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# Miriam Gideon's cantata, The Habitable Earth: a conductor's analysis

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MIRIAM GIDEON'S CANTATA, *THE HABITABLE EARTH*:  
A CONDUCTOR'S ANALYSIS

A Monograph

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Musical Arts

in

The School of Music

by  
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August 2003

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## **DEDICATION**

To you mom, and to the memory of my beloved father.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Thanks to Dr. Kenneth Fulton for his guidance through the years, his faith in me and his invaluable help in accomplishing this project. Thanks to Dr. Robert Peck for his inspirational insight. Thanks to Dr. Cornelia Yarbrough and Dr. Sara Lynn Baird for being role models of professionalism and musicianship. Thanks to my husband Hector and my little boy Andres for their love and support.

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## ABSTRACT

American composer Miriam Gideon (1906-1996) is highly recognized for her vocal chamber music and her contribution to the Jewish Synagogue service. Her musical style has been described as both lyrical and expressionistic, highly engaging, with strong prevalence of dissonance and chromaticism.

This study examines Miriam Gideon's cantata *The Habitable Earth* from a conductor's point of view. Its purpose is to increase familiarity with the work among choral musicians. The study offers detailed analysis and suggestions for performance procedures, which may also be used for understanding other twentieth century choral works.

Chapter One provides biographical information with concentration on Gideon's musical education and a discussion of her compositional output with a demonstration of important stylistic features. Chapter Two examines the text and its sources as well as the formal structure of the cantata. Chapter Three introduces the terms free atonality, emancipation of the dissonance, cell motives and cell intervals, pitch-class sets and tertian chords with split members, which are used in the detailed analysis of Part I, Part II and Part III of the cantata. Chapter Four presents additional stylistic observations about the melodic and harmonic formations, the writing for choir, soloists and instruments, tempo, articulation and dynamics. In addition, it offers suggestions for rehearsal procedures.

## CHAPTER 1

### BIOGRAPHY AND COMPOSITIONAL OUTPUT

Considered a pioneer among the contemporary American composers, Miriam Gideon (1906-1996) has been recognized as a distinguished artist, one whose popularity is based solely on the high quality of her works. A composer, teacher, and advocate of contemporary music, she wrote in variety of genres: chamber music, vocal, instrumental and choral works. Gideon is well known among the Jewish music society and throughout her career she received numerous commissions associated with the Synagogue Service.

This study examines Miriam Gideon's cantata *The Habitable Earth* for SATB choir, SATB soli, oboe and piano, from a conductor's point of view. Its purpose is to increase familiarity among choral musicians with the work and offer a detailed analysis and suggestions for performance procedures, which may be used for understanding other twentieth century choral works.

Chapter One presents biographical information and a discussion of Gideon's compositional output. Chapter Two examines the text, its sources and the formal structure of the cantata. Chapter Three provides detailed analysis of each movement. Chapter Four discusses some additional observations about the work and offers suggestions for rehearsal procedures.

#### Biography

Miriam Gideon was born in Greeley, Colorado on October 23, 1906, to a family of German-Jewish descendants. Her father, Abram Gideon, a Harvard graduate, was a professor of philosophy and modern languages at the Colorado State Teacher's College and her mother, Henrietta Shoninger, an elementary school teacher. Gideon's first exposure to



music was through the regular music classes at the public school. She remembers being taught “solfege” and “movable do”, a great help in her future career.<sup>1</sup>

The family moved briefly to California and then to Chicago. In 1915, while in Chicago, Miriam began piano lessons with a cousin.<sup>2</sup> The next year the family moved to Yonkers, New York and established a permanent residence there. Gideon enrolled at the Yonkers Conservatory of Music where she studied with the well-known pianist and teacher Hans Barth. Barth was quite impressed by Gideon’s skills to move freely around the keys as well as her sight-reading and transposing abilities. She recalls, “He asked me to read something at sight. He gave me a Chopin piece that I didn’t know and I transposed it at sight before reading through in the original key. I thought that was what he wanted. Of course he was doubly surprised and said he will take me as a student and so he did.”<sup>3</sup> As for her early musical ambitions, she writes,

When I was very young, I wanted to be a pianist, and had childhood fantasies of playing at Carnegie Hall. And then-I wanted to compose. And I did but my first attempts, mostly for piano, were completely uninteresting to me. In my late teens I began writing songs, setting poems that really moved me. The first one I wrote meant more to me that I had done before. From then on I’ve been obsessed with composing.<sup>4</sup>

Gideon’s musical development was carried further thanks to her uncle Henri Gideon, the music director of Temple Israel, the largest reform synagogue in Boston. He discovered her talent and allowed young Miriam to spend her high school and college years with him. While in Boston, she took active part as an organist and a singer in the community choral and

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<sup>1</sup> Jane W. Le Page, *Women Composers, Conductors and Musicians of the Twentieth Century* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 1983), 118.

