of my third symphony. To begin, the violins perform a lonely, sad melody in the higher registers of the instrument, harkening back to the melancholy nature of the first movement. Eventually, this melody evolves into a quiet, yet warm hymn-like passage from the full string orchestra. The hymn slowly builds into a full orchestral tutti, now strong and formidable. These passages are again derived from previous material, namely the chorale from the second movement. After a powerful climax, elements of the toccata reemerge, although the music primarily is based on the melody of Kimigayo.

The structure of the final movement is best summarized in an AB-AB form, with the A sections primarily being of a slower tempo, while the B sections being more-or-less toccata-like. When the second A section arrives, both characteristics of the hymn return. This time, the solo violin performs the melody while the violas, cellos, and contrabasses accompany. Yet again, I conjure up material from the second movement, bringing back the fast, yet subdued, virtuosic violin passage that concluded the movement. However, this familiar music takes an unfamiliar turn, as it builds into an ecstatic, momentous conclusion. After a jubilant musical conversation between the solo violin and orchestra, the soloist takes the lead and finishes the symphony with a thunderous finale.

- Mason Swan Lewis, 2020

INSTRUMENTATION

Piccolo (doubles Alto Flute) 2 Flutes 2 Oboes English Horn 2 Clarinets in B-flat Bass Clarinet 2 Bassoons Contrabassoon 4 Horns in F 3 Trumpets in C 2 Trombones Bass Trombone Tuba Timpani Percussion (4 players): Bass Drum, Cymbals, Suspended Cymbal, large Rin Gong, Tam-tam, Snare Drum, Tenor Drum, 3 Tom-toms, Temple

Block, Tubular Bells, Xylophone, Vibraphone

Harp Piano Offstage Piano*

Solo Violin Offstage Solo Violin*

String Orchestra (16, 14, 12, 10, 8)

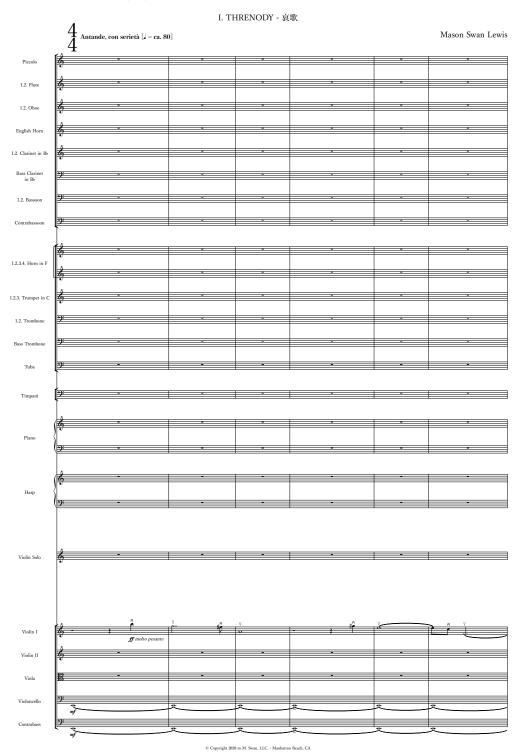
Duration: ca. 50 minutes

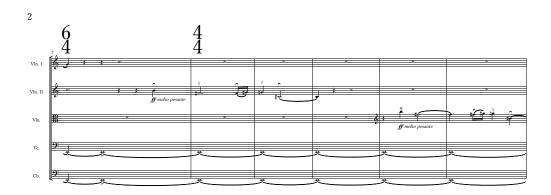
^{*} Note: it is preferred that both the offstage piano and violin be performed by separate players than the onstage performers. If additional performers are not available, then the onstage piano may perform the offstage part. The offstage violin – again if a separate performer is unavailable – can be performed by a member of either violin section, preferably a middle chair so as not to be easily noticed.

^{**} All dyads, triads, etc... written in the string sections are divisi unless otherwise marked as non-divisi.

Symphony no. 3 "Risen from the Ashes" - 「灰からの復活」

For Solo Violin and Orchestra (2020)

