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A Discussion of Performance Practice Issues in Steven Stucky's

Fanfares and Arias

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Musical Arts

by

Leo Genki Sakomoto

2012

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2012

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

A Discussion of Performance Practice Issues in Steven Stucky's

Fanfares and Arias

by

Leo Genki Sakomoto

Doctor of Musical Arts

University of California, Los Angeles, 2012

Professor David T. Lee, Chair

Steven Stucky is a Pulitzer Prize-winning contemporary composer. His prolific catalogue of compositions range from large-scale orchestral works to a cappella miniatures for chorus. For 21 years he enjoyed a close partnership with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, beginning in 1988 as composer-in-residence and later becoming the orchestra's consulting composer for new music. He is also active as a conductor, author, lecturer and teacher. He has taught at Cornell University since 1980 and now serves as Given Foundation Professor of Composition. He is a frequent guest at colleges and conservatories, and his works appear on the programs of the world's major orchestras.

To date, he has contributed six works to the wind band repertoire: *Voyages for Cello and Wind Orchestra* (1983-84), *Threnos: for Wind Ensemble* (1988), *Funeral Music for Queen Mary*

(1992), *Fanfares and Arias* (1994), *Concerto for Percussion and Wind Orchestra* (2001) and *Hue and Cry* (2006). A work of approximately 17 minutes, *Fanfares and Arias* remains Stucky's singular large-scale work for full wind ensemble, utilizing both the saxophone and euphonium sections.

This monumental work by a significant contemporary composer has so far eluded critical study by the wind band profession. Perhaps this neglect can be attributed to the inherent technical difficulty, as well as the relative esoteric nature of the piece: two characteristics that can have an effect on how often works are performed. Stucky's compositions are currently only available through the rental process; the prohibitive cost and procedure involved can also be a deterrent to potential performances.

The purpose of this study is to provide various insights into the performance practice issues of *Fanfares and Arias* as they apply to the conductor. Potential performance difficulties include the navigation of several passages involving mixed time signatures at a fast tempo. This paper will also examine the distinctive stylistic characteristics of Steven Stucky to better recognize how he utilizes his compositional techniques, such as his use of rhythmic and harmonic cells. This study will also investigate areas of concern for individual instruments in the ensemble – for example, techniques to facilitate the use of “slap-tongue” for the alto saxophone part will be explored. Tempo flexibility will be discussed, and, to this end, recordings of the piece will be used. A brief overview of Stucky's wind band works is included.

The dissertation of Leo Genki Sakomoto is approved.

Jens H. Lindemann

Donald Neuen

Mark R. Morris

David T. Lee, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2012

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Music examples included in the document were obtained from the scores of:

Symphonies of Wind Instruments, composed by Igor Stravinsky and published by Boosey & Hawkes.

Fanfares and Arias and *Boston Fancies*, both works composed by Steven Stucky and published by Merion Music.

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VITA

2005	B. A., Music Education California State University, Los Angeles Los Angeles, California
2007	M. M., Instrumental Conducting University of California, Los Angeles Los Angeles, California
2008-09	Instructional Assistant John Adams Middle School Santa Monica, California
2005-10	Teaching Associate Department of Music University of California, Los Angeles
2010-11	Interim Director of Bands California State University, Bakersfield Bakersfield, California
2012-	Assistant Conductor Inland Valley Symphony Temecula, California

I. Introduction

The wind band profession has evolved tremendously over the past century. Conductor skill, quality of ensembles and quality of repertoire are among the massive improvements seen throughout the recent history of the medium. The evolution of the repertoire is remarkable in itself – the beginnings of which included almost exclusively of orchestral transcriptions, light concert music and marches. Due to the leadership of many conductors and performers of the wind band, the repertoire now features a number of compositions of artistic merit composed by distinguished composers. The wind band profession, aware that the survival of the medium is dependent on works written by world-class composers, continues to seek out and commission from those most celebrated. Steven Stucky is undoubtedly a member of that group.

Much has been written about the need to commission from highly decorated and internationally performed composers. Stucky has met that criteria – his works are consistently performed by the world’s orchestras and ensembles, and he has been awarded many distinctions, the highest honor being his 2005 Pulitzer Prize for the *Second Concerto for Orchestra*. Noted wind band conductor Ray Cramer opines about the importance of Pulitzer Prize winning composers:

The dedicated work and vision by so many conductors and organizations in the past twenty-five years has produced a steady stream of outstanding wind band compositions... These pieces, many by Pulitzer Prize winning composers, have contributed not only to the wealth of our literature but most assuredly to a new level of musical respect.¹

¹ Frank L. Battisti, *The Winds of Change: The Evolution of the Contemporary American Wind Band/Ensemble and its Conductor* (Galesville: Meredith Music Publications, 2002), 272.

While the artistic worth of the Pulitzer Prize has been highly debated among those in the art music world, wind band scholars have nevertheless put an amount of respect on the winner of the prize as a worthy composer of the wind band medium.²

Out of his six wind band works, two resulted from major commissioning consortiums: *Fanfares and Arias*, and the *Concerto for Percussion*. This alone does much to support the assertion that Stucky is well-regarded within the profession. Stucky has also been much acknowledged as a coveted composer by many notable figures in the wind band profession, including Michael Haithcock:

The wind band now appears to be more accepted by our composer colleagues than at any point since the birth of the medium as a viable performance genre. The works of Schwantner and Harbison offer us hope that our best composers will give us not just a piece but multiple works... The success and number of performances of works by Rands, Druckman, Husa, Stucky and other prize-winning composers represent the growing positive contributions of America's best composers and stand as powerful examples for other composers.³

While his most frequently performed work is technically a wind band piece, his other works that are more representative of his compositional style are not nearly as performed. A survey of known performances of his works reveals that *Funeral Music for Queen Mary* has been performed fifty-three times from 2005 to early 2012. In comparison, the *Concerto for Percussion* and *Hue and Cry* received five performances each; *Threnos* four; *Fanfares and Arias* three; and *Voyages* one.⁴ The author will investigate reasons for the disparate amount of performances between *Funeral Music* and the rest of Stucky's wind band works.

² Battisti, *The Winds of Change*, 259.

³ Ibid., 275. As of April 2012, Haithcock remains the only conductor who has produced an album solely dedicated to the wind band music of Stucky.

⁴ Steven Stucky, *Performances*, <http://www.stevenstucky.com/performances.shtml>

A study in 2011 by Clifford N. Towner sought to evaluate and rank compositions for wind band according to specific criteria. He surveyed a panel of eighteen highly regarded wind band conductors who evaluated the repertoire and determined the works of serious artistic merit. *Fanfares and Arias* and *Funeral Music for Queen Mary* were ranked highly among the list of works.⁵

The fact that he has not been commissioned for a major work since the *Concerto for Percussion* can be due to multiple factors; the most likely being the composer's busy schedule. Budgetary issues of wind band programs can also deter one from pursuing a high-profile commission. It is the belief of the author that another major consortium organized to commission Stucky to write a large-scale work for the wind band will further enrich the repertoire.

To that end, the author presents the following text on Steven Stucky, with an emphasis on the performance practice approach to *Fanfares and Arias*. A brief biographical sketch is provided, as well as his general approach to composition and an overview of his works for wind band. It is hoped that the present study on Stucky will encourage increased performances and commissions of his wind band works, in addition to further scholarly study relating to his wind band compositions.

⁵ Clifford N. Towner, "An Evaluation of Compositions for Wind Band According to Specific Criteria of Serious Artistic Merit: A Second Update" (DMA Diss., University of Nebraska, 2011).