<sup>2</sup> David Ewen, *American Composers: A Biographical Dictionary* (New York: G.P. Putnam, 1928), 258.

<sup>3</sup> Linda Ardito, “Miriam Gideon: A Memorial Tribute,” *Perspectives of New Music* 34/2 (Summer 1996): 205.

<sup>4</sup> Deena Rosenberg, “Interview with Miriam Gideon” in *The Music Makers*, ed. Deena Rosenberg and Bernard Rosenberg (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 62.

chamber concerts presented by her uncle. This involvement with Jewish sacred music continued throughout her career and resulted in many commissioned works. Miriam was constantly nourished by the presence of many “fine musicians” and “lots of music around the house.”<sup>5</sup>

In 1922, Gideon enrolled at the College of Liberal Arts of Boston University, where she studied piano with Felix Fox. In 1926, after graduating with a Bachelor’s degree in piano performance, she returned to New York City. The same year, she enrolled for graduate studies at New York University. Here she met Lazare Saminsky, a Russian born composer, conductor and scholar, who also held the position of music director at one of the biggest Jewish synagogues, Temple Emanu-El. Gideon remembers her first interview with him,

He asked me to do a four-part harmony exercise and he looked at it and said, ‘my dear child, you don’t know the first thing about harmony.’ This was not true, I can tell you that. Lazare Saminsky was a first-rate musician and he studied with Prokofiev and all kinds of very distinguished people in the class no less than Rimsky-Korsakov. I have Rimsky-Korsakov’s book on harmony and based upon contents in that book I do know what exactly he meant when he said that I don’t know anything about harmony. At any rate we got along fine.<sup>6</sup>

Saminsky had a deep interest in both ethnic and contemporary music. As a distinguished scholar on Hebrew music, he conducted ethnological expeditions to seek out the religious chants of Georgian and Persian Jews. He traveled through Syria and Palestine giving both lectures and recitals on Hebrew music.<sup>7</sup>

Saminsky was also a vigorous advocate of new American music. His appearances as a lecturer and conductor throughout the United States and Europe contributed greatly to the popularization of modern music. In 1923, shortly after immigrating to the United States, he

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<sup>5</sup> Ardito, “Memorial Tribute,” 205.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 206.

<sup>7</sup> Stanley Sadie, ed. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians Second Edition* (New York: Grove’s Dictionaries, 2001), s.v. “Saminsky, Lazare” by Nathan Broder and Barbara Rendon, vol. 22, 208.

was appointed musical director of Temple Emanu-El in New York, a post he held for thirty-four years.<sup>8</sup> Upon his commission Gideon wrote *The Hound of Heaven* (1945) in celebration of the century of the founding of the temple. She recalls: “Some of my most interesting commissions have been associated with the houses of worship. This one was particularly gratifying to me.”<sup>9</sup>

Saminsky coordinated Gideon’s study in all music disciplines. He allowed and encouraged her to develop a strong individuality as a composer. He also recommended that Miriam study with one of the two most prominent teachers residing in the United States at the time, Arnold Schoenberg and Roger Sessions. Gideon recalls,

This was a very generous gesture on his part because he really wasn’t trying to get rid of me. He thought it would be better for me. I said, ‘Well you are the better judge than I am about which one I should choose.’ He said that he thought that Sessions would be better because he would be more likely to stay in the East and Schonberg would probably move to California which is exactly what happened. So sure enough Sessions became my next and final teacher.<sup>10</sup>

Gideon’s studies with Sessions were from 1935 to 1939 when she left for Europe to study composition. However the political events and the upcoming war interrupted her plans and she returned home. As a student of Roger Sessions, Gideon became a part of a circle of young composers, which included Milton Babbitt, Leon Kirchner, Hugo Weisgall, Vivian Fine and Edward Cone. Sessions rarely taught privately, instead he worked with small group of students, which met daily at the Dalcroze School. The lessons consisted of playing one another’s compositions, followed by rigorous discussions.<sup>11</sup>

When asked about Sessions influence and contribution to her development as a composer, Gideon replied,

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Le Page, *Women Composers*, 123.

<sup>10</sup> Ardito, “Memorial Tribute,” 206.

<sup>11</sup> Rosenberg, “Interview with Miriam Gideon,” 63.