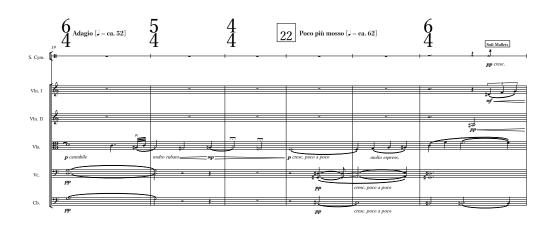










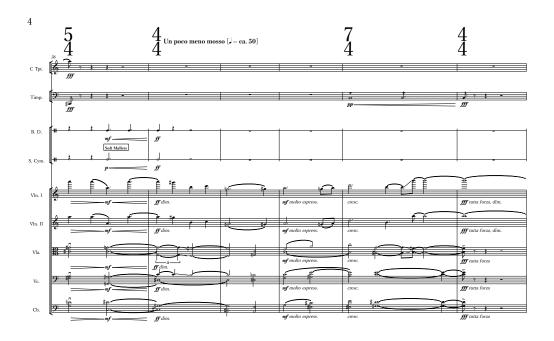


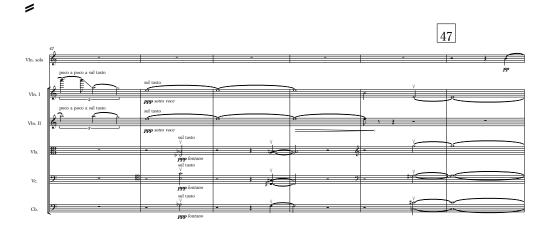


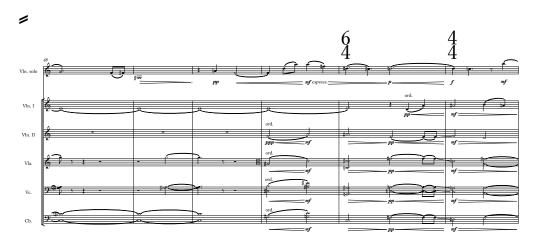


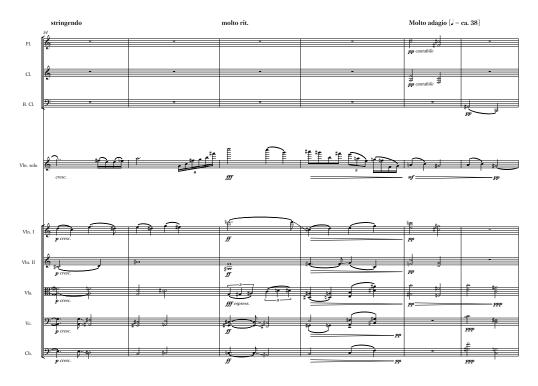


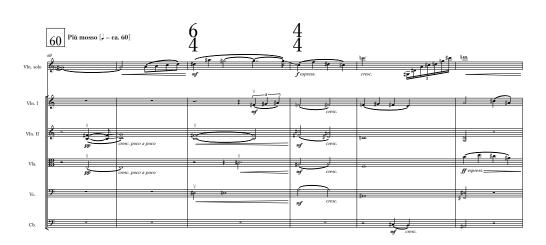








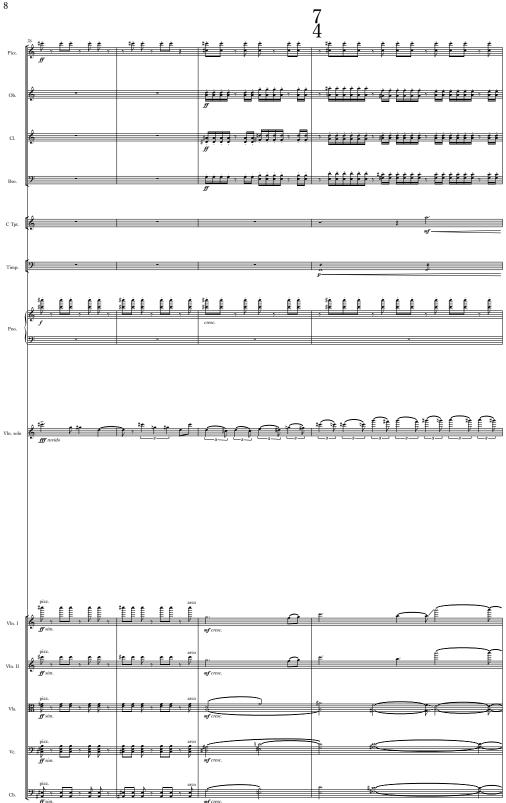




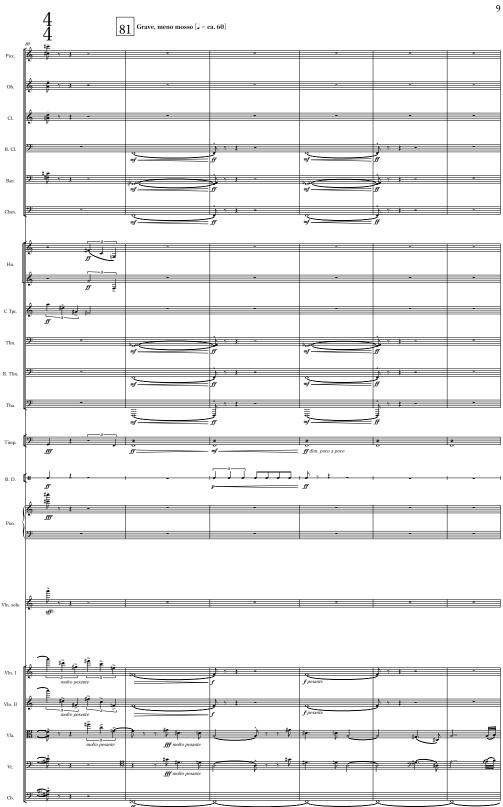








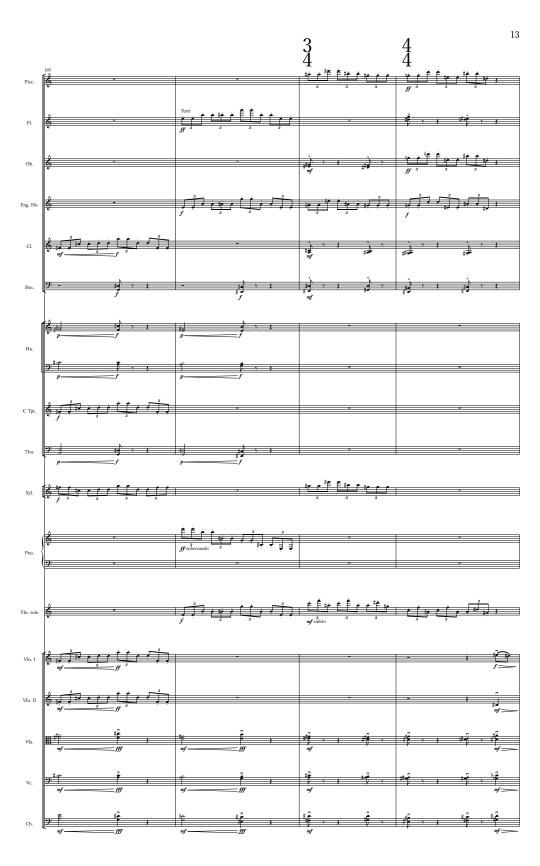




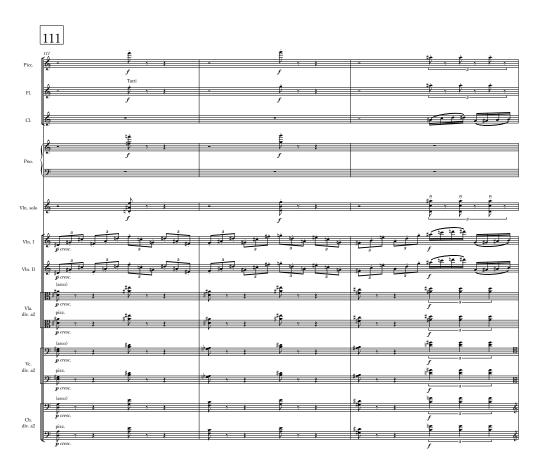