II. Composer Profile

Steven Stucky was born on November 7, 1949 in Hutchinson, Kansas. He was raised in Kansas and Texas, in what he claims was “a family with very little music in it.”⁶ Despite the apparent lack of a familial musical heritage, his ambition to compose was nonetheless piqued at an early age:

I gravitated to the two records of classical music my mother owned – Dvorak’s *New World Symphony* and Prokofiev’s *Peter and the Wolf* – and listened to them over and over again, wanting somehow to make the same kind of thing for myself. I tried to make scores even before I could read music, sprinkling sharps and flats all over the page – complete nonsense.⁷

Popular music was not part of my childhood. I think what gets into your music in the most authentic way is what you grew up with in fairly early years. I certainly grew up hearing Hank Williams and Elvis Presley and so on, but it somehow didn’t get deeply into my soul.⁸

After a lesson on composers during a grade school class, he would go on to create a notebook with information about composers; he had a page on Wagner, Tchaikovsky, and himself.⁹

The introduction to the sound world of orchestral music provided by these commercial recordings would later evolve into his use of color and timbre as a compositional device.

He would eventually learn viola. He describes self-deprecatingly:

Orchestral playing was wonderful training for me. I wasn’t a terribly talented string player, but I kept it up through college and a little bit afterward, so I learned a lot of repertoire and got completely plugged into the orchestra as my home.¹⁰

⁶ Ann McCutchan, *The Muse that Sings: Composers Speak About the Creative Process* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 133.

⁷ Ibid., 133-134.

⁸ Donald Crockett, “Stucky, Hartke, Crockett: Conversations in Los Angeles,” *Contemporary Music Review* 10, no. 1 (1994): 52.

⁹ McCutchan, 134.

¹⁰ Ibid., 134.

He attended Baylor University, majoring in music. He would recall as an undergraduate composition student in the 1960s:

The pressure was strong first of all to write a certain kind of modernist-inspired music, and second, to be absolutely original in every piece – never to seem to be connected to anything that had come before.¹¹

The scepter of Schoenberg was a powerful element in 1960s academia:

When I was a student we still felt, in our everyday work, the contest between Schoenberg and Stravinsky. We were encouraged to feel that the single most influential figure on the course of our music was Schoenberg. That turns out to have been wrong. It turns out that Stravinsky is a much more powerful force in present day music than Schoenberg.¹²

Going on to Cornell University and graduating with an advanced degree, the feeling of confidence in his music was self-described as lacking:

When I got out of graduate school I wasn't happy with any of my music. I was right, too. My music was pretty bad, and nobody was paying any attention to it, and I felt fairly hopeless.¹³

The pressure to conform to the influence of a specific kind of modernist music was great:

It was hard for me not to admit who my real models were and which music I really loved. It took me awhile to get to the point where I could say, "What I really like is *this*, and what really shaped me as a musician are *these* experiences, and I want them to be in my pieces."¹⁴

The "real models" had their home in the early twentieth century and influenced Stucky's development and style as a composer throughout his career:

I've been working on the same project... which is to take as a starting point the Debussy, Stravinsky, and Ravel sound world and aesthetic world and make something valuable to add to that tradition; and to do it in such a way that I'm satisfied with the product, but, in

¹¹ Ibid., 134.

¹² Crockett, 54.

¹³ McCutchan, 134.

¹⁴ Ibid., 134-135.

the course of doing that, hope that people who can listen to Ravel and Stravinsky can also listen to my music, or at least they can try in some way.¹⁵

He would ease into his career as a teacher and composer:

I took a teaching job and I didn't write very much, but eventually I wrote one piece that I sort of liked and somehow parlayed that into another one. In the early 1980s I began to write music that I still like.¹⁶

Over the course of his illustrious career, he realized his compositional style voice, derived from his major influences, had developed into his own individual musical personality:

I just noticed one day that I already had it. This is something I worried about when I was young. All I could see was that at a certain age I was writing bad Shostakovich, at a certain age I was writing bad Copland, and at a certain age I was writing bad Bartók, and at a certain age I was writing bad Lutosławski. At some point I realized that I was now writing pieces which all sounded like they were by the same guy. This guy was an amalgam of bad Lutosławski, bad Bartók and bad Ravel and so on, but filtered through my personality. There was one composer in these pieces. And I stopped thinking about it, stopped worrying about it. I now tell my students not to think about this question because it will either solve itself or not, and there's not much you can do about it. The way to get your voice is to know as much as music as possible; to get out of the practice room now and then and look at paintings, read books. And then you'll be an interesting person and you'll be in your music."¹⁷

Steven Stucky is now one of America's most highly regarded and frequently performed living composers. He has received commissions from the major American orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. He began the longest relationship on record between a composer and an American orchestra in 1988, when Andre Prévin appointed him Composer-in-Residence of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. He continues to work with the orchestra as Consulting Composer for

¹⁵ Anthony Philip Spano Jr., "The Collaboration and Creative Process Between Composer and Conductor: A Study of the Composition and Performance of Contemporary Wind Ensemble Repertoire" (M.M. thesis, University of California Los Angeles, 1996), 10.

¹⁶ McCutchan, 134.

¹⁷ Spano, 11.

New Music. His other residencies include the American Academy in Rome, Princeton University's Composition Colloquium, the Cleveland Institute of Music and the Eastman School of Music.

Among his many distinctions and awards, he was a finalist in 1989 for the Pulitzer Prize in music for his Concerto for Orchestra. He won the prize outright in 2005, coincidentally for his Second Concerto for Orchestra. A Guggenheim Fellowship in 1986 supplements his long list of honors.

As a conductor, Stucky frequently leads the Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group and Ensemble X, a contemporary music group he founded in 1997. He has conducted world and regional premieres of works by many of his contemporaries, including Donald Crockett, Jacob Druckman, William Kraft, Witold Lutosławski, Christopher Rouse, Joseph Phibbs, and Judith Weir.

Regarded as an expert on the music of the late Polish composer Witold Lutosławski, Stucky has won the ASCAP Deems Taylor Prize for his 1981 book *Lutosławski and His Music*. He is consultant to the Philharmonia Orchestra's 2013 centennial celebrations of the composer in London.

He currently resides in Ithaca, New York, where he serves as Given Foundation Professor of Composition.¹⁸

¹⁸ Steven Stucky, *Biography*, <http://stevenstucky.com/biography.shtml>

Compositional Approach

When composing, Stucky strives to work in a strict, controlled environment free of distractions. This usually leads to working during the early hours of the morning:

Composing is so hard for me that I don't try to do it on airplanes or in hotel rooms. I try to save it for some version of my ideal situation, because that's the only way I can hope to get anything done. Ideally, I get up early and work in the morning for a few hours. I have to stop fairly soon, because once I begin to get mentally tired I can't trust my taste. I'll come back the next morning and evaluate where I left off, see if I've gone too far, determine what's useful and what's not. Getting up early is also a way of avoiding other people and having some privacy. I need to be by myself, completely undistracted. I don't even want to hear anybody else's breathing – never mind a clarinet or a trombone! When I'm on a deadline, I try to get up as early as 5 A.M. or 5:30, although I'm getting a little old to make that work. I work at home because there is no soundproofing in my office at school. Occasionally I borrow somebody else's house, go over there very early every morning.¹⁹

The piano is ever present during the compositional process:

I need to work at the piano. I think it's really important to have some kind of living sound in the room. No matter how good your ear is, how experienced you are, and how strong your imagination is, mental sound and physical sound always turn out to be different from one another. You need to keep going back and forth between imagination and reality.²⁰

Stucky tries to be as informed as possible about the work before he begins composing:

I try never to start a piece before I know a lot about its character, the kind of sound world it will exist in, what the piece will feel like (although there have been emergencies where I had to start before I was ready). In a way the "personality" of the piece is more important than any of the notes or technical details that I'll eventually work out. If I know enough about the personality and the general layout of the piece, I can sort of fly over it as if in an airplane, see its basic shape, visualize its neighborhoods. I can see a series of problems to be solved in technical ways – a series of questions to be answered. Most of this is in my head, although I might draw the shape of the piece and keep the picture around for a few days or weeks until I know the piece better. But by the time I sit down to write, the picture will be obsolete.²¹

¹⁹ McCutchan, 137-138.

²⁰ Ibid., 138.