...it was a great experience. There was a lot of give and take between teacher and pupils and among the students themselves. Sessions put most of us through a pretty rigorous study in strict counterpoint. He had studied with Ernest Bloch, who as a sixteenth-century specialist felt that that discipline was most important. I got tremendous amount from Sessions approach, which combined the study of the basic music theory with assessment of our latest compositions.<sup>12</sup>

In another interview she adds, “If you ask me specifically what I learned, it’s so much it isn’t possible to say, but it had a great deal to do with proportion in composition.”<sup>13</sup>

In 1942, after ten fruitful years of studying composition, Gideon returned to the academic environment to pursue a graduate degree in musicology. In 1946, she received a Master of Arts degree from the Columbia University. Her studies with the renowned musicologist, Paul Henry Lang, were very beneficial. She honestly admits, “I really was almost know-nothing. These days, somebody who is at the age I was (at the time I was ‘thirty-ish’), who is seriously interested in music, knows a lot about music which I didn’t know. Anyway, that was a good way to learn it. I went through four years with great pleasure and interest.”<sup>14</sup>

In 1946, Gideon was appointed to the music faculty of Brooklyn College in New York, where she served until 1954. In 1947, she joined concurrently the faculty of the City College of New York. When asked what subject she taught, Gideon answered, “Put simply, I have taught *music*. That’s fairly obvious. I have taught sight-singing and ear-training and, of course harmony. Through it all, it was a heavy load of free composition because I believe that that’s a wonderful way of learning.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ardito, “Memorial Tribute,” 207.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ardito, “Memorial Tribute,” 210.

Gideon also believed that originality and talent exist in everyone and a composer should rely on his/hers own voice despite all the advanced skills and techniques they may possess.<sup>16</sup> The following words are strong expression of her teaching credo,

I feel that many young composers have been taught the wrong musical values. Often they've been well schooled in sophisticated compositional devices-so well schooled that they've sacrificed spontaneity. I may sound a bit stuffy about this, but I've come to believe that it's very important at a certain stage in a young composer's development for him to write the way he really feels. Otherwise he's likely to flounder in a sea of persuasive techniques and never know who he is.<sup>17</sup>

While teaching at the Brooklyn College, Gideon met Frederic Ewen, a noted scholar and writer. Ewen was born in Austria in 1899, and came to the United States at the age of thirteen. His literary interests included eighteenth-century European literature, the poetry and the prose of Heinrich Heine, the works of Schiller and the life and the works of Bertold Brecht.<sup>18</sup>

Gideon and Ewen married in 1949 and throughout the years they established a warm and loving partnership. Leo Kraft, a close friend of Gideon, comments that both were "...very, very close. Fred listened to her music very intently and always had something to say about it. She read all of his prose works as he was writing them, and they collaborated in that kind of spiritual sense."<sup>19</sup>

In 1954, Gideon and Ewen were expelled from the faculty of the Brooklyn College for their strong political views. At the time of the Cold War, when McCarthyism as an anti-Communist movement was invading not only the political and the economical spheres, but

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Rosenberg, "Interview with Miriam Gideon," 67.

<sup>18</sup> Frances Locher, ed., *Contemporary Authors. A Bio-Bibliographical Guide to Current Writers in Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry, Journalism, Drama, Motion Pictures, Television and Other Fields*, Vol.73-76 (Michigan, Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1978), 191.

<sup>19</sup> Leo Kraft, Interview, quoted in Ellie Hissama, *Gendering Musical Modernism* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 165.

also academe, many professors were subjected to political tests, screening and interrogating.

Ellen Schrecker writes,

The academe did not fight McCarthyism. It contributed to it. The dismissals, the blacklists, and above all the most universal acceptance of the legitimacy of what the congressional committees and other official investigators were doing conferred respectability upon the most repressive elements of the anti-Communist crusade. Here, if anywhere, dissent should have found a sanctuary.<sup>20</sup>

Gideon and Ewen were strong opponents of McCarthyism, and they refused to testify before a government committee against fellow colleagues. In 1955, rather than being fired for her action, Gideon voluntarily terminated her other teaching contract, with the City College of New York.<sup>21</sup>

The same year, Hugo Weisgall, a dear friend, and a fellow composer, offered Gideon a teaching position at the Cantors Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary. This helped Gideon not only financially but also opened new possibilities for commissions. In 1967, Gideon also joined the faculty of the Manhattan School of Music.

In 1970, at the age of sixty-four, Gideon was awarded the degree of Doctorate of Sacred Music from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.<sup>22</sup> She admitted that this final degree came to her as a surprise, "...nobody was more surprised than myself...I was asked to write these services [*Sacred Service for Sabbath Morning* and *Shirat Miriam L'Shabbat*]. They were both commissioned and I felt that was fine and they involved a great deal of study and, lo and behold, I got a little prize at the end of it, namely the degree."<sup>23</sup>

In 1971, Gideon returned to the City College of New York, where she remained until 1976. In 1981, she received an Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge commission from the Library of

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<sup>20</sup> Ellen W. Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities* (Oxford University Press, 1986), 341.