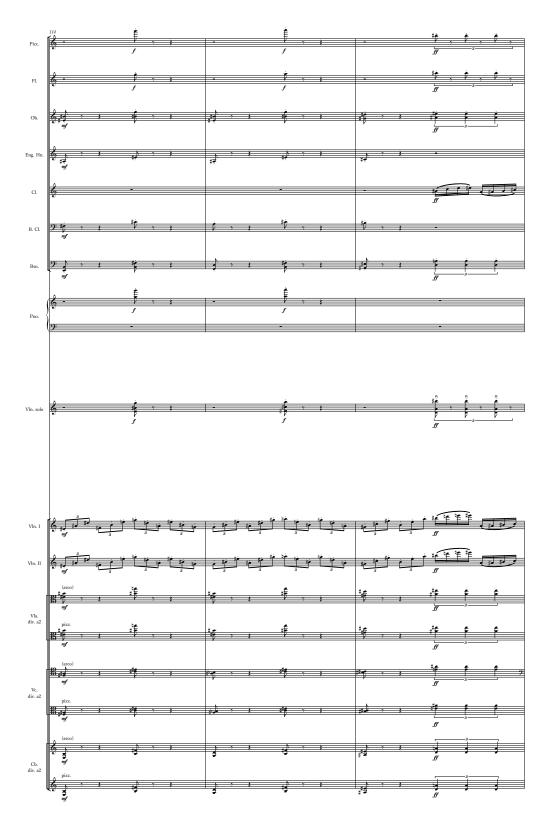




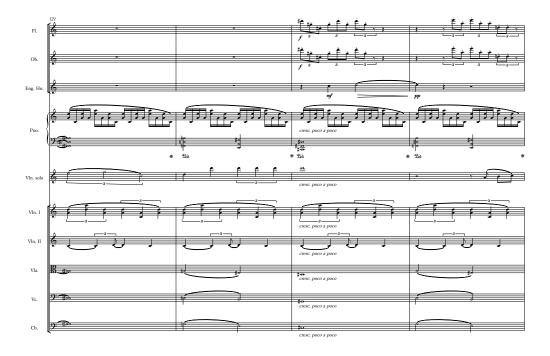








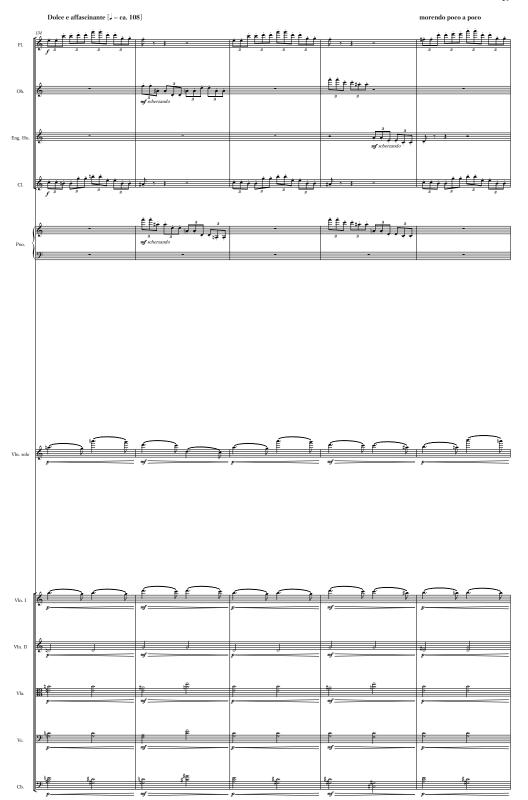


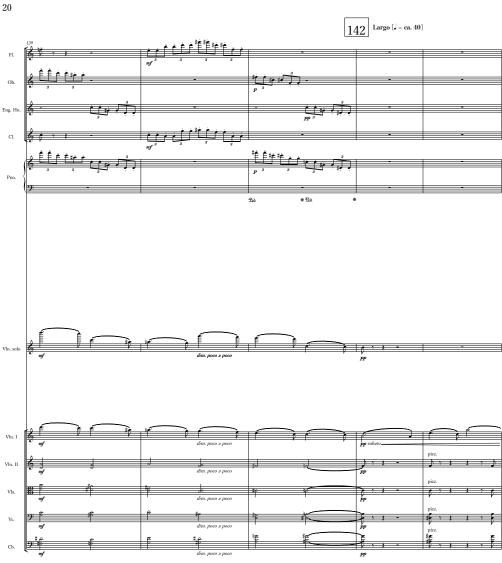




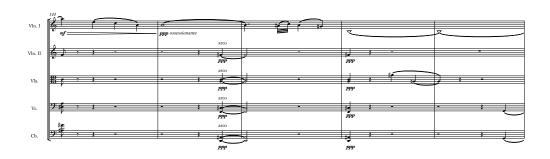




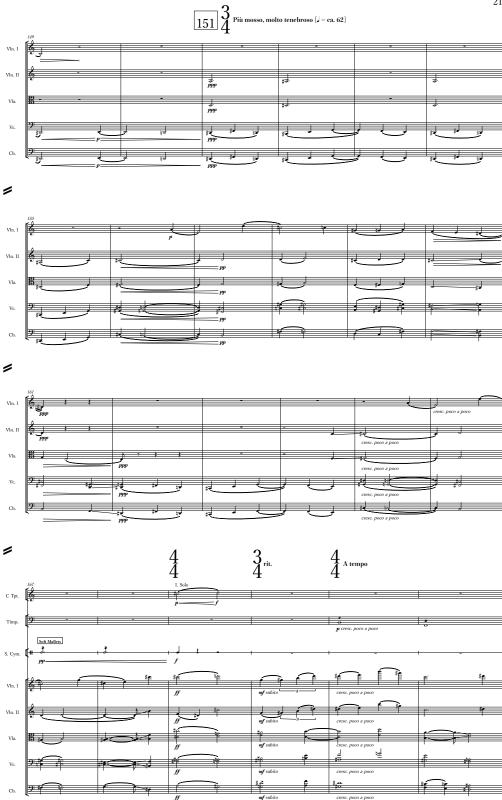


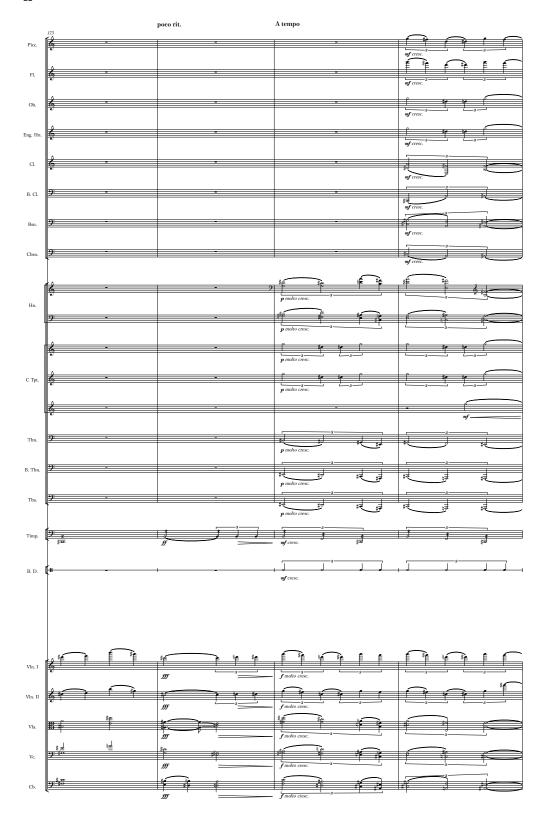






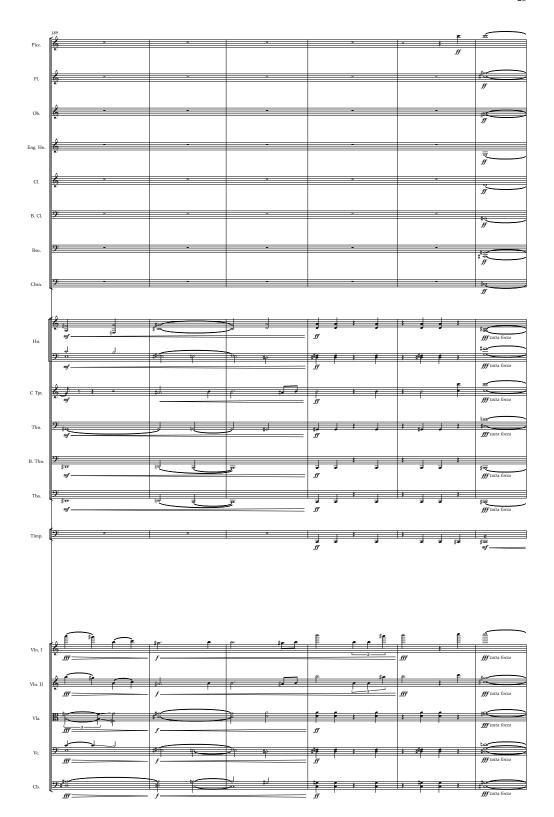


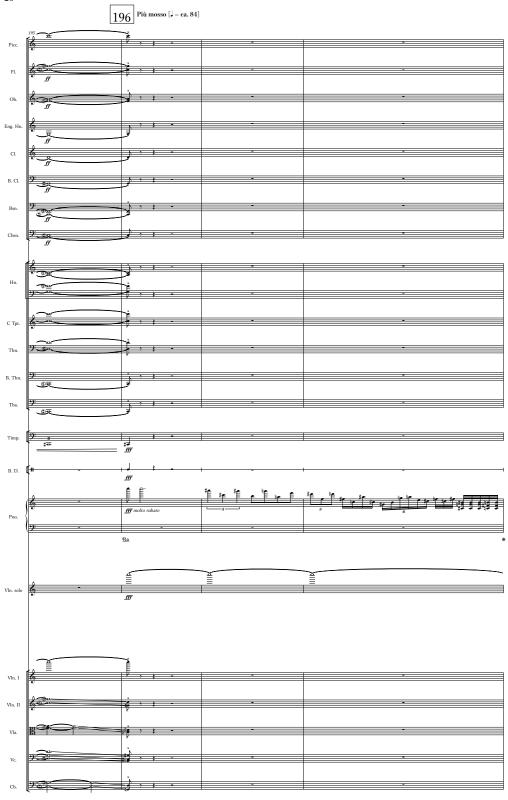


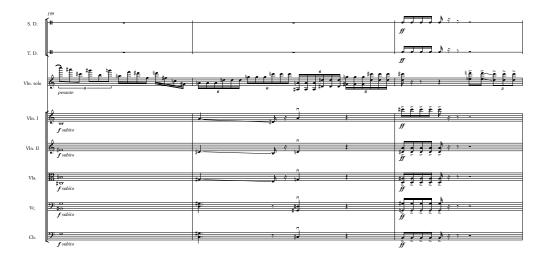