²¹ Ibid., 135

Stucky generally does not rely on deriving ideas from small sketches:

I don't amass bunches of sketches and then sort through them and decide which to use and which to throw away. I imagine passages in my head, then sketch just enough on the side to work out technical details, then go straight into the full score. If the essential layout – length, movement, character, emotional climate – are more or less known, I can start at the beginning and write the piece from beginning to end. Sometimes I get ideas that I will use later in the piece and I save them, but not in an extensive sketch. I just say, "Wouldn't it be neat if this happened at the end?" and I sort of work up to it.²²

Due to the style of his music, Stucky orchestrates the work simultaneously during the creation of the piece. The use of separate sketches comes to use for this purpose:

In my music the ways the instruments or voices contribute to the texture are as important as the notes, so I orchestrate as I go. Orchestration can't be a separate phase, because of the specific nature of my music. It's often thickly textured – a lot of different things go on at once, and they have to be worked out at the same time. I'll have a page on which I try things out, and when I've gotten what I want, I'll throw that page away and put what works in the score. There isn't a sketchbook left afterward for somebody to look at – nothing to see except the piece. Besides which, it's such a relief when the piece is over, that I would throw any incriminating evidence away. I don't want a memento of the difficult parts, I just want the finished piece. All sketches go in the waste bin. Maybe I'm protecting myself from dissertation writers.²³

He occasionally reuses material from his earlier works:

As a student and an early professional without many prospects for performances or commissions, I abandoned lots of pieces. I kept trying things that wouldn't work. But none of that work was wasted. I haven't recycled any of that old material, but I have recycled from successful pieces, the way an eighteenth-century composer would. I've actually borrowed chunks from myself for different purposes. I don't keep it a secret, either. There's nothing shameful about it.

Maybe this is a natural way for me to work – to make something, then reuse it and also transform it several times in the course of a piece. Working from a model and enjoying the distance I create from the model while I'm still modeling is somehow pleasurable for me. I've done that many times in different pieces. The model could be material that already exists or that I create especially for this purpose. I might make a piece in which I

²² Ibid., 136.

²³ Ibid.

complete a first section, then build all the other sections around that chassis. As a listener, you wouldn't recognize all of the transformations.²⁴

As noted above, the composer had expressed Debussy, Ravel and Stravinsky as influential to his development as a composer. Having written the definitive critical text on Lutosławski and his music, the influences of that particular composer on Stucky's works are not surprising in the least.²⁵ Among the compositional views Stucky shares with Lutosławski:

...he believes, and I believe, that when color is useful it is achieved by some combination of timbre and pitch – that is, timbre and harmonic language. That is what makes colors memorable and structurally useful, rather than pure timbre.²⁶

Despite his success as a composer, Stucky remains remarkably humble:

There are many difficulties in being a composer. First of all, it's hard to accept day to day, even though you know it very well, that you're only one person, that you have a limited repertoire of tricks. Some of the tricks you're good at, others you're only sort of good at. It's a challenge to accept this and make the most of it. Sometimes it feels as if I've never written music in my life, and I wonder whether it's too late to get my real estate license! I feel like I'm constantly learning how to work, always inventing from scratch. And then I look back and see that I do it the same way every time.

I'm encouraged by the extreme modesty of some of the composers I love the most. Lutosławski, who was a great influence on me, used to say that his reason for writing each piece was to do better than the last one. I think that's part of what keeps me going. If I ever felt truly satisfied with a piece, I'd probably stop composing for fear of not being able to do it again.²⁷

²⁴ Ibid., 135.

²⁵ Steven Stucky, *Lutosławski and his Music* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981)

²⁶ Crockett, 59.

²⁷ McCutchan, 140.

III. Works for Wind Band

Stucky's current compositional output for wind band totals six works. Prior to *Fanfares and Arias*, he had written *Voyages for Cello and Wind Orchestra* (1983-84), *Threnos, for Wind Ensemble* (1988), and *Funeral Music for Queen Mary, after Purcell* (1992). He describes these three works as being composed "basically for orchestral winds. I essentially wrote an orchestra piece and left out the strings."²⁸ The following is a brief chronological overview of each of the wind band works of Stucky that surround *Fanfares and Arias*.

Voyages for Cello and Wind Orchestra

Voyages is Stucky's first published work for wind ensemble. The work was composed between mid-1983 and mid-1984.²⁹ The score itself was copyrighted in 1988. As printed in the score, the piece was commissioned by the Yale University Band, and is dedicated to the Yale Concert Band, Thomas C. Duffy, Director, and to cellist Lynden Cranham.³⁰ Ms. Cranham and the Yale Band gave the premiere in New Haven, Connecticut on December 7, 1984, with Duffy conducting.³¹ Stucky writes in the program notes the motivation for the composition:

Having long wanted to write something for solo cello and to try my hand at writing for wind ensemble, I decided that to combine these two projects might provide very interesting compositional challenges and opportunities.³²

²⁸ Spano, 10.

²⁹ Steven Stucky, *Voyages for Cello and Wind Orchestra Program Note*, <http://www.stevenstucky.com/docs/Voyages-note.html>.

³⁰ Steven Stucky, *Voyages for Cello and Wind Orchestra* (Merion Music, Inc., 1988), A. Duffy would eventually receive his doctorate in composition from Cornell, studying under Stucky and Karel Husa.

³¹ Stucky, *Voyages Program Note*.

³² *Ibid.*

The work is scored for three flutes (first and second is doubled on piccolos), three oboes (the third is doubled on English horn), three B-flat clarinets (the third is doubled on bass clarinet), three bassoons (the third is doubled on contrabassoon), four French horns in F, four trumpets in B-flat, three trombones, tuba, percussion, celesta, harp, piano, two to six double basses and solo cello.³³ He also provides a diagram depicting the suggested arrangement for the larger percussion instruments on stage. A minimum of three percussionists is required, although Stucky remarks that some passages would be easier with an extra player. The first percussion part covers eight different percussion instruments; the second covers eleven; the third covers nine. *Fanfares and Arias*, in comparison, only uses twelve total percussion instruments.

Interestingly, Stucky specifies in great detail the type of percussion beaters to be used throughout the piece. This is notated in the score with custom markings – usually initials following a horizontal dash for the type (–BD for “bass drum beater” for example) or shapes depicting the type of beater. This level of detail in terms of percussion mallets does not appear in *Fanfares and Arias*.

Additional specific notational devices in *Voyages* include a trio of markings that have appeared in the later scores of Lutosławski.³⁴ The first is a black arrow pointing downward that “cancels all time signatures and indicates that rhythms within the measure need not be coordinated in strict ensemble.”³⁵ A second marking exists as a white half-arrowhead pointing downward that “indicates a (left-hand) cue given by the conductor to one player or a small group

³³ Stucky, *Voyages*, A. There is what one can assume to be an innocent typo in the instrumentation listing: the omission of the “flat” sign indicator for both B-flat clarinet and B-flat trumpet – both traditional wind band instruments.

³⁴ Stucky, *Lutosławski and his Music*, 115.

³⁵ Stucky, *Voyages*, B.

of players.”³⁶ Finally, a custom sign resembling a bracketed repeat notation instructs players to “continue the repeated pattern beyond the conductor’s downbeat.”³⁷ This last sign appears in *Fanfares and Arias*, albeit only in one instance, with no special instructions accompanying it in the score.

Voyages is approximately twenty-four minutes in length that traverses through four distinct sections – slow-fast-slow-fast, with no traditional separation between movements. Among the elements that foreshadow some features of *Fanfares and Arias* and other works is the transitions between the movements – either imperceptible until a new tempo is realized by the listener, or shifting suddenly in regards to tempo and mood.