<sup>21</sup> Ellie Hisama, *Gendering Musical Modernism* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 167.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

Congress for *Spirit Above the Dust*, a work commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Music Library Association.<sup>24</sup>

Gideon resigned from the Jewish Theological Seminary and the Manhattan School of Music in 1991.<sup>25</sup> Her long and distinguished music career ended with her death on June 18, 1996, after a long battle with illness. Ardito writes, "...close friends and the contemporary music community, of which she [Gideon] had been such a vital member, were left to reflect upon the loss of this extraordinary individual."<sup>26</sup>

### **Compositional Output**

For Gideon every composition fulfills an emotional need, a subjective experience, which comes from her passion for composing: "What I write has to *mean* something to me. It has to surprise me – otherwise I can't get excited about it. Most of my works seem to me to be fresh, original statements."<sup>27</sup> Although she did not earn her living as a composer alone, Gideon wrote all the time. Most of her works were commissioned and this made her choice of text and performing forces very particular. With specific sound in mind she chose the voicing, the instrumentation, and the difficulty of the piece. She was always open to changes, even after the premiere of the work.<sup>28</sup>

For every composer a performance of his/her own work is very desirable, a recording, quite an achievement. Gideon was especially pleased and satisfied with the fact that most of her works have been recorded. She commented,

I am especially gratified by the response made by people who have listened to my recordings, since they have had the opportunity of hearing my music more than one

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<sup>24</sup> Le Page, *Women Composers*, 136.

<sup>25</sup> Ardito, "Memorial Tribute," 203.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 202.

<sup>27</sup> Rosenberg, "Interview with Miriam Gideon," 65.

<sup>28</sup> Judith Fertig Pinnolis, "An Analysis of Selected Works of the American Composer Miriam Gideon (1906- ) in the Light of Contemporary Jewish Musical Trends" (MA thesis, University of Cincinnati, 1978), 151.

time a live performance provides. One performance, even though it may generate a warm reaction in the listener, does not really provide a key to what the composer is saying. Only repeated hearings can do that. I am fortunate in having had excellent performers for my recordings - the finest soloists and chamber players a composer could wish for.<sup>29</sup>

Gideon was asked quite often about being a woman composer and her opinion on the role of women in music. She strongly believed that "...a woman composer can have something special to say, in that there is a very particular woman's way of responding to the world."<sup>30</sup> She did not approve of the isolation of women composers as such, "I feel it is a mistake to isolate women on concert programs or broadcasts or recordings. Integrate women composers on equal footing with men but don't segregate them."<sup>31</sup>

Gideon's involvement with Jewish music held a special place in her career. She became involved with the synagogue service while residing in Boston with her uncle Henry Gideon. Later as a student of Saminsky and Sessions she became familiar with the music of other Jewish composers such as Darius Milhaud, Ernest Bloch, Joseph Achron, and Hugo Weisgall.<sup>32</sup> As a professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary she became more proficient with the details of the service as well as other liturgical works.

Highly respected in the Jewish musical society, she is the first woman ever commissioned to compose two full services for the synagogue. For her, being labeled "Jewish composer," could be viewed as a "a form of symbolic reference."<sup>33</sup> In the interview with Albert Weisser, Gideon shared her excitement of being selected for such an honorable task,

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<sup>29</sup> Le Page, *Women Composers*, 125.

<sup>30</sup> Albert Weisser, "An Interview with Miriam Gideon," *Dimensions in American Judaism* (Spring 1970): 39.

<sup>31</sup> Rosenberg, "Interview with Miriam Gideon," 69.

<sup>32</sup> Albert Weisser, "An Interview," 39.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.



Well, first of all, I am very excited. I had never let myself think of such a possibility before-it just seemed so unrealistic. The few works I had done with so-called Jewish content were commissions of a sort, and though I spent a great deal of time and thought on them-as I usually do-they were quite short works.<sup>34</sup>

The earlier works she referred to are *Psalm 84* ("How Goodly Are Thy Tents" 1947) for unaccompanied mixed voices, *Adon Olam* (1954) for soloists, mixed chorus and chamber orchestra, commissioned and performed by Hugo Weisgall at Temple Chizuk Amuno in Baltimore. She also composed an instrumental piece *Three Masques* (1958) for organ, based on cantillatory motives from Book of Esther.

Gideon's compositional output includes more than fifty-five works, most of which are published and recorded. Her works are mainly chamber, for solo or ensemble of instruments, voice and instruments, song cycles and choral music. Her few orchestra works are also created with an intimate sound in mind. The three opuses in this category, *Lyric Piece for String Orchestra* (1941), *Symphonia Brevis* (1953), and *Songs of Youth and Madness* (for voice and orchestra, 1977), do not exceed the scope of a chamber piece. Her dramatic works *Fortunato* (opera in three scenes, 1958) and *The Adorable Mouse* (folk tale for voice and chamber group, 1960), are also quite economical in terms of performance forces.<sup>35</sup>

An important aspect of Gideon's musical profile is the use of words. She stated, "I am moved by poetry and great prose as much as by music."<sup>36</sup> Her texts include ancient Greek and Hebrew, English, French, German, Spanish, Latin and Japanese. Although not

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> The score of *Fortunato* calls for ten singers, one French horn, one trumpet, timpani, percussion and strings. *The Adorable Mouse* is for narrator and chamber orchestra.