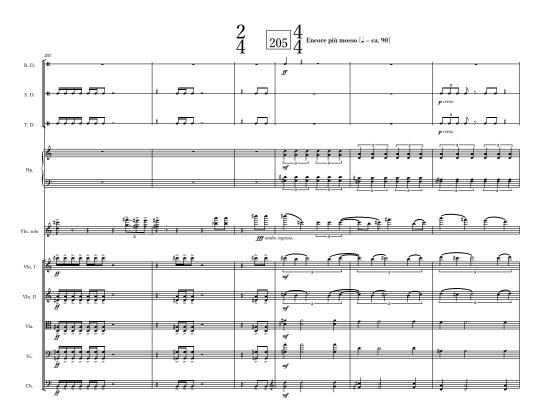


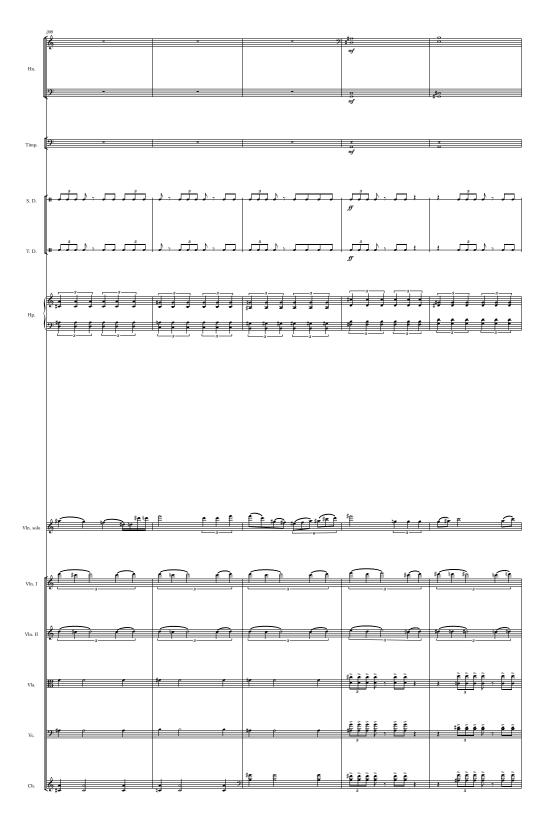


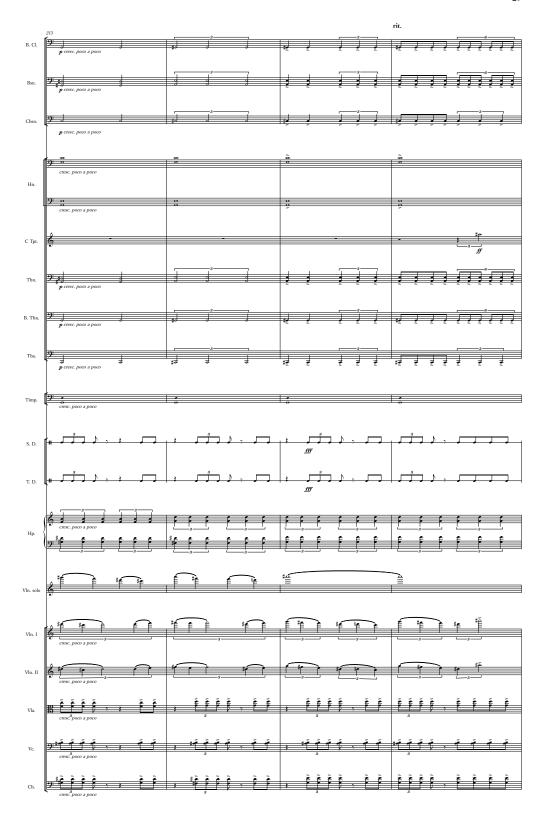


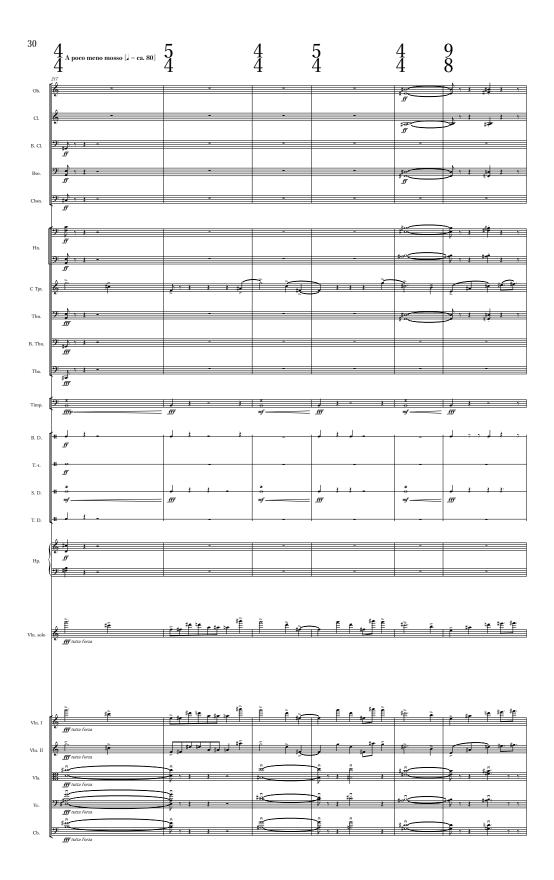


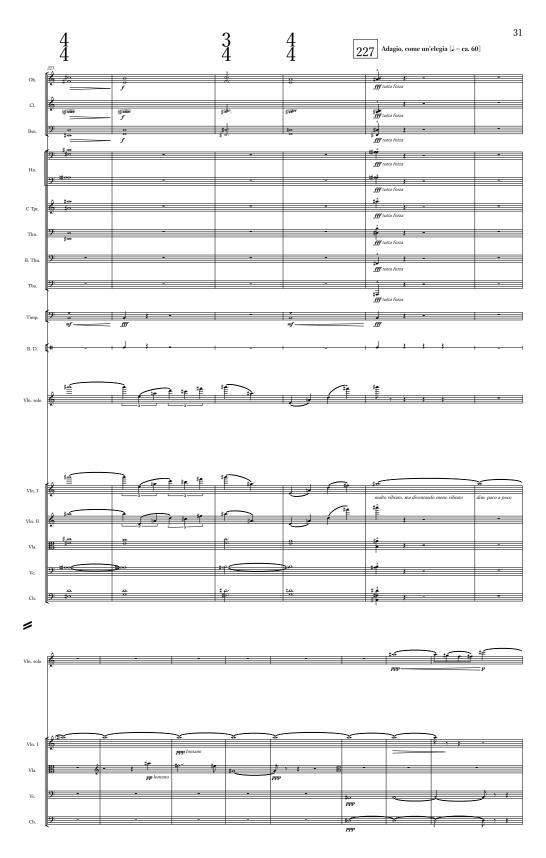


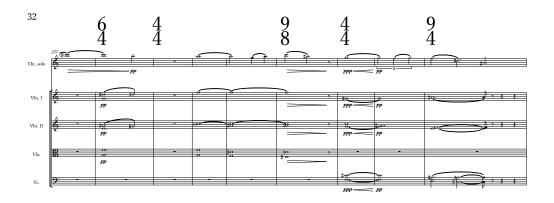


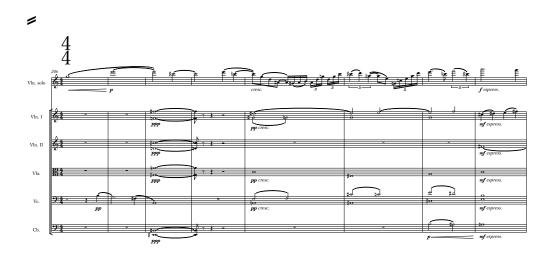


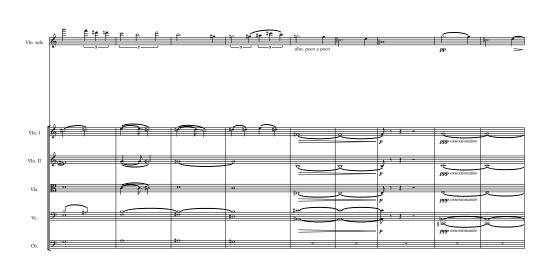


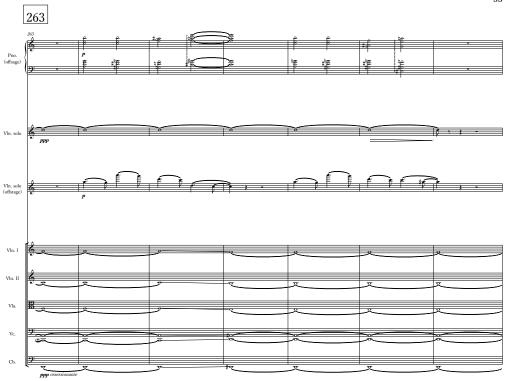




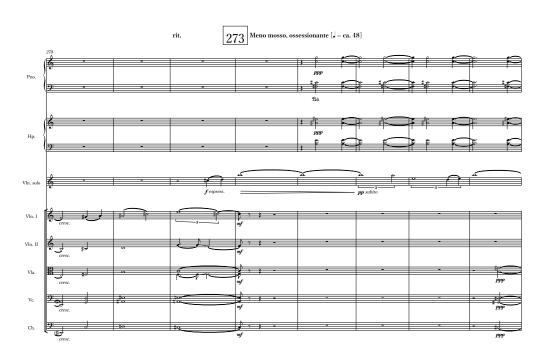