Threnos, for Wind Ensemble

Marice Stith and the Cornell University Wind Ensemble commissioned *Threnos* in memory of composer Brian Israel – a contemporary and friend of Stucky who had passed away of leukemia at the age of thirty-five. It was completed in January 1988 and first performed in Ithaca, New York, on March 6 of the same year. The title itself is defined as “lamentation, dirge”.³⁸

The eight minutes and thirty seconds work is scored for three flutes (one doubling on piccolo), three oboes (one doubling on English horn), two clarinets in B-flat, E-flat clarinet, bass

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Steven Stucky, *Threnos, for Wind Ensemble Program Note*, <http://www.stevenstucky.com/docs/Threnos-note.html>. As of April 2012, the work is erroneously listed at <http://www.stevenstucky.com/works.shtml> as being composed in 1998 as opposed to the correct 1988.

clarinet, three bassoons (one doubling on contrabassoon), four French horns in F, four trumpets in B-flat, three trombones, tuba, percussion and piano.

The music is dominated by three elements: the forceful arpeggiated gesture heard in the horns at the opening; the constant tolling of bells, both literal (in the piano, vibraphone, chimes as well as other instruments) and figurative; and a fragment of lament-like melody first heard in the solo oboe near the beginning.³⁹

The arpeggiated figures throughout the work will also appear in *Fanfares and Arias*, as is the now-characteristic aspects of Stucky's lyrical writing. The bird-call-like gestures in the woodwinds are utilized not only in *Threnos* but also in *Voyages* and *Fanfares and Arias*.

Funeral Music for Queen Mary (After Purcell)

By far Stucky's most performed and recorded work,⁴⁰ *Funeral Music for Queen Mary* is an arrangement of three of the pieces heard at the funeral of Mary II of England, who died of smallpox on December 28, 1694.⁴¹ The pieces include a solemn march, the anthem "In the Midst of Life We Are in Death," and a *canzona* in imitative polyphonic style.

Stucky describes how he approached the composition:

In working on the project I did not try to achieve a pure, musicological reconstruction but, on the contrary, to regard Purcell's music, which I love deeply, through the lens of three hundred intervening years. Thus, although most of this version is straightforward

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Franklin Crawford, "Steal This Concerto, Please: An Interview with Steven Stucky," *Cornell University News Service*, April 21, 2005; available from <http://www.news.cornell.edu/stories/April05/stucky.interview.fac.html>; Internet, accessed February 3, 2012.

⁴¹ Steven Stucky, *Funeral Music for Queen Mary for Wind Orchestra (After Purcell) Program Note*, <http://www.stevenstucky.com/docs/FuneralMusic-note.html>

orchestration of the Purcell originals, there are moments when Purcell drifts out of focus.⁴²

As this work is essentially an orchestrated arrangement of a different composer, the characteristics of Stucky's music are not as prevalent. There are instances of his voice – multiple texture lines and a brief foray into atonal-sounding areas in the harmony.

The work was commissioned by Esa-Pekka Salonen and first performed by the Los Angeles Philharmonic on February 6, 1992. The piece is ten minutes in length and is scored for three flutes (one doubling piccolo), three oboes (one doubling English horn), three clarinets in B-flat, three bassoons (one doubling contrabassoon), four French horns in F, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, percussion, piano and harp.

Concerto for Percussion and Wind Orchestra

The *Concerto for Percussion and Wind Orchestra* was commissioned in honor of Donald Hunsberger on the occasion of his retirement after nearly forty years as director of the Eastman Wind Ensemble, by a consortium of his former students, many of whom are among the leading wind conductors across the United States and even abroad.⁴³ The work was completed on November 30, 2001. Percussionist Gordon Stout and the Ithaca College Wind Ensemble gave the premiere performance in Rochester, New York, on February 6, 2002, with Hunsberger conducting.⁴⁴ The nineteen-minute work is scored for percussion solo, three flutes (one doubling piccolo), three oboes (one doubling English horn), three B-flat clarinets, E-flat clarinets, bass

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Steven Stucky, *Concerto for Percussion and Wind Orchestra Program Note*, <http://www.stevenstucky.com/docs/Perc-Cto-note.html>.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

clarinet, three bassoons (one doubling contrabassoon), four French horns in F, four trumpets, three trombones, tuba, piano, celeste and percussion.

Stucky explains the amount of percussion instruments required for the soloist's performance:

The huge array of solo instruments in my *Concerto for Percussion and Wind Orchestra* is the result of a request from the soloist, Gordon Stout, not to limit myself mainly to the marimba (of which he is, of course, a famous exponent) but instead to range widely across all the percussion families. There are a number of timbral groupings: wood and drum sounds in the first movement, set against boisterous, big-band-like riffs from the ensemble, for example; or marimba paired with steel drum as the lyrical voices in the slow second movement. The third movement, a scherzo, uses only keyboards – glockenspiel, xylophone, marimba – and it winks broadly at Strauss's *Til Eulenspiegel*. The fourth movement turns to solemn, metallic resonances – gongs, Japanese temple bells, *almglocken* (tuned European cowbells) – and it sets these against the ominous heartbeat pattern of the bass drum. The finale returns to the extroverted atmosphere of the first movement, with the soloist – now playing metal instruments that go “clunk” (agogo bells, Latin-American cowbells, brake drums, anvil) and “boing” (the spring from an automobile suspension) – trading riffs with the ensemble. The work closes with a return to the wood and skin sounds of the opening.⁴⁵

The solemn fourth movement became a dedication to the victims of the September 11, 2001 attacks at the World Trade Center:

This movement reflects the somber atmosphere of fall 2001 more directly than I ever intended. Ordinarily I am skeptical of musical responses to outside events, and I never planned to write a piece “about” the attacks of September 11; yet, as I was writing this movement I asked myself why the music seemed so dark, so serious, and only then I realized that the world had thrust itself into my music whether I wanted it or not. Hence the dedication “to the victims of September 11, 2001,” added after the fourth movement was finished.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Hue and Cry

The latest wind band composition by Stucky is a four-minute work, composed in 2006. It was the result of a request by Mark Scatterday, director of the Eastman Wind Ensemble, and Cynthia Johnston Turner, director of the Cornell Wind Ensemble, to Stucky for a four-minute fanfare. Stucky describes the piece as being “more like a very short overture, in other words a ‘real’ piece, complete but miniature.”⁴⁷

The composer describes the short work:

A slow introduction dominated by a lyrical theme (horns) soon merges into the main tempo, *Allegro di molto*. Several short ideas are heard in quick succession: *scherzando* arpeggio figures, a sparkling *tutti* texture, and a pealing brass figure (admittedly fanfare-like) culminate in a longer, main theme. All these ideas are repeated, reordered, and recombined, before the work ends by recalling the opening horn melody.⁴⁸

The work was premiered on February 3, 2007, by the Cornell University Wind Ensemble, with Cynthia Johnston Turner conducting.

⁴⁷ Steven Stucky, *Hue and Cry Program Note*, <http://stevenstucky.com/docs/HueandCry-note.html>.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

IV. *Fanfares and Arias*

Steven Stucky was commissioned to compose *Fanfares and Arias* by what was at the time called the Big Eight Band Directors Association. Completed on September 28, 1994, it was premiered by the University of Colorado Wind Ensemble, conducted by Allan McMurray, during the College Band Directors National Association in Boulder on February 22, 1995.⁴⁹ Its duration is approximately seventeen minutes in length. The work consists of five alternating sections generally characterized by their tempo (fast or slow) and character (fanfare or aria).

The instrumentation is as follows: Piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, English horn, clarinet in E-flat, three clarinets in B-flat, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon (Stucky allows an alternative of contrabass clarinet in B-flat or contra-alto clarinet in E-flat), two alto saxophones, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, four horns, three trumpets in C, three trombones, two euphoniums, tuba, and string bass. Percussion instruments include xylophone, three tom-toms, triangle, marimba, three temple blocks, vibraphone (motor off), bass drum, chimes, triangle, glockenspiel, three suspended cymbals (small, medium, large) and tam-tam. Snare drum is needed in the penultimate measure of the work, but is omitted from the instrumentation list, possibly due to oversight. The timpani, usually a mainstay in the wind band instrumentation, is not used at all in the work.

To date, Stucky has composed six works for wind band; *Fanfares and Arias* is his fourth in chronological order. It remains his singular large-scale work for full wind ensemble, here

⁴⁹ Steven Stucky, *Fanfares and Arias Program Note*, <http://www.stevenstucky.com/docs/Fanfare-Arias-note.html>.

defined as including both the traditional saxophone section and euphonium – neither that are included in the wind section of the traditional symphony orchestra.