<sup>36</sup> Barbara Petersen, "The Vocal Chamber Music of Miriam Gideon," in Judith Zaimont, Catherine Overhauser and Jane Gottlieb, eds. *The Musical Woman. An International Perspective*, Vol II (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 321.

fluent in all chosen languages, she familiarized herself with the sounds, the rhythm and the meaning of the individual words.<sup>37</sup>

Her fascination with poetry and prose extended as far as using words as a literary background for instrumental compositions. *Of Shadows Numberless* (1966) is a mood piece suggested by the poem “Ode to a Nightingale” by John Keats. In *Sonata for Piano* (1977) each movement is named after a phrase from the play “Atlanta of Calydon” by Charles Algernon Swinburne. Movement one is titled “Veiled Destinies,” movement two, “Night in the Shadow of Light,” movement three, “Rapid and the Footless Herds.” A piece for organ solo, *Three Biblical Masks* (1958, rewritten for violin and piano in 1960), depicts the main Biblical characters in the Purim story, Haman, Esther and Mordesai.<sup>38</sup>

Of particular interest are some bilingual settings in which within the same work Gideon sets both the original language and its English translation. Although such a device is especially challenging to the composer, due to the specific phonetic rules of each language, Gideon enjoyed finding the most appropriate musical setting for the text. She commented,

One aspect of my music that has aroused interest and at times controversy is my dual setting within the same work of poems in the original language and in English translation. I can explain my attraction for this way of composing by my fascination with language as such, and by the challenge of finding an appropriate musical garb for the same poetic idea in different language, at the same time resolving this diversity into an integrated whole.<sup>39</sup>

When setting different languages within the same work, Gideon sometimes alternated verse of original language with a verse in English (or translated verse first, followed by the one in the original language), or she presented all verses in the original language first and then their translation. In *Mixco* (1957) for voice and piano, the English translation is first,

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Petersen, *op. cit.*, 231.

followed by the original verses in Spanish. In *Songs of Youth and Madness*, verses in German alternate with their English translation. In *The Condemned Playground* (1963) there are three different languages used, Latin (for song one, “Pyrrha”), Japanese (for song two, “Hiroshima”) and French (for song three, “Litanies of Satan”). Here each poem is presented in its whole in the original language and then in its English translation.

Gideon’s desire to create an appropriate sound world for the language used, is exhibited in song two from *The Condemned Playground*, “Hiroshima.” The texture and the instrumentation of the Japanese verse are quite different from the way the English translation is set. The Japanese verse has a seven-measure introduction for Flute and Cello in which a delicate sound is achieved by the use of harmonics in cello (Example 1.1).

The image shows a musical score for two instruments: Flute and Violoncello. The Flute part starts at measure 18 with a tempo marking of 69 and a dynamic of *mp*. It features a complex melodic line with trills and triplets. The Violoncello part starts at measure 22 with a dynamic of *mp*. It also features a complex melodic line with trills and triplets. Both parts include dynamic markings such as *dim* (diminuendo) and *pp* (pianissimo).

Example 1.1. *The Condemned Playground*, “Hiroshima”, measures 18-24.  
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The voice enters unaccompanied and soon is joined by solo Flute. The trills in the flute part have a pastoral effect (Example 1.2). Even when all string instruments enter at the

26

Flute

Soprano

Da - re ga cho - o mi ta no da ro - o Ha - chi gat - su no hi - ka -

*p*

30

Fl.

S

ri - ni Oto ma na Ku ha - ba - ta - ku? Rin pun no ki

*p*

35

Fl.

S

ra me ki o... Da - re ga so no ta ma shi o

3

Fl.

S

mi ta no da ro - o? ka - o ri ta - ka ki ka - ze ni no ri

Example 1.2. *The Condemned Playground*, “Hiroshima”, measures 26-39.

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climax of the piece, “Dare mo so reo” (“No one saw intensely burning,” mm. 41-43), they are muted, in shimmering tremolo (Example 1.3).

41

Flute

*f* *mf*

Violin I

(sord) *fp* *mf*

Violin II

(sord) *fp* *mf*

Viola

(sord) *fp* *mf*

Cello

(sord) *fp* *mf*

Soprano

Da - re mo so re o mi na kat - ta

Example 1.3. *The Condemned Playground*, “Hiroshima”, measures 41-43.

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When asked to describe her own musical style Gideon replied, “...free atonality; something that means, or at least in my case means, I am not using any precompositional elements, that is no row, no series. I’d say it is dissonant and without a basic key center.”<sup>40</sup> Although greatly influenced by expressionism and the 12-tone method, Gideon did not adopt either of the techniques. Instead she created her own language, highly dissonant and yet full of intimate lyricism, with economy of musical material and clarity of forms and lines.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Pinnolis, “An Analysis of Selected Works,” 102.