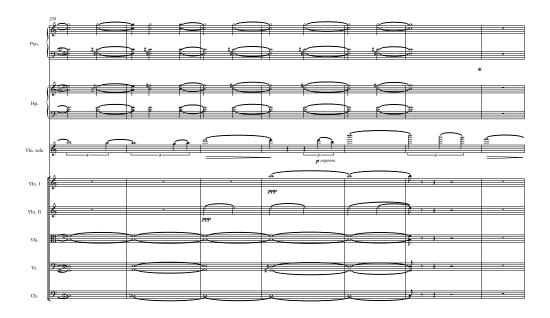




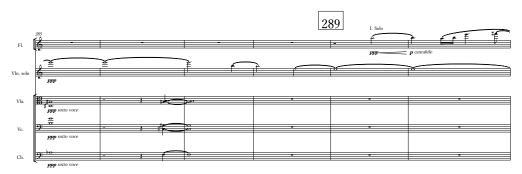


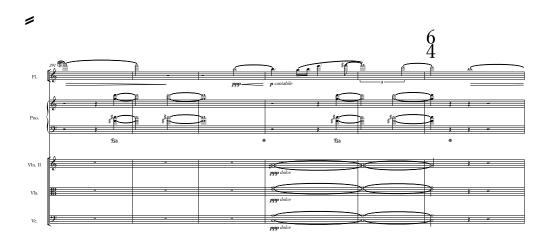


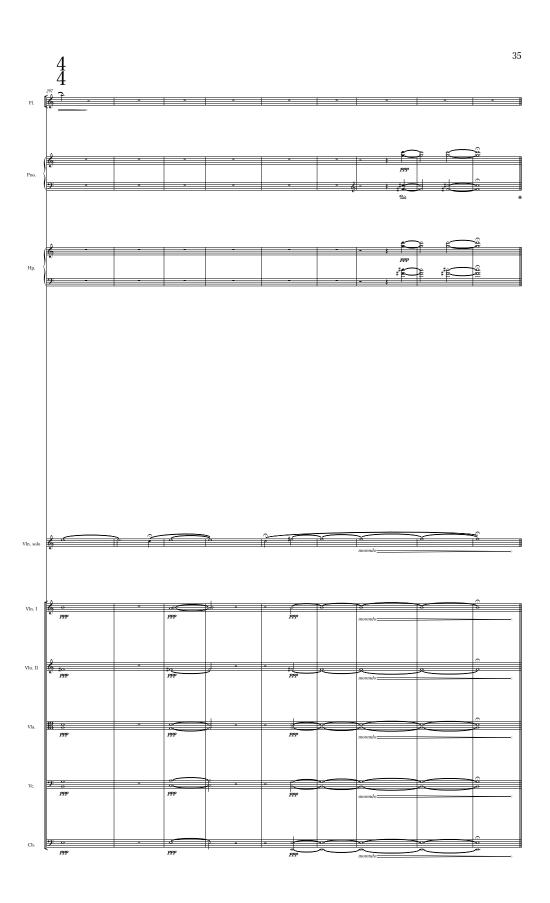


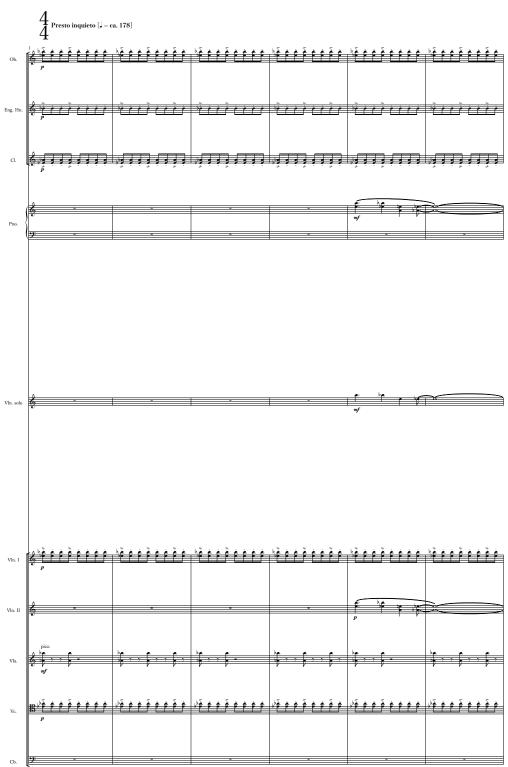


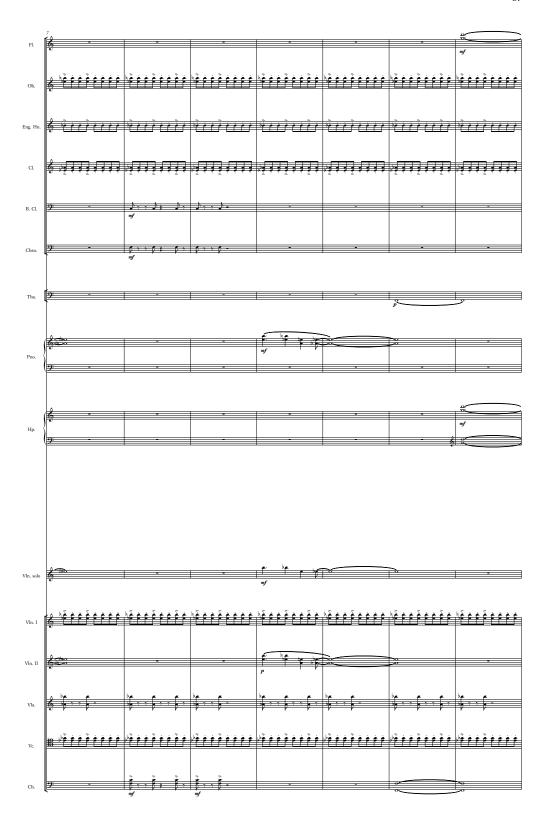


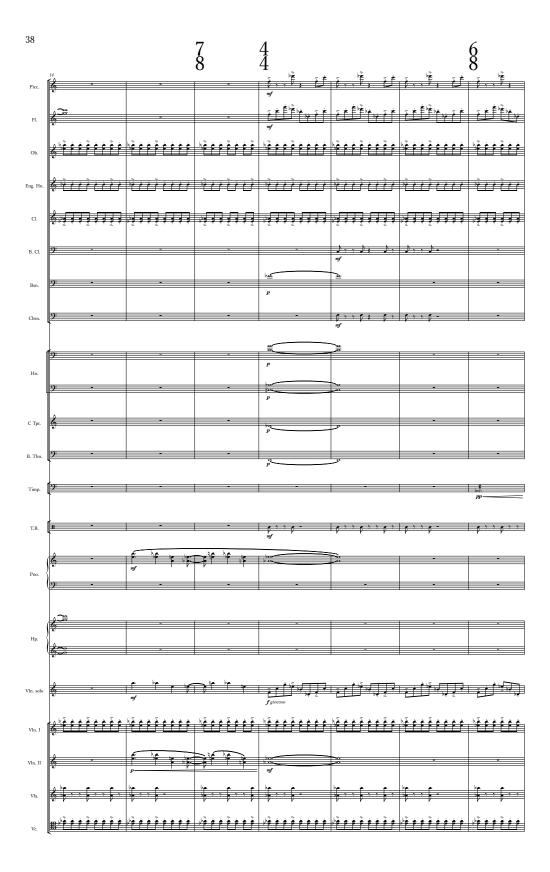




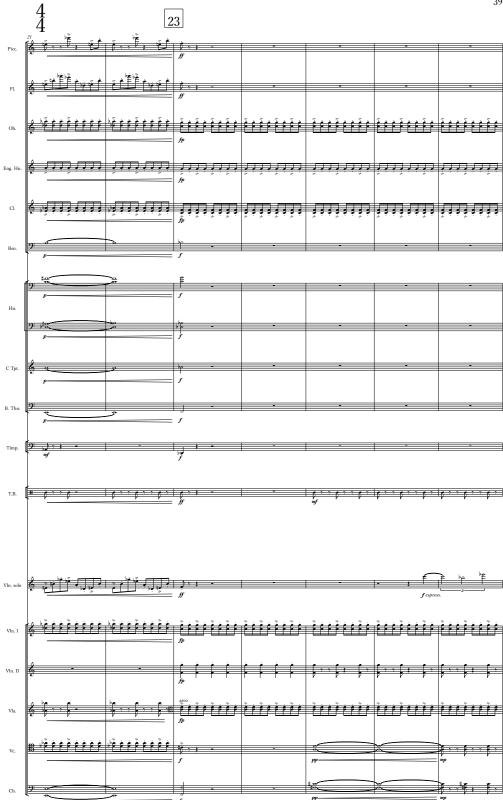




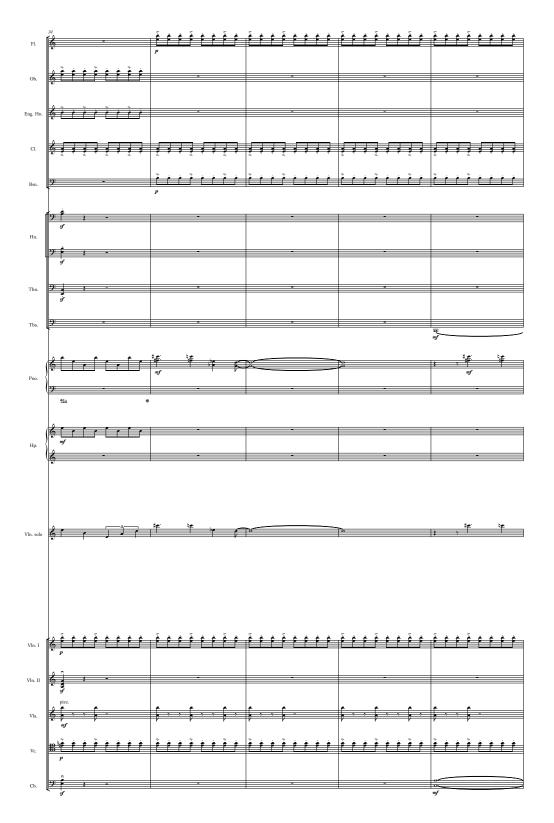


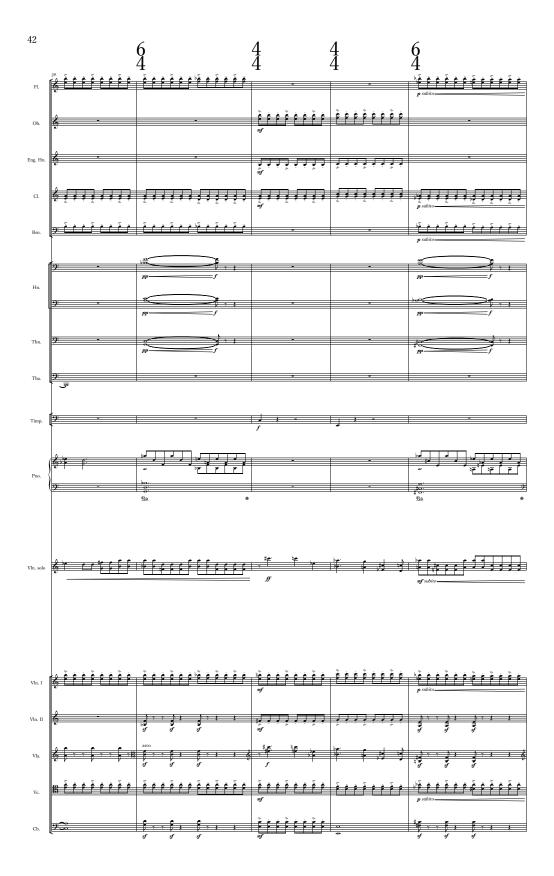