Stucky used his earlier *Fanfare for Los Angeles* (1993), composed for the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, as a “point of departure” for *Fanfares and Arias*.⁵⁰ The first “fanfare” is essentially *Fanfare for Los Angeles* re-orchestrated for wind band, transposed down a half-step. The material introduced in the first “fanfare” is then developed throughout the remainder of the work.

It is significant to note within the *Fanfare for Los Angeles* the deliberate allusions to Stravinsky’s *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* as “a sort of inside joke” to Esa-Pekka Salonen, then conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, who had commissioned the work.⁵¹ The *Symphonies* is known to be a masterwork within the entire repertoire of western art music and represents a cornerstone of wind repertoire.⁵² The allusions, while somewhat tenuous to the lay listener, are recognizable enough to perhaps make *Fanfares and Arias* (itself using the whole of *Fanfare for Los Angeles* as the first and last fanfare sections) a thoughtful companion piece to the *Symphonies* in a concert program. The following overview of the allusions to *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* will utilize *Fanfares and Arias* as opposed to *Fanfare for Los Angeles*.

The immediate opening for both works can be characterized as shrill and insistent. Stravinsky achieves this through the use of the repeated high pitches, both short and long in sustained length, in the clarinet parts. The shrillness is augmented by eighth-note gestures in the flute parts meant to accent the entrances of each pitch in the clarinet pitches. The pointed

⁵⁰ McCutchen, 135.

⁵¹ Steven Stucky, e-mail message to author, January 10, 2010.

⁵² Jonathan Cross, *The Stravinsky Legacy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 6.

insistency in the music is helped by including bell-tone-like parts played by the trumpet and trombone. The character of the opening [Figure 1] has led to a number of scholars to describe this particular section as the “bell motive,” “invocation motif,” and so forth.⁵³

The image shows a musical score for selected parts (mm. 1-6) of Igor Stravinsky's score. The score includes parts for Flute 1, Flute 2, 3, Clarinet in Bb 1, 2, 3, Trumpet in Bb 1, 2, 3, and Trombone 1, 2, 3. The tempo is marked as 144 (♩ = 72) sempre. The score shows repeated high pitches and eighth-note accents across the instruments.

Figure 1. Selected parts, mm. 1-6.

(Scanned and condensed from Igor Stravinsky's score, published by Boosey & Hawkes.)

The opening for *Fanfares and Arias* [Figure 2] has a similar mood. Stucky uses the same method: repeated high pitches, once again short and long (E-flat clarinet, trumpet 1, trombone 1) with the eighth-note accents (oboes, English horn, French horns). A nod to the bell-tone like

⁵³ Gretchen Grace Horlacher, *Building Blocks: Repetition and Continuity in the Music of Stravinsky* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 167.

character is aided by a single strike of the chimes. The use of a specific-sized instrumental group is also used – both compact in size.

Vivo (♩ = 144 - 152)

Ob. II
E.H.
E♭ Cl.
A. II
Horn III
Tpt. I
Tpt. II
Trb. I
Perc. IV Chimes

Figure 2. Selected parts, mm. 1-9.

(Scanned and condensed from Steven Stucky's score, published by Merion Music, Inc.)

A subtle connection to the two works can be made in also observing the use of a minor third interval in the first melodic gesture in both – measure 9 in Stucky, measure 2-3 in Stravinsky (both visible in the previous figures). Both works have an opening pulse at 144: The *Symphonies* at eighth-note = 144 and *Fanfares and Arias* at a minimum tempo of quarter-note = 144.

Perhaps a stronger connection between the two pieces can be seen originating from the fragment immediately following the opening bell-tone motive in the *Symphonies*. This fragment

is taken from the chorale that appears at the end of the *Symphonies*, originally composed as a memorial to Debussy. Its evolving, noncontiguous melodies span the entire piece – arguably the most fundamental tune in the work.⁵⁴ The opening fragment [Figure 3] utilizes a dirge-like chord, and a long-short rhythmic gesture that returns many times throughout the piece.



Figure 3. Fragment of the “Chorale” gesture.

Stucky uses dissonant harmony reminiscent of the chorale fragment, and the same long-short motive approach [Figure 4].



Figure 4. Selected long-short fragment used in *Fanfares and Arias*.

(Scanned and condensed from Steven Stucky’s score, published by Merion Music, Inc.)

⁵⁴ Ibid., 187.

This singular rhythmic gesture is central to the *Symphonies* connection to *Fanfares and Arias* – while Stravinsky immediately alternates between the two “bell” and “chorale” motives, Stucky develops the long-short motive from the chorale fragment, along with the earlier introduction material, throughout the remainder of the “first fanfare” section (again, essentially the *Fanfare for Los Angeles*). A variant of the long-short motive appears fourteen times in Fanfare I. This subtle link to Stravinsky (and by extension, Debussy) only strengthens Stucky’s acknowledgement of their influence in his writing.

As mentioned above, Stucky borrows elements from his other previous works. *Boston Fancies* (1985) not only provides the foundation of the formal arrangement of the work, but also lends a significant amount of melodic material for one of the slower “aria” section [Figure 5].

The image displays five staves of musical notation for a flute part, labeled 'fl.' on the left. The notation includes various dynamics and performance instructions:

- Staff 1:** Starts with a large 'X' above the staff. Dynamics include *f*, *f*, *poco*, *p sub.*, and *pp*. A 3/4 time signature is shown at the end.
- Staff 2:** Starts with a circled '34' and a 3/4 time signature. Dynamics include *p*, *mf*, *p cresc.*, *acc.*, and *poco f, espr.*
- Staff 3:** Starts with a circled '35' and a large 'X' above the staff. Dynamics include *p* and *pp cresc. sempre*.
- Staff 4:** Starts with a large 'X' above the staff. Dynamics include *ben f, espr.*
- Staff 5:** Starts with a large 'X' above the staff. Dynamics include *p*, *pp*, and *ppp senza vibr.*

Figure 5. Selected flute part from *Boston Fancies*.

(Scanned and modified from Steven Stucky's score, published by Merion Music, Inc.)

The study of recordings of *Boston Fancies* can assist the performer in making interpretive decisions during the aria sections of *Fanfares and Arias*.

Fanfares and Arias contain elements that can be described as characteristic to the composer. This includes the ethereal nature the dense harmonies create in his lyrical sections; sudden and subtle transitions; rhythmic and harmonic cells, melodic fragments, and the use of timbre and color as a sort of structural guidepost.

Form

The composer provides the following in the program notes:

“Fanfares and Arias... is arranged as an alternating series of fast sections (the “fanfares”) and slow sections (the “arias), in which all the business of making a musical work coherent – beginning and ending clearly, for example, or signaling where we are in the “story” – is carried out by the fanfares, while all the expressive, emotional freight is borne by the arias.”⁵⁵

The form – alternating fast sections with material related to each other and slow sections similarly related to each other – is one that Stucky has used often. He cites his chamber work *Boston Fancies* (1985) as the original model of the form.⁵⁶

The overarching formal structure follows a general fast-slow-fast-slow-fast blueprint, with the “fanfares” representing “fast” sections, and the “arias” as the “slow” sections. As stated above, each section within their respective “fast/slow” category is related in one shape or another. The “fanfares” and “arias” themselves are not identical in terms of materials used; nevertheless there are connections between them that can be gleaned from detailed examination of the score. For reference purposes, the sections will be labeled in sequential order as: Fanfare I – Aria I – Fanfare II – Aria II – Fanfare III.

Representative of many of his works, Stucky utilizes a free ordering of the twelve pitches as *Fanfares and Aria*’s harmonic and melodic framework. There are elements, however minimal, of traditional diatonic harmony. The usage of all pitches of the chromatic scale is important to address, since he uses the unique harmonic colors provided by untraditional harmony to serve as structural points within each section of the work.