<sup>41</sup> George Perle, “The Music of Miriam Gideon,” *Bulletin of American Composers Alliance*, 7/4 (1958): 4.

Gideon characterized her early compositions in the tradition of German romantic *lieder*.<sup>42</sup> She also composed a twelve-tone piece, only to find out that the technique did not interest her<sup>43</sup>. She commented,

It is one of the few compositions that has no meaning for me. Everything else I've written *does*. I knew that even when I was in the midst of writing the twelve-tone piece, which I tried writing as an experiment, that I could not subscribe to this kind of thing. But I thought I'd try it and that was the result. Of course I realize that people are different and that some people work better if they have a preconceived or preordained system and they follow it, and there's plenty of freedom within that, too. I simply cannot function that way and if I tell you that I write intuitively, I hope that my reader will understand.<sup>44</sup>

In "An Analysis of Selected Works of the American Composer Miriam Gideon, in the Light of Contemporary Jewish Trends," Judith Pinnolis writes, "...Miss Gideon is an extremely conservative composer. Her music is marked by a sameness of message. She is bound up in the exploration of a rather confined world, and she is quite content through her career to explore this world and create a vital place for herself in it."<sup>45</sup>

Gideon's confined world, as referred to by Pinnolis, is the atonality, as she chose it to be the main idiom for her music. Indeed, in a world of radical experiments, which opened new venues for expression, she was quite a traditionalist. Gideon did not embrace the twelve-tone technique, nor did she experiment with other preset melodic patterns. Her rhythms are old-fashioned and conventional; they derive from the flow of the text. She did not explore computer or electronic music or new performing techniques and unusual instruments. Yet

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<sup>42</sup> Rosenberg, "Interview with Miriam Gideon," 64.

<sup>43</sup> The twelve-tone piece Gideon refers to is unpublished and no information about its name or date is available.

<sup>44</sup> Ardito, "Memorial Tribute," 211.

<sup>45</sup> Pinnolis, "An Analysis of Selected Works," 151.

within the chosen boundaries she managed to create uniquely individual settings by altering the micro events in every composition.<sup>46</sup>

One of the landmarks in Gideon's career as a composer is *The Hound of Heaven* (1945), a work for voice, violin, viola and cello, based on poem by Francis Thompson. The work was commissioned by Lazare Saminsky to commemorate the centennial of the founding of Congregation Emanu-El in New York. Gideon chose a text that does not directly imply a Jewish subject, but in which she saw universal meaning. Although the subject of the poem is the conversion to Catholicism, she felt that, "...the few lines I choose to set, however, had to do with overcoming life's strife and stress. That might well be posed by the Jewish people, in terms of their tragic history. Saminsky understood the deeper implication of the words, and approved the choice."<sup>47</sup>

In his article "The Music of Miriam Gideon,"<sup>48</sup> George Perle gives a detailed analysis of the work in order to demonstrate some of the most salient features of Gideon's compositional style. He writes,

The texture of this, as most of Miriam Gideon's other works, is strikingly personal, characterized by lightness, the sudden exposure of individual notes, constantly shifting octave relationships. The unique quality of the texture, however, is not merely a subjective, idiosyncratic feature, but a consequence of her compositional technique. Individual intervals are isolated, contrasted, their components presented in all possible ways--simultaneously, successively and, if one may use the term diagonally--that is, by means of successive juxtaposition of separate lines. The larger melodic and harmonic components are generated from minimal basic cell in this way. This is a technique that imposes economy and the exclusion of irrelevances--a technique that may be indefinitely expanded and within which a composer may grow...<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Le Page, *Women Composes*, 123.

<sup>48</sup> Perle, "The Music of Miriam Gideon," 4.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 6.

Perle gives an example with the opening fifteen measures of the work, where many of those features are presented (Example 1.4). According to him, the minimal basic cell in the

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 1 through 7, marked 'Sostenuto' with a tempo of 44. It includes staves for Voice, Oboe, Violin, Viola, and Violoncello. The second system covers measures 8 through 17, marked 'Piu mosso'. It includes staves for Oboe (Ob.), Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.). Dynamics such as *p* (piano) and *mp* (mezzo-piano) are indicated throughout the score.