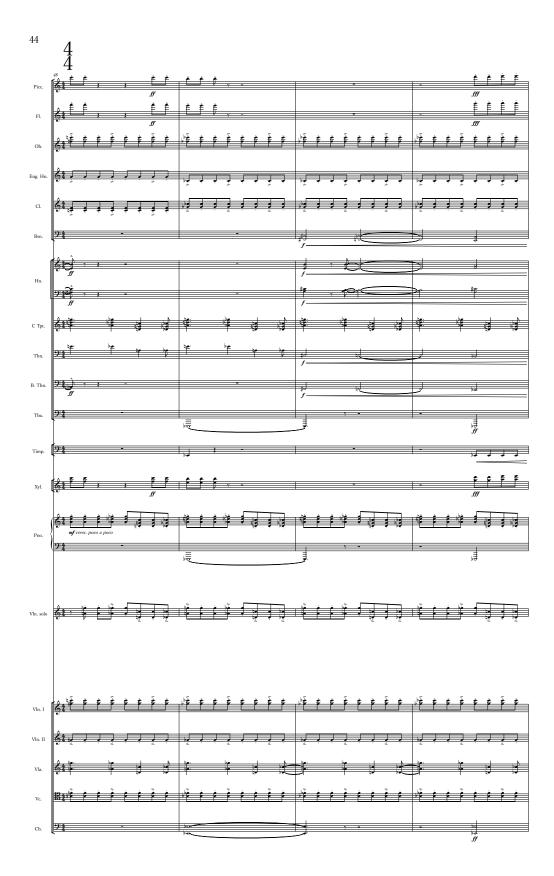




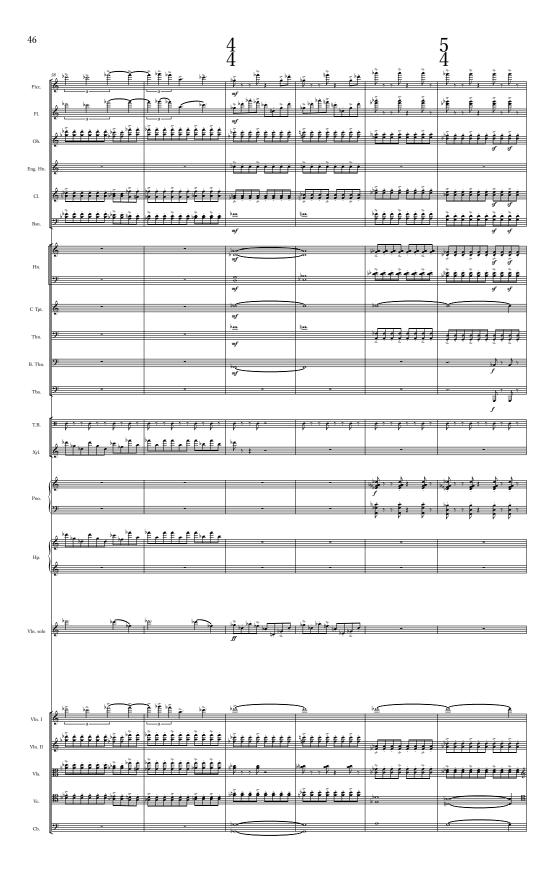






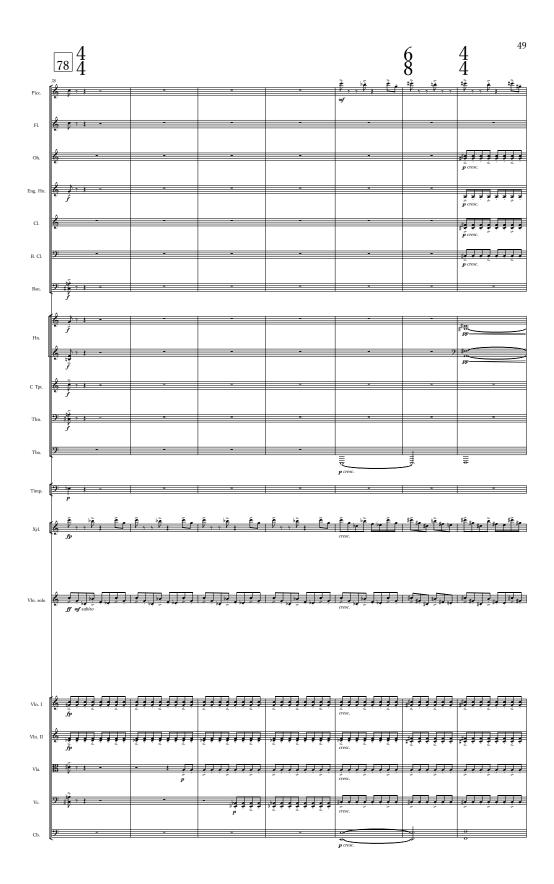


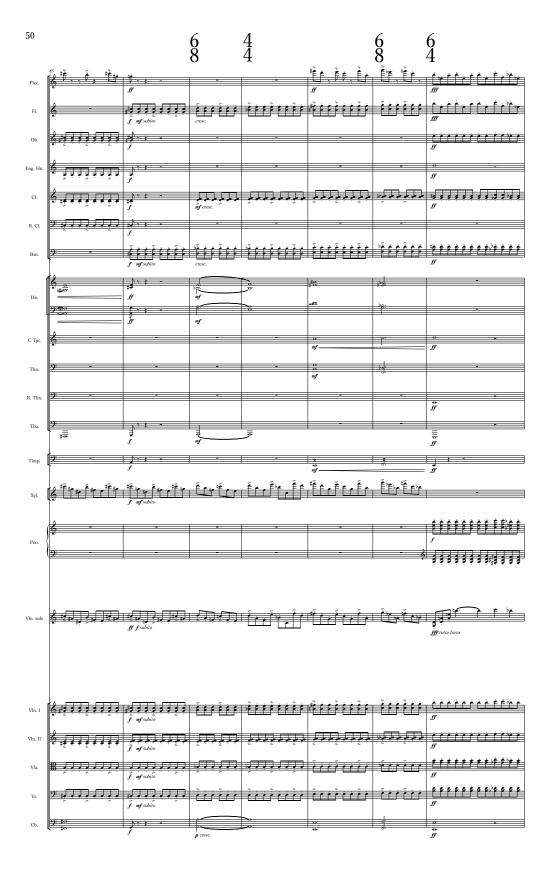


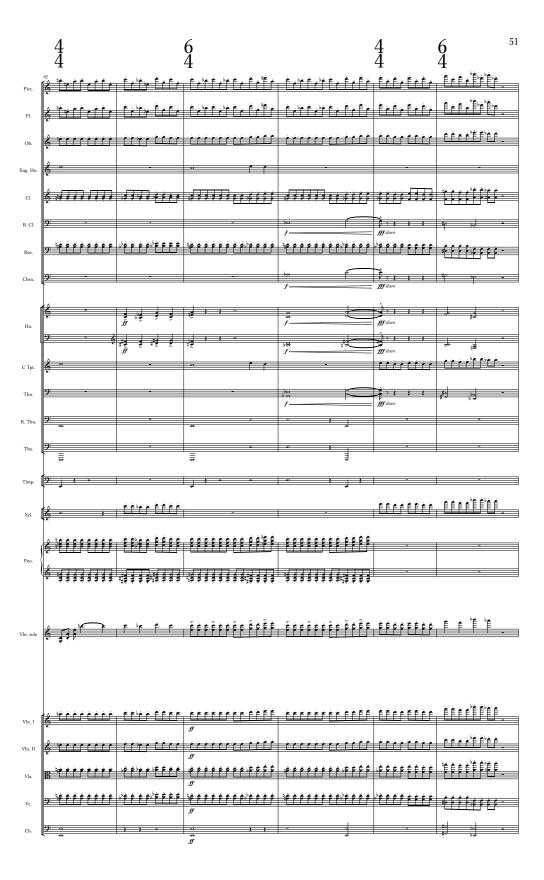








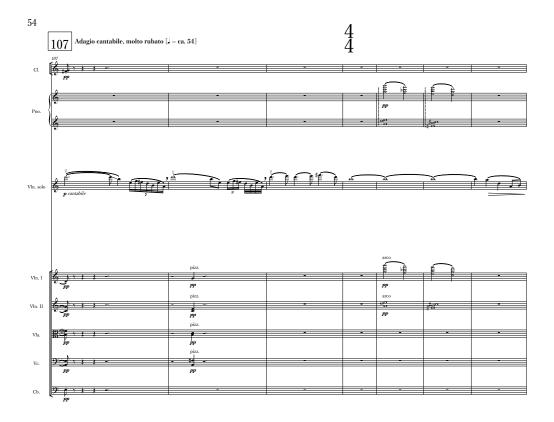






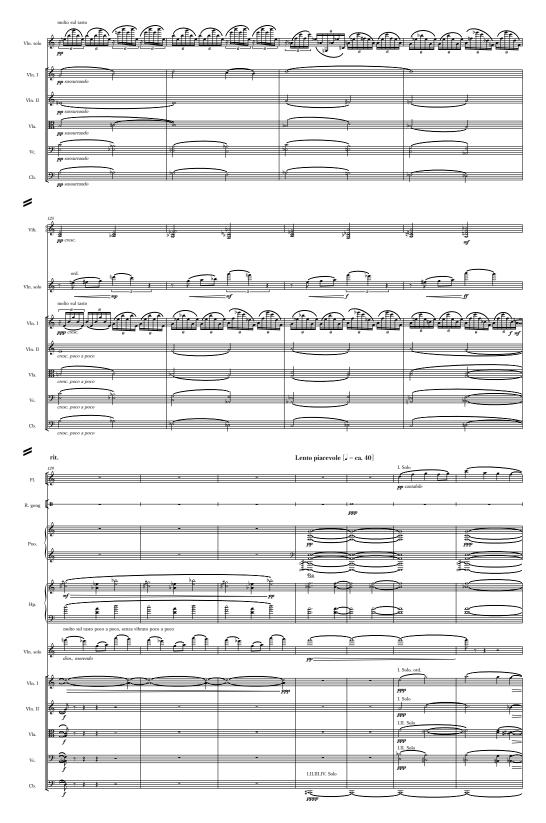








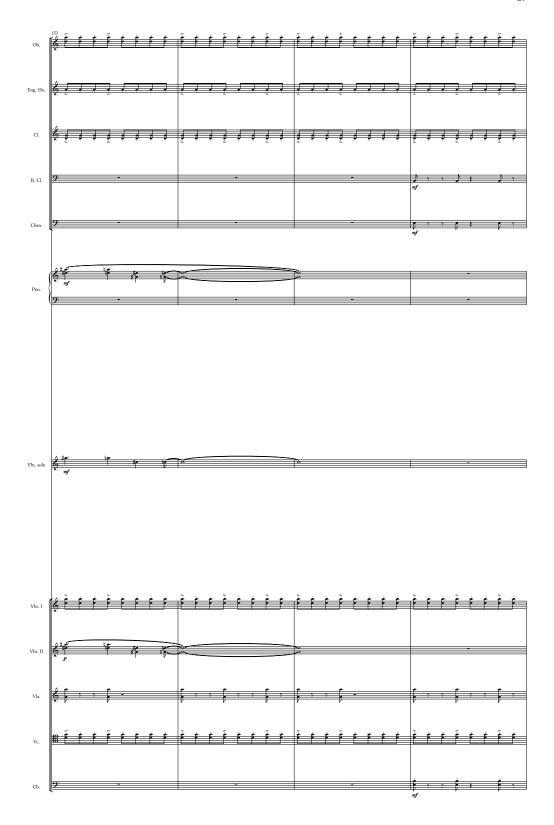
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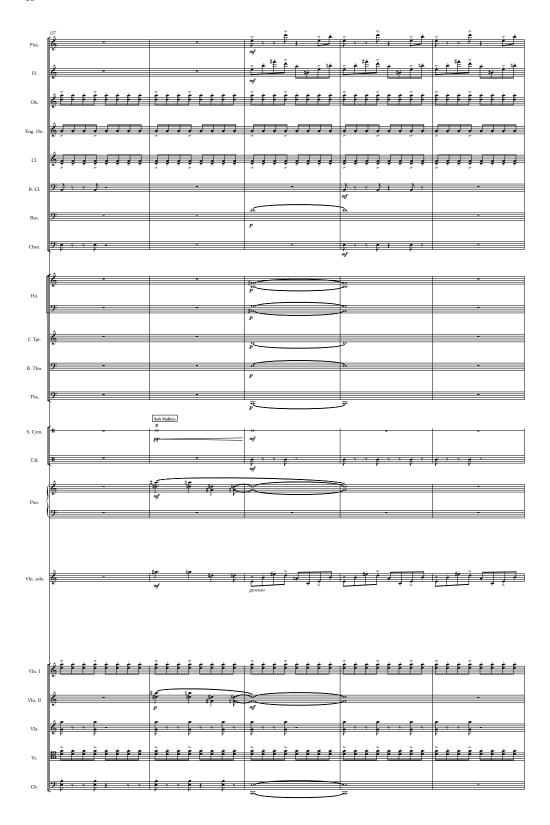