⁵⁵ Stucky, *Fanfares and Arias Program Note*.

⁵⁶ Steven Stucky, e-mail message to author, January 10, 2010

V. Performance Practice: Technical Considerations

The following section is intended to inform a conductor's approach to the rehearsal and performance of *Fanfares and Arias*. The performance ensemble can possibly range from highly advanced high school ensembles to professional world-class orchestras. It can be assumed that the possession of the score will greatly assist the understanding of the following text.

Tempo

The tempo indication for Fanfare I is marked as *Vivo* (quarter note = 144-152). The relatively wide range allows ensembles to facilitate instances of rather difficult sixteenth-note flourishes in this section, starting at measure 59 and ending at measure 90. Any slower than the minimum tempo of quarter note = 144 can cause the character of the opening to lose its dramatic urgency and energy. Most ensembles that attempt performance of the work should be proficient enough to play at quarter note = 152. The first fanfare section includes several time signature changes in rapid succession, many in irregular forms such as 5/8 and 7/8. This should not prove too difficult for the conductor or players, for Stucky clearly indicated in the score and parts how one should divide the eighth-note groupings.

Several instances of grand pauses (marked G.P. in the score) are seen in the fanfare sections. The generally accepted use of a G.P. is to create a silence for a period of time at the discretion of the performer/conductor, identical to a fermata. In *Fanfares and Arias*, the G.P. notation is marked above metered measures – sometimes over a 2/4 bar, 5/4 bar, etc. It is the belief of the author that these measures of G.P. are meant to be indicators of silence in strict time, the length not determined by a performer. Evidence can be found in two commercial

recordings of Stucky's music – one of *Fanfares and Arias* on an album featuring his wind band works, the other a recording of *Fanfare for Los Angeles*. In the notes for the latter, it is specified that the composer himself was present for the recording of the work as a consultant. Surely he would insist the grand pauses to be used as fermata if it were the case; here it is observed as if they were rests of specified duration.

That is not to say that one should beat time thorough the grand pause measures. It is advised to provide the downbeat for the first beat of such a measure, as well as giving a preparation beat for the next measure where the performers presumably re-enter. Under this premise, every 2/4 measure marked as G.P. would need time-beating. Anything greater, for instance 3/4, 4/4, 5/4 measures marked G.P. only requires the aforementioned downbeat and preparation beat. This minimizes the distraction of pulsing gestures through empty silence, as well as heightening the dramatic effect absolute silence within a piece can provide.

A sudden change in tempo indicates the arrival of Aria I at rehearsal letter E, marked as *Largo* (quarter note = 48). This lyrical section features several passages on woodwind instruments that can be characterized as having a recitative-feel. Thus, while a specific tempo marking is present, one can allow minimal flexibility of tempo to guide the melodic phrasing needed to interpret the solo lines.

An even slower *Meno mosso* (quarter note = 44) is marked at rehearsal F. Strict adherence to this tempo is needed to facilitate several factors: the unison melodic lines in the woodwind instruments, the accompaniment texture in which microrhythmic elements are utilized, and the transitory effect that occurs prior to rehearsal H (the beginning of Fanfare II), where the percussion instruments must play in strict, unwavering time. The utmost importance

should be placed on tempo accuracy for the percussion, beginning with their entrance four measures after rehearsal G. Three percussionists play three separate lines, seemingly disparate on their own, yet when combined form a continuous melodic gesture in triple subdivision, almost clockwork in character [Figure 6].

Meno mosso (♩ = 44)

4/4

Perc. I

Perc. II *pp delicato*

Perc. III *pp delicato, staccato*

Allegro (♩ = 132)

3/4

Perc. I

Perc. II

Perc. III

Figure 6. Selected parts, mm. 129-138.

(Scanned and condensed from Steven Stucky's score, published by Merion Music, Inc.)

Each note of a one-beat triplet figure in Aria I becomes the pulse of the 3/4 time signature (quarter note = 132) in Fanfare II, creating what Stucky had intended: the first aria gradually giving way to the second fanfare, overlapping in such a way that it is difficult to say exactly

where the slow tempo ends and the fast begins.⁵⁷ Rehearsal letter G provides a moment for the conductor to solidify the tempo leading to measure 129 – a solitary whole note played by the oboe, with incidental accompaniment in the percussion.

As briefly mentioned above, Fanfare II is marked at *Allegro* (quarter note = 132). The pulse remains steady throughout with basic time signature changes and a few grand pauses (the same principle described for the earlier fanfare applies here). The tempo allows for rather straightforward conducting, where the difficulties in performance translates to providing a clear, crisp conducting pattern to allow the ensemble to perform with precision.

Aria II begins with the tempo marked *Largo* (quarter note = 44), similar to rehearsal F. The same general features are present (recitative-like solos, followed by a lyrical melody shared in unison by a small instrumental group), although it is subsequently interrupted by material from Fanfare I (in the same tempo of the earlier fanfare section). This material overlaps the end of Aria II in a way that for a moment, both fast and slow tempos exist simultaneously. The first instance of interruption occurs at rehearsal letter R; five measures later the slow Aria II tempo returns, marked as Tempo II. *Largo* (quarter note = 44). Five measures pass again until the “fast” Tempo I returns at rehearsal letter S. Fanfare III (consisting mostly of literal reprise of material from Fanfare I) is established by rehearsal letter T. The tempo considerations taken in Fanfare I can be applied.

⁵⁷ Stucky, *Fanfares and Arias Program Note*.

Rhythm and Precision

Performance issues involving rhythm within *Fanfares and Arias* can hinder players at every proficiency level. Among these include complex rhythms contributing to the unintentional slowing of the tempo, tendency to rush through simple like-rhythms, and general precision issues. The text in the following section will attempt to highlight areas of difficulty and present concepts to facilitate performance. As a general note, problems and performance facilitators in Fanfare I are applicable to those identical in Fanfare III.

The two instances of a conventional difficult rhythmic passage occur during Fanfare I. The first described is located at measures 59 through 64, the second at rehearsal letter D [Figure 7]. Regarding both instances, the subdivision does not extend beyond the sixteenth-note, yet the difficulty is compounded by the tempo, wide intervallic changes and jazz-like syncopated accents. Both passages will benefit from rehearsals under the performance tempo.

The image shows a musical score for measures 59 through 64 of Fanfare I. It consists of four staves: Oboe II (Ob. II), Euphonium (E.H.), B♭ Clarinet I (B♭ Cl. I), and Saxophone A I (Sax. A. I). The score is written in 4/4 time and features complex rhythms with various time signatures (4/4, 3/8, 4/4, 5/8, 2/4, 3/4) and syncopated accents. The saxophone part starts with a forte (ff) dynamic and a first ending bracket. The oboe part has a *glz* marking. The euphonium and clarinet parts have accents and slurs. The saxophone part has a first ending bracket and a *ff* dynamic marking.

Figure 7. Selected parts, mm. 59-64.

(Scanned and condensed from Steven Stucky's score, published by Merion Music, Inc.)

The melodic line with the rhythm in question is shared by a woodwind instrumental group – typically able to navigate angular intervals. It is important to ensure that the players subdivide the 3/8 bar to carefully place the third eighth-note beat in its accurate location. The failure to maintain accuracy in this passage will most likely occur when players hold the same eighth-note in the 3/8 bar too long, making them ill-prepared to continue on to the next sixteenth-note flourish. This danger also presents itself at measure 64, with the eighth-note on beat two. Adherence of the notated *staccato* articulation will help alleviate the issue, as well as emphasizing the eighth-note subdivision pulse through the passage.

The accompanying tone held by the E-flat clarinet and B-flat clarinet 2 and 3 in measure 62 should be scrutinized during rehearsal, making sure the tone is held to its fullest value through the measure. The resulting sound may come as a surprise, for the other wind instruments will be silent for the duration of two eighth-note pulses.

The second instance of fast rhythmic complexity (mm. 84-88) is relatively increased in difficulty. The texture is thickened with the addition of several more instruments, adding to the previously mentioned issues involved with the passage [Figure 8].