Example 1.4. *The Hound of Heaven*, measures 1-17.  
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(example 1.4 continued)



15

*mf*

A - cross the mar - gent of the world I fled,

Ob. *mp*

Vln. *mp*

Vla. *mp*

Vc. *mp*

course of these opening measures is the dyad E-F, first played by the oboe (mm. 2-4), imitated by the cello (mm. 4-6) and played as simultaneity between the oboe and the cello at measure 10. This semitone is imitated in the voice as an E-D# dyad (m. 14), sung again as F-E (m. 15) and expanded to E-F# at the conclusion of the vocal phrase (mm. 16-17).<sup>50</sup>

Sudden exposure of individual notes that result from octave shifting is well exhibited in the viola part. In measure one, the drop of A# an octave lower than the initial A-natural “exposes” the C#, thus achieving a totally different acoustical impression. What may have been a simple m3 drop and ascending augmented triad is now a descending three-note motive (A4-F3#-A3#), outlining a rather dissonant M7, followed by an ascending M10. Similar technique is used in measures 7-8 in the viola part, where the second F# is dropped an octave lower and the interval is m9. In the cello, the exposure of F in measure 15 is prepared ahead

<sup>50</sup> Perle, “The Music of Miriam Gideon,” 3.

by shifting one of the Es an octave lower (m. 13-14). The lightness of the texture results from the fact that no more than two instruments (always in different combinations) sound together, the phrases are short and dispersed among long stretches of rests.

The structural significance of the E-F dyad and its expansion E-F#, is demonstrated at the end of the piece, where the “...succession of focal elements presented in the beginning of the composition are reversed.”<sup>51</sup> As will be seen (Example 1.5), the voice reiterates the E-F# dyad, while the oboe “comes to rest on its opening two-note figure, F-E.”<sup>52</sup>

Example 1.5. *The Hound of Heaven*, measures 141-149.  
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(example 1.5 continued)

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

145

Ob.

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Another interesting technique, which has become a signature feature of Gideon's style, is the doubling of the voice by the instruments (Example 1.6). As Barbara Petersen notes, "she [Gideon] creates a subtle heterophony, with the singer's notes scattered among different instruments or octaves."<sup>53</sup> Perle comments,

This is a striking and original way of integrating disparate elements without 'homogenizing' them. It is, of course, somewhat related to procedures employed in very different contexts by several other composers. The participation of various instruments in the unfolding of a single line suggests Webern and the constantly shifting octave relationships, Stravinsky.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Petersen, *op. cit.*, 243.

<sup>54</sup> Perle, "The Music of Miriam Gideon," 4.

51 *p subito*

Voice: Heav'n and I wept to-gether, And its sweet tears were

Oboe

Violin: *p subito*

Viola: *p*

Cello: *p*

55

Ob.: salt with mor-tal mine. I slept, me-thinks, and

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.: *mp* *mf* *p subito*

Example 1.6. *The Hound of Heaven*, measures 51-57.  
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The compositional style established in *The Hound of Heaven* is exhibited in two succeeding song cycles: *Five Sonnets from Shakespeare* (1950) for voice, trumpet and string quartet, and *Three Sonnets from a Fatal Interview* (1952) for voice and piano, text by Edna St. Vincent Millay. In her article, “The Vocal Chamber Music of Miriam Gideon,” Barbara Petersen observes that in *Five Sonnets from Shakespeare* Gideon treats the voice and the trumpet interchangeably, “sometimes in unison or heterophonically and other times contrapuntally, with one growing out of the other as an extension of its phrase.”<sup>55</sup>

In *Three Sonnets from a Fatal Interview* Gideon exhibits another prominent feature of her style, the concept of “motivic saturation.”<sup>56</sup> In her book *Gendering Musical Modernism*, Ellie Hisama quotes an interview with Milton Babbitt in which he states, “...the concept was very familiar to Miriam, she considered herself a motivic composer.”<sup>57</sup> To demonstrate that, Hisama offers a detailed analysis of “Night is my Sister,” the second movement from *Three Sonnets from a Fatal Interview*. According to the analysis there are two pitch class sets ([013] and [014]), which serve as germ cells.<sup>58</sup> Both are stated in the very first measure of the piece and their continual use throughout the movement creates “compositional coherence.”<sup>59</sup> Hisama’s analysis concentrates on the vertical presentations of the two pitch class sets and the voice leading. As seen in Example 1.7, the [013], and [014] are also used as germ cells for the vocal melody.

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<sup>55</sup> Petersen, *op. cit.*, 244.

<sup>56</sup> Hisama, *Gendering Musical Modernism*, 152.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

tumultuous ♩ = 66

sempre *p* senza sord.

sempre *p* senza sord.

sempre *p* senza sord. pizz.

arco

pizz. arco

*cresc.*

*cresc.*

[014] [013]

[0 1 4]  
2 2

*p* Night is my sis - ter

[013] [014] [013]

Example 1.7. *Three Sonnets from a Fatal Interview*, “Night is my sister” measures 1-19.  
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(example 1.7 continued)

9 [0 1 4] [0 1 4]

and how deep in love, how drowned in

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

13 [0 1 4 7] [0 1 3]

love, and weed - i - ly washed a - shore, there to be

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Poco cresc.

[013] [014] [014] [014] [013]

17 [0 1 4] *pp subito*

fret ted by the drag and shore *mp* at the tide's edge I

Vln.

Vla.