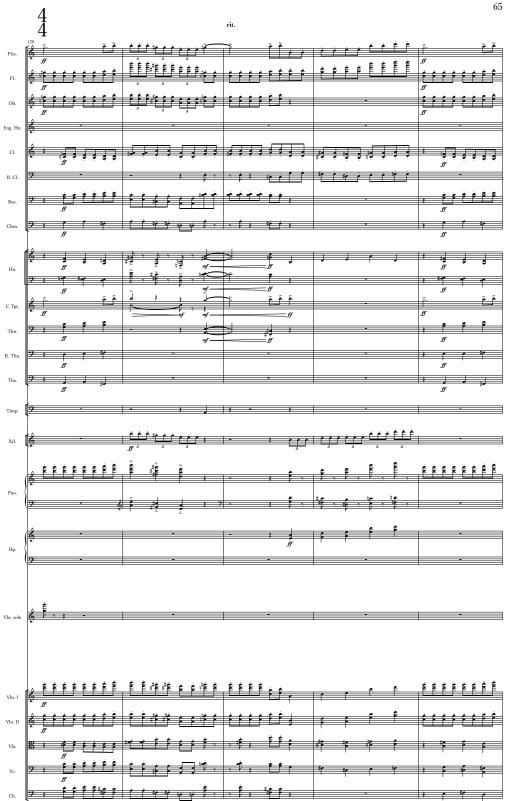


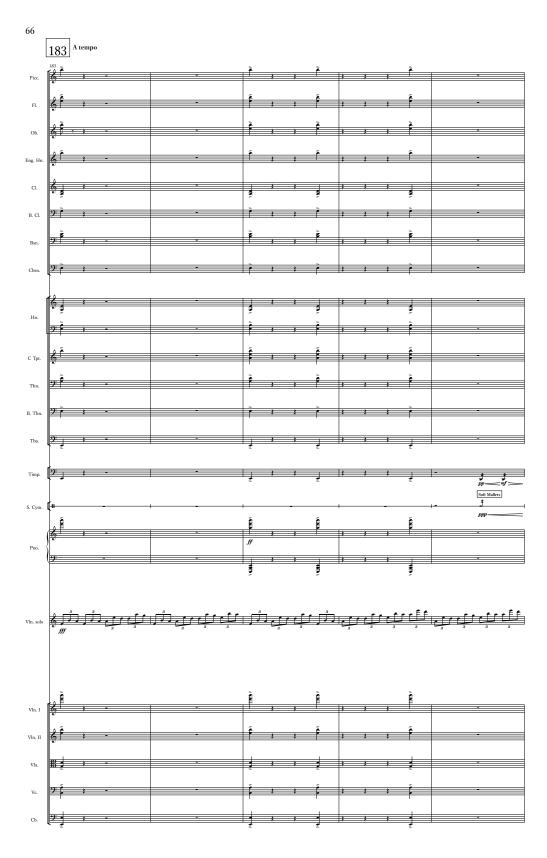


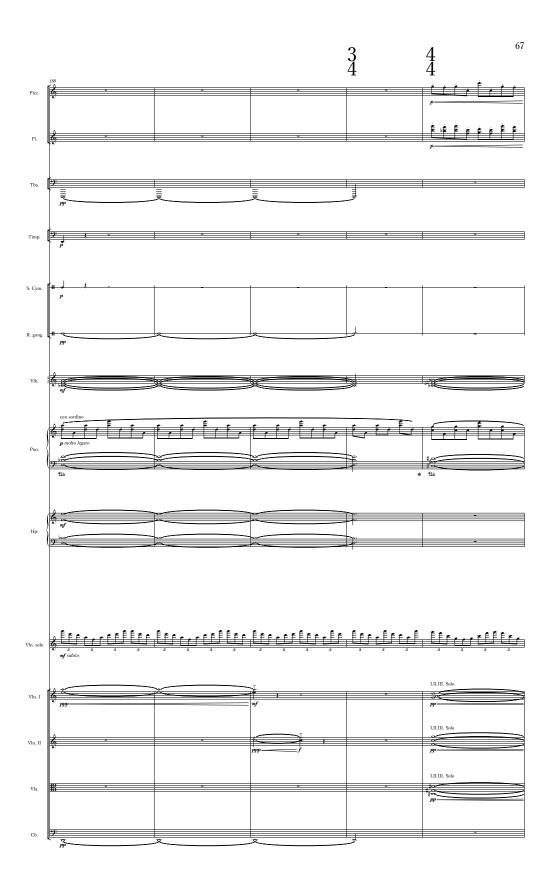


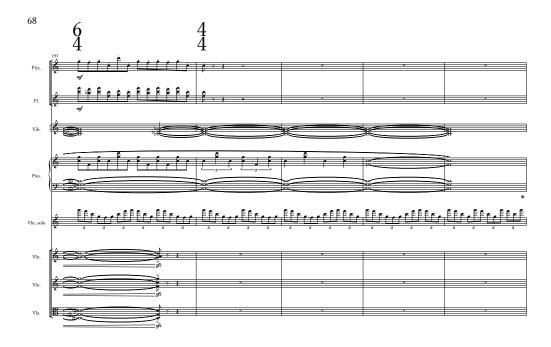






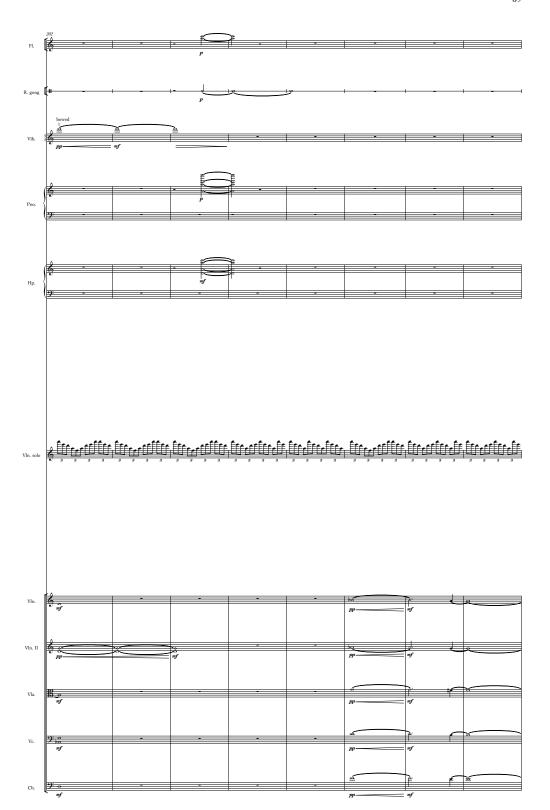


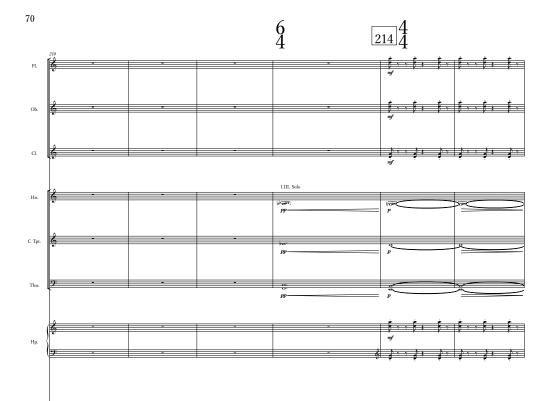




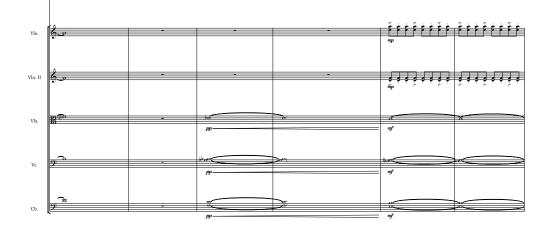
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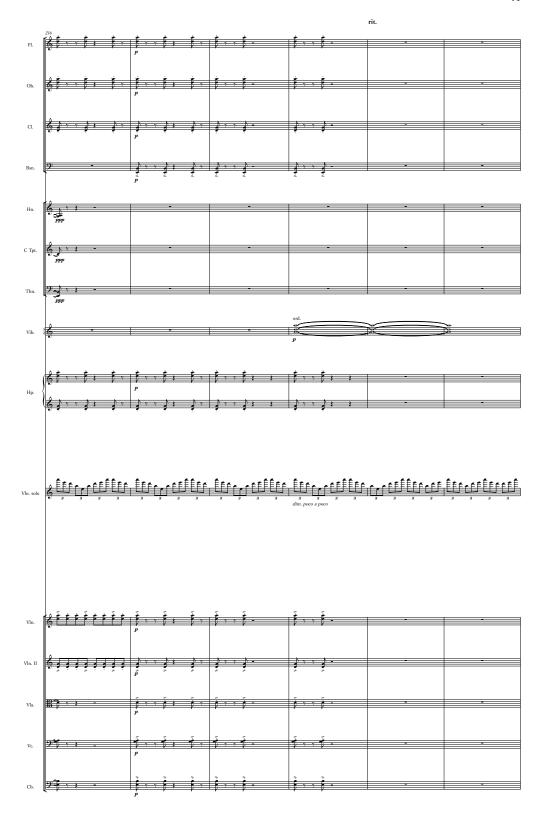
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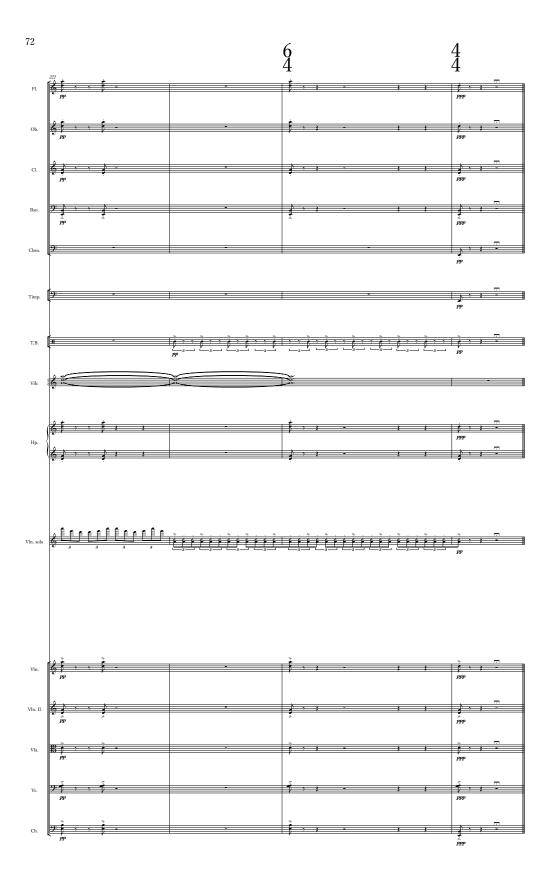