The image shows a page of a musical score for a woodwind ensemble. It covers measures 84 to 88. The time signature changes from 2/4 at measure 84 to 3/4 at measure 85. The instruments listed are Piccolo, Flute I and II, Oboe I and II, English Horn, E-flat Clarinet, Clarinet I and II, Bass Clarinet, Bassoon I, and Bassoon II. The music is written in a key with two flats (B-flat major or D minor). The score includes various rhythmic figures, including sixteenth-note runs and eighth-note patterns. Dynamic markings include *ff cresc.* and *cresc.* throughout the passage.

Figure 8: Selected parts, mm. 84-88.

(Scanned and condensed from Steven Stucky’s score, published by Merion Music, Inc.)

Again, the tempo will tend to slow down when players approach the “longer” notes compared to the surrounding sixteenth note values (eighth-notes, two tied sixteenth notes). Rehearsing at a slower tempo will help players grasp the intricacies of the rhythm, especially instances of sixteenth-eighth-sixteenth note combinations on measure 87, and the similar-sounding rhythmic figure at measure 88. Although not notated as such, articulating the releases of the final note at the ends of each figure as *staccato* will aid in preventing the tempo from slowing.

The slower aria sections bring about several instances of notation in microrhythmic detail, herein defined as values greater than a sixteenth-note subdivision. Ornamentations such as grace notes augment certain melodic gestures that can affect accuracy in rhythmic interpretation. Many instances of thirty-second-note gestures occur in the solo melodic gestures; any difficulties encountered here can perhaps be clarified outside the general ensemble rehearsal setting.

At measure 115, a lengthy lyric melody begins with flute, English horn, clarinet, and bassoon [Figure 9]. Grace note ornamentations can cause difficulty with maintaining accurate tempo and rhythm. The grace notes should be played as closely to the main ornamented note as possible. For cleanliness, it may help to rehearse the passage without the ornamentation to help players understand the general rhythmic structure throughout the melodic line.

The image shows a musical score for measures 116-119. It features five staves: Flute I and II (Fl. I, II), English Horn (E.H.), Clarinet I and II (Cl. I, II), and Bassoon II (Bsn. II). The music is in 4/4 time. Measure 116 starts with a first ending bracket. The flute and English horn parts have grace notes and ornaments. The clarinet and bassoon parts also have grace notes and ornaments. Dynamic markings include *p* and *p sempre*. The score is written in a standard musical notation style with various ornaments and grace notes.

Figure 9: Selected melodic parts, mm. 116-119.

(Scanned and condensed from Steven Stucky's score, published by Merion Music, Inc.)

The lyric melody above is accompanied by an intricate texture provided by saxophones and trombones [Figure 10]. It features short rhythmic bursts, many in thirty-second note clusters.

The image shows a musical score for Saxophones (Sax. A.) and Trombones (Trb.). The Saxophone part is written in two staves (I and II) and features a complex rhythmic pattern with many thirty-second note clusters. The Trombone part is also written in two staves (I and II) and features a similar complex rhythmic pattern. The score includes performance instructions such as "slap-tongue", "pp sempre, molto delicato e staccatissimo", and "con sord. (harmon)".

Figure 10: Selected parts, mm. 116-119.

(Scanned and condensed from Steven Stucky's score, published by Merion Music, Inc.)

The players must be confident about the careful subdivision needed at the dirge-like tempo of quarter note = 44. Prior to the rehearsal process, the conductor should take time to carefully study the rhythm, especially notating where the downbeats are to be able to communicate the fact to the players. Time permitting, sectional rehearsal will increase the accuracy of the accompaniment through this passage.

Opportunities for rushing through the music appear within several areas in Fanfare I (and by extension Fanfare III). These areas tend to be instances where a particular rhythmic cell is repeated through several measures as seen in figure 11.

The image shows three systems of musical notation, each consisting of three staves. The first system (measures 13-15) shows a complex rhythmic pattern with eighth notes and rests. The second system (measures 13-15) is a variation of the first, with some notes tied across measures. The third system (measures 13-15) shows a different rhythmic pattern, with some notes tied across measures. The notation includes various musical symbols such as stems, beams, and rests.

Figure 11: Selected parts, mm. 13-15.

(Scanned and condensed from Steven Stucky's score, published by Merion Music, Inc.)

Measures 13 through 15 have the ensemble playing identical rhythmic sets thrice consecutively. The tendency here will be for players to disregard the eighth-note rest following the two tied eighth note figures in each measure, causing them to arrive on the downbeat of the next measures too soon. Prevention of this can come naturally, for since the time signature is in the irregular

5/8, players are likely to give more attention to the subdividing of the pulse. Nevertheless, both conductor and ensemble must remain vigilant to prevent potential fluctuations of tempo.

In many cases, the more simple the repeated rhythmic cell, the easier it is for the performer to rush through the figure. Figure 12 showcases an area subject to rushing.

The image shows a page of a musical score for selected parts, measures 53-58. The score is arranged in a system with multiple staves. The instruments listed on the left are: Fl. I, Fl. II, Ob. I, Ob. II, E.H., Eb Cl., Cl. I, Cl. II, Bb Cl., Bs. Cl., Bas. I, Bas. II, Cbsn., Horn I, Horn II, Horn III, Horn IV, Tpt. I, Tpt. II, and Tpt. III. The music begins at measure 53. In measures 53 and 54, there is a hemiola effect where the rhythmic emphasis is on beats that create the illusion of a 6/8 pulse. In measure 55, the rhythmic gesture shifts by one eighth-note. The score includes dynamics such as *f*, *cresc.*, and *ff*. A circled 'C' is placed above the flute part in measure 55. At the bottom of the score, the time signatures 3/4 and 5/4 are indicated.

Figure 12: Selected parts, mm. 53-58.

(Scanned and condensed from Steven Stucky's score, published by Merion Music, Inc.)

Beginning at measure 53, Stucky creates a hemiola effect for two measures by placing the rhythmic emphasis on beats that can create the aural illusion of perceiving a 6/8 pulse instead of the notated 3/4 time. At measure 55, he brilliantly shifts the rhythmic gesture by one eighth-note

pulse, a subtle yet effective way of creating agitation at a point of heightening tension. Upon initial inspection, the notated rhythm appears to be relatively simple, yet this simplicity can possibly entice the ensemble to rush through the section – critical when the texture calls for the complete unison of a singular rhythmic gesture. Two areas of consideration will assist in accurate placement of the notes. The first is the entrance of the upbeat eighth-notes, where accuracy can be ensured pedagogically by having the players create a subtle physical pulse on the downbeat before the note occurs. This physical motion can be anything from a slight nod of the head (in a way that does not affect the act of producing a characteristic tone on the instrument), the tapping of either the toe or the heel on the ground, and even a slight body movement on the beat. The second consideration is to direct attention towards the most stable areas of the figure: instances when the eighth-note is played on a downbeat. In the case of rushing or general slovenliness in accuracy, the ensemble should be directed to concentrate on arriving on beat threes with the utmost accuracy, assisted by a clear, crisp baton motion by the conductor. It goes without saying that meaningful eye contact with the players will decrease the likelihood of inaccuracy.

In general, it is important for both conductor and ensemble to confidently arrive at the most stable points in the rhythmic cells – the downbeats. “Aiming for the downbeats” is an efficient way to communicate this concept during rehearsals. This, along with strategies to facilitate offbeat entrances, will help the ensemble achieve clarity in rhythmic precision in the other fanfare sections as well.

Fanfare II features many instances of melodic cells passing through different combinations of instrumental groups, creating one melodic gesture made up of the cells. The

difficulty of executing these passages can be exacerbated by the orchestration: for instance, one passage features the English horn, trombone, temple blocks and tom-toms passing the melodic gesture through each other [Figure 13].

The image shows a musical score for measures 249-254. It features four staves: English Horn (E.H.), Trombone I (Trb. I), Percussion I (Perc. I), and Percussion II (Perc. II). The E.H. staff begins with a melodic line in measure 249, marked with a *dim.* dynamic. In measure 250, the Trb. I staff takes over the melodic line, marked with *mp*. In measure 251, Perc. I (Tom-toms) plays the melodic line, marked with *p*. In measure 252, Perc. II (T. blocks) plays the melodic line, marked with *p*. In measure 253, Perc. I (Tom-toms) plays the melodic line, marked with *dim.*. In measure 254, Perc. II (T. blocks) plays the melodic line, marked with *pp*.

Figure 13: Selected parts, mm. 249-254.

Scanned and condensed from Steven Stucky's score, published by Merion Music, Inc.)

The rather unique instrumental grouping can make this particular instance of passing melodic cells more difficult than other occurrences. The physical seating distance from the English horn to the trombone and percussion can serve as an obstacle in performance. The individual players should rely less on listening and reacting to the previous cell before their own, and strive to be accurate with their own place within the overall ensemble pulse.

Saxophone Slap-Tongue Technique

The saxophone slap-tongue technique is the only contemporary extended instrumental technique that is required in *Fanfares and Arias*. It is used in the accompaniment texture from measure 115 through 124, as seen in a previous figure [figure 10]. Saxophone players have

noted the technique's degree of difficulty during the author's own personal rehearsal experience of the work. This section intends to present an overview of specific techniques to assist saxophonists to achieve the intended sound.

Stucky first used the technique in *Notturmo* (1981), his work for solo saxophone and piano. Its use was inspired by the technique demonstrated by Mark Taggart, the soloist who commissioned the piece.⁵⁸ The performance note for *Notturmo* describes the slap-tongue as “a very percussive attack.”⁵⁹ In *Fanfares and Arias*, players should keep in mind that the percussive quality should take precedence over the need for pitch, nor for the *piannissimo* dynamic marking throughout the passage. The unique sonic quality of the technique should be aurally noticeable by the listener, while not overpowering the main melodic line in the woodwind instrumental group. It exists, like in *Notturmo*, as a distinctive sonic contrast to the long lyric melodic lines throughout the passage.⁶⁰

The technique required to produce the slap-tongue:

... involves pulling the reed away from the mouthpiece with the tongue. Using the length of the tongue, the player presses hard against the reed, at the same time sucking so as to create a vacuum between reed and tongue; he then draws the tongue sharply away so that the vacuum is broken and the reed is released. When the player removes the tongue, it should be in a very quick violent motion, and then return with hard pressure. The player should also use a tight embouchure to limit the reed vibration when in the position just before producing the slap-tongue.⁶¹

The slap-tongue is used substantially enough in *Fanfares and Arias* to refer to it as a factor of the unique qualities of the work, in that it explores the use of unconventional

⁵⁸ Christopher Jon Greco, “A Study: An Interpretation and Analysis of a Late Twentieth Century Work for Saxophone and Piano: Steven Stucky's *Notturmo*” (DMA Diss., University of California Los Angeles, 2006), 19.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

instrumental sounds within a texture. In addition to the method delineated above, consulting the players' studio instructor for other helpful tips will assist in the successful use of the slap-tongue.

Instrumentation

When programming the music of Steven Stucky, it is important to consider the composer's original intention and vision. This can be overlooked if an ensemble is accustomed to performing pieces where certain sections are doubled in other instruments if that particular instrument is missing from the ensemble. Since Stucky orchestrates his works while he composes them, he has the specific tone color in mind. Being primarily an orchestral composer, it can be reasonably deduced that he would expect ensembles attempting to perform his works to have every instrument required available.

Fanfares and Arias require the string bass and contrabassoon, two instruments that may not be readily available for use in many university wind bands. In many wind band compositions, the string bass has been used to augment the tuba parts and to strengthen the bass lines. In *Fanfares and Arias*, the string bass part is wholly independent of the tuba part, taking advantage of its unique sonic resonance and qualities. It is used where a lower-pitched tone is needed in more delicately orchestrated passages, such as at rehearsal letter A.

Similarly, the contrabassoon can be a difficult instrument to procure for wind band programs operating on limited resources. Nevertheless, it is needed for the performance to realize the composer's intent – its distinctive organ pedal quality in the lowest range is put to great effect in *Aria II*, at measures 306 through 332. *Aria II* possesses a richer harmonic

progression than Aria I, and the contrabassoon part provides the dramatic propulsion by acting as the ominous deep voice raising the tension by half-steps throughout the section.

In the circumstance where an ensemble programs the piece, yet cannot acquire the relatively exotic instruments, they may have no alternative but to creatively substitute the parts with similarly sounding instruments, perhaps at different instrumental ranges.

VI. Perspectives on Programming *Fanfares and Arias*

As noted above, the number of performances *Fanfares and Arias* has received since 2005 pales in comparison to the more popular *Funeral Music for Queen Mary*. A quick survey of each work's features can glean some reason for the disparity. The factor one hears instantly would be the harmony utilized – *Fanfares and Arias* (and by extension, his works not involving some sort of arrangement of the work of another composer) challenges the listener with non-traditional, contemporary harmony, while *Funeral Music for Queen Mary* features mostly Purcell's traditional diatonic harmonies and comfortable progressions. The issue of contemporary harmonic progression and development is exacerbated in Stucky's traditional writing, which often features sections that are denied a thorough development, usually resulting in sudden or unconventional transitions. This is exemplified in *Fanfares and Arias*, such as where the transition between Aria II and Fanfare III is juxtaposed with material from each section.

A second and equally considered factor for listeners would be the absence of a melody that is at the least distinguishable to the ear, if not outright hummable while leaving the concert hall. *Funeral Music for Queen Mary*, while not featuring a melody one might whistle casually, nonetheless possesses a recognizable tune. *Fanfares and Arias*' tunes consist of angular movement, melodic fragments that pass through multiple instruments of contrasting timbres and existing sometimes within dense harmonies can confuse, even frustrate the lay listener.

The third major factor would be the implied difficulty of producing performances of the less often performed works. *Funeral Music for Queen Mary*'s relative lack of technical difficulty makes it more accessible to ensembles of a developing ability level, as opposed to the

intricate precision required in *Fanfares and Arias*, or the understanding of contemporary compositional techniques needed in the two *Concertos*.

In terms of audience appeal, therefore, the obstacle appears to be the general esoteric nature of *Fanfares and Arias* that may prevent the work from being programmed more often, due to the fear of negative audience (and performer) reaction. While the author makes no attempt in helping to change the listener's subjective opinion of the work (whether it be audience or performer), the text will suggest programming strategies to better assist in understanding the work, which in turn may encourage increased performances overall.

As suggested earlier in this document, a unique programming opportunity can be utilized when one considers the relationship the work has with Stravinsky's *Symphonies of Wind Instruments*. Prior to the performance of both works, the presenter of the program can hold a short lecture on each piece – historical significance of the *Symphonies* as a pioneer in forcing composers to rethink the rules of form, and the legacy as an influential work that is still connected to works composed in contemporary times. Certain excerpts that show the relationship between the two works can be played to allow the audience to better grasp the relationship between the two works.

A pre-concert lecture before a program of a group of esoteric works can prepare the audience to approach the music with a fresh perspective. Stucky, in the keynote address of the Florida State University New Music Festival in April 1993, has remarks that can help in the creation of a pre-concert talk. He gives several pieces of advice, covering topics such as audience expectation, being prepared for discontinuity as opposed to the traditional modes of continuity between musical events, the discouragement of trying to understand the detailed

aspects of a given work, and perhaps most important, allowing the audience permission to dislike what they hear.⁶²

The last aspect – knowing it is perfectly acceptable to dislike a work – does much to relieve the audience of the expectation that they are to automatically recognize that the work performed is to be enjoyed due to extra-musical factors involved, such as being composed by a world-renown, award-winning composer. For at the end of the concert, after a performance of a Stucky piece, everyone involved will have been exposed to a work of high artistic merit.

⁶² Steven Stucky, “Listening to Contemporary Music,”
<http://www.stevenstucky.com/ListeningtoContempMusic.shtml>.

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