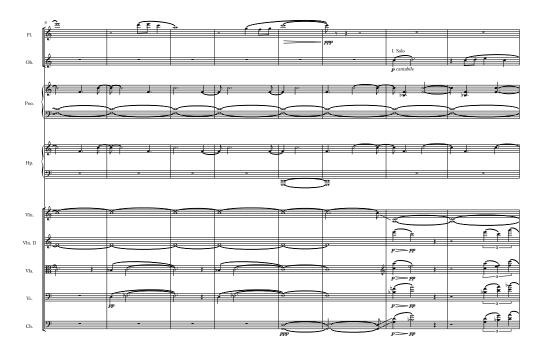








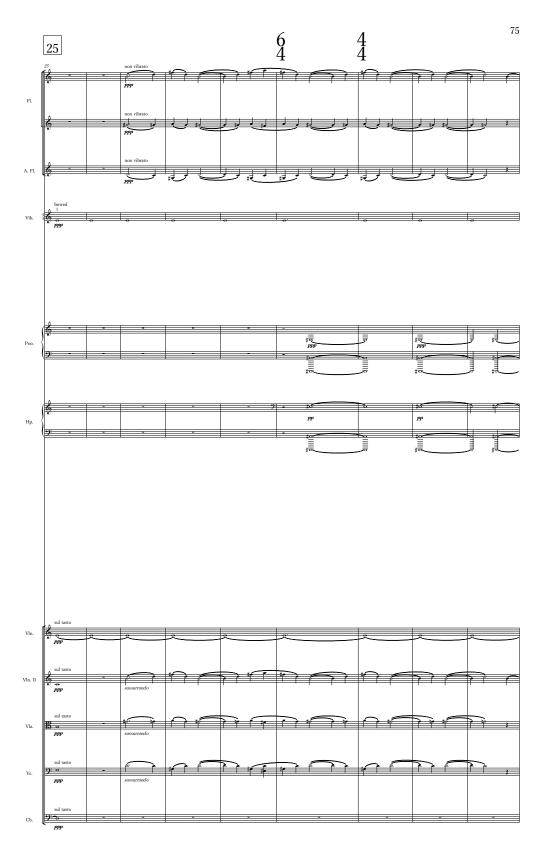


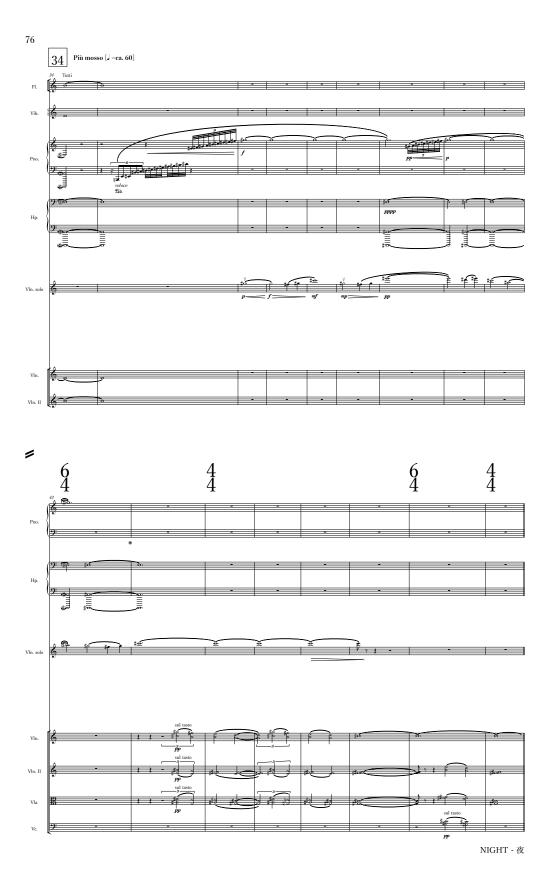


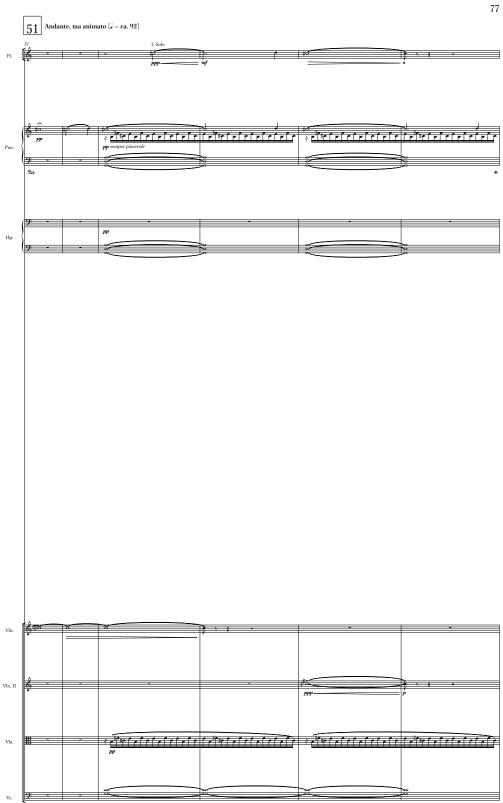


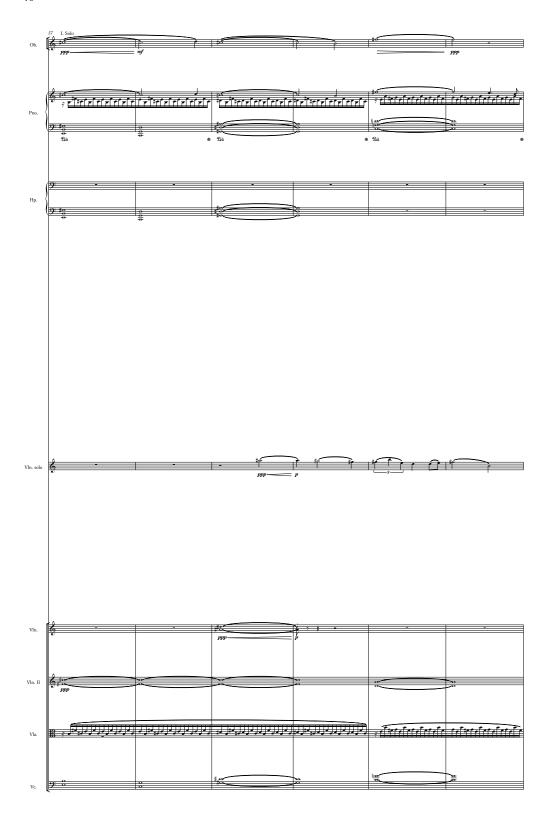


PRELUDE - 前奏





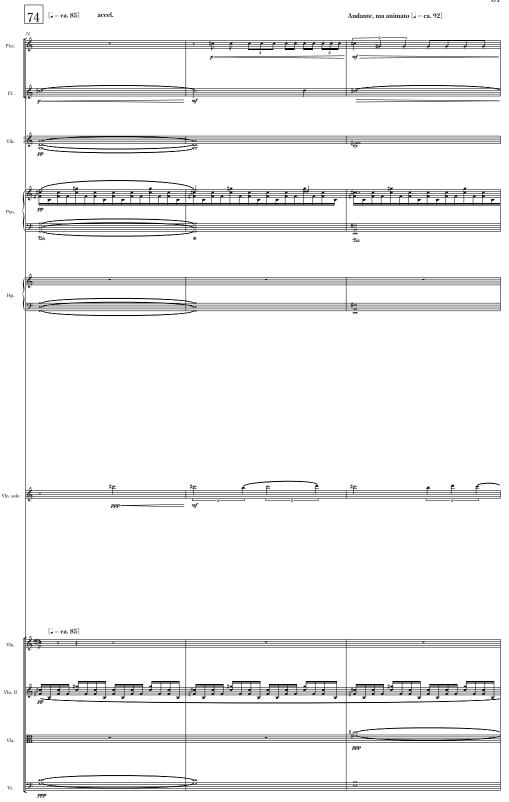




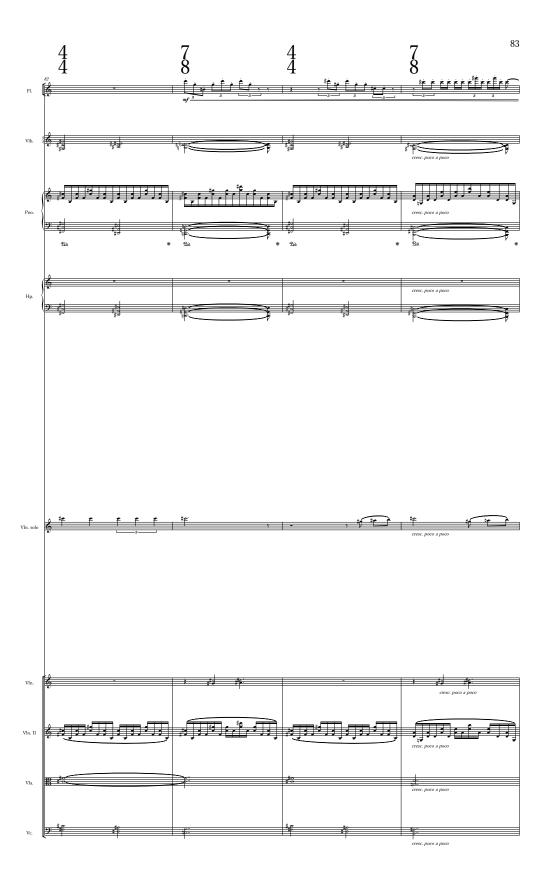


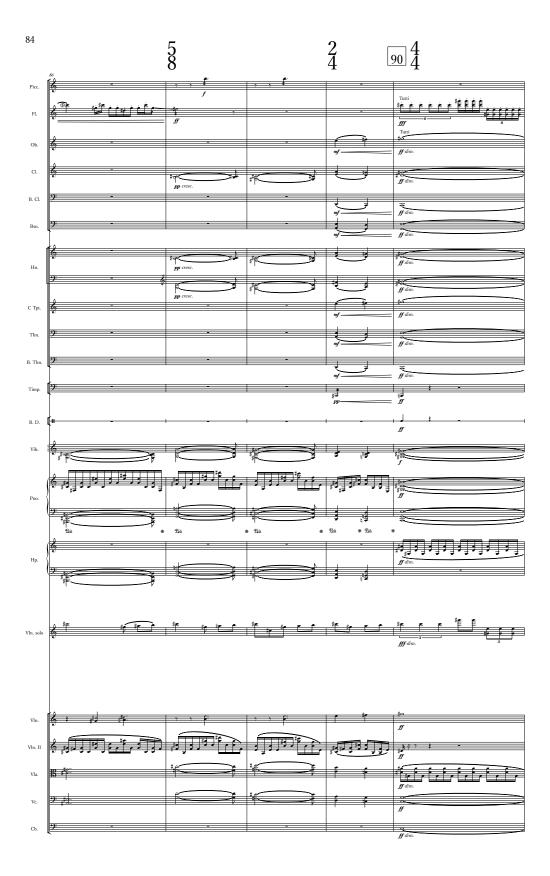


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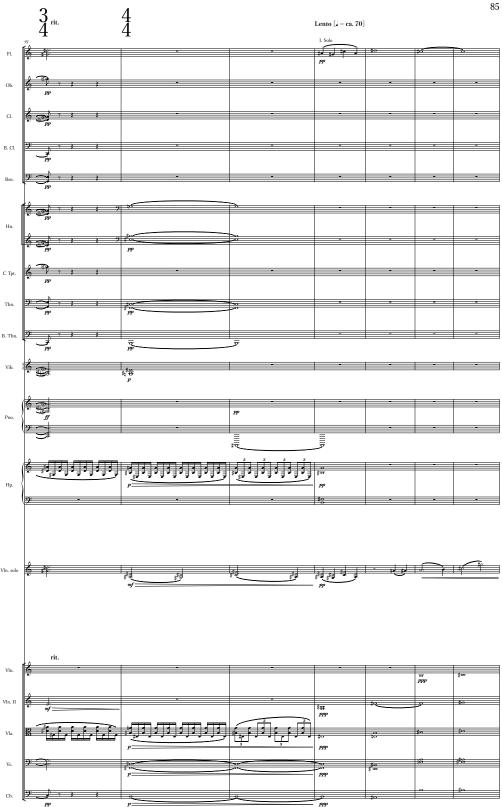


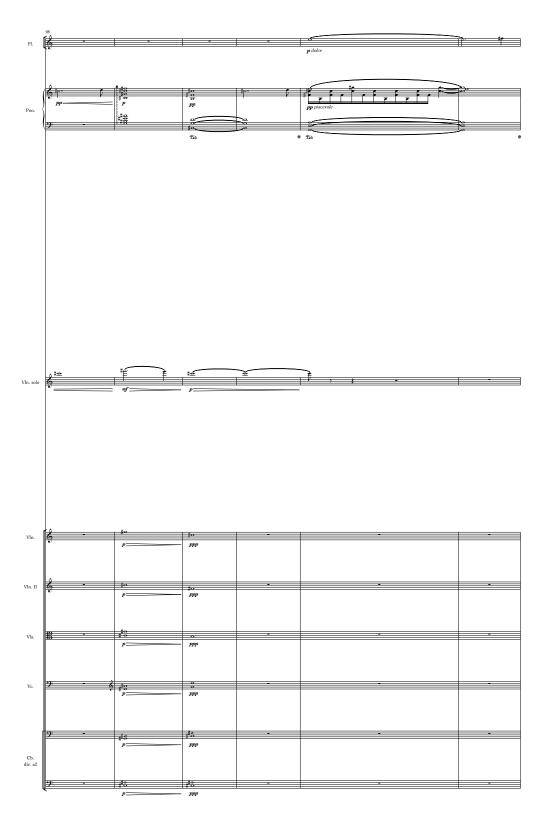


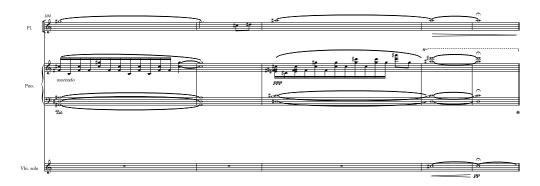






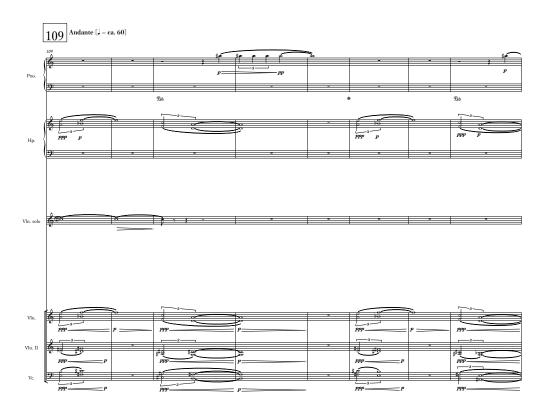


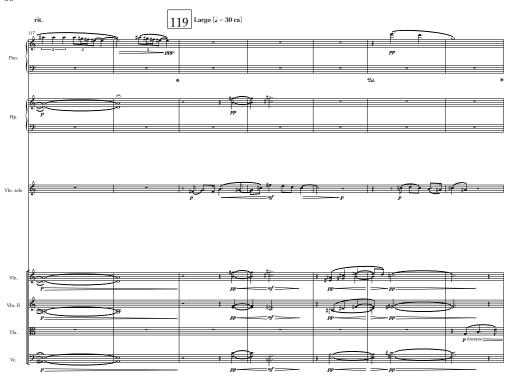




THE WIND DANCES ACROSS THE GRASS - 風が草を横切って踊る

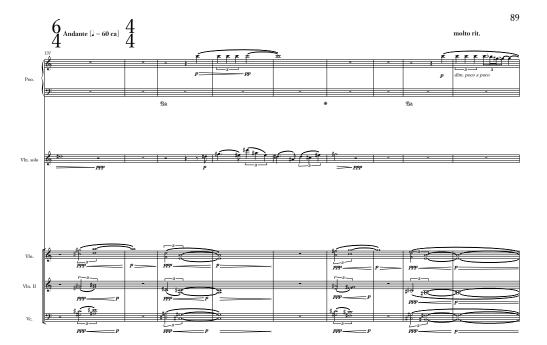


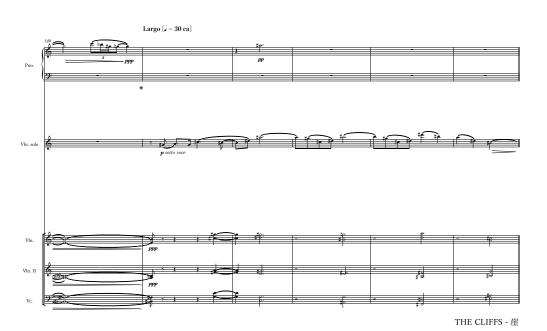












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