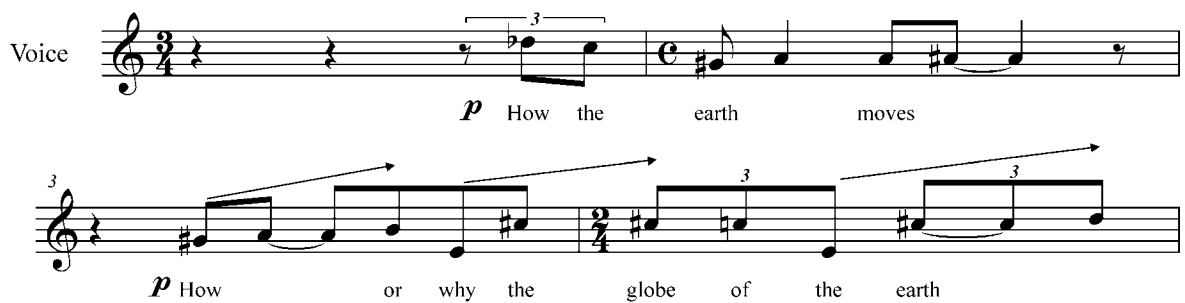
Vc.

*mp* *pp subito* *pp*

*mp*

Gideon's fascination with poetry and constant quest for interesting subjects are exhibited in *Questions on Nature* (1965) for voice, oboe, piano, glockenspiel, tam-tam and in *Rhymes from the Hill* (1968) for voice, clarinet, marimba and cello. The text of *Questions on Nature* is by a twelve-century poet, Adelard of Bath. In the form of enigmatic sayings, Adelard gives answers to questions asked by his young inquisitive nephew.<sup>60</sup>

The texts deal with seven subjects – sun, planets, wind, stars, animals, echo, and man. Each poem starts with a question word (how, why, whether, what), which is reflected in the music by “inconclusive sounding phrases or intervals.”<sup>61</sup> The inconclusiveness of a musical phrase is an aural phenomenon, in which ascending intervals are associated with questions. This impression is even stronger if the intervals outlined are dissonant. Examples 1.8 through 1.13 demonstrate selections from *Questions on Nature* in which the questions in the text are reflected in the music through such intervals.



Example 1.8. *Questions on Nature*, Movement one, voice only, measures 1-4.  
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<sup>60</sup> Miriam Gideon, *Questions on Nature* (Hillsdale NY: Mobart Music Publication, 1978)

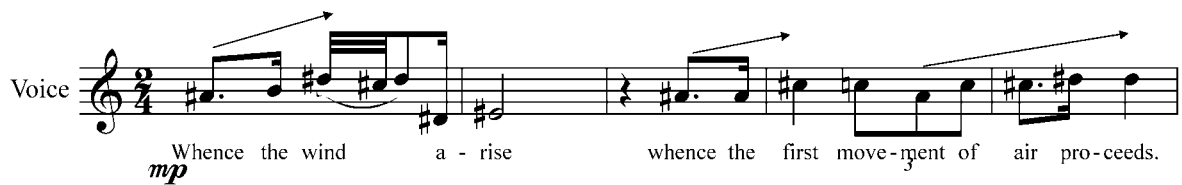
<sup>61</sup> Petersen, *op. cit.*, 238.





Example 1.9. *Questions on Nature*, Movement two, voice only, measures 1-6.

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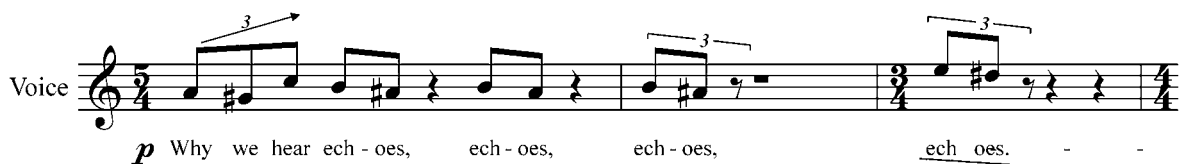
Example 1.10. *Questions on Nature*, Movement three, voice only, measures 1-5.

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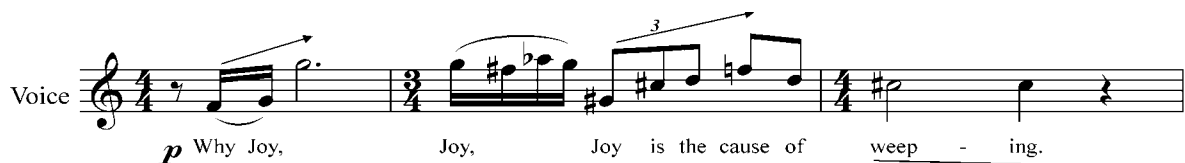
Example 1.11. *Questions on Nature*, Movement four, voice only, measures 1-9.

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Example 1.12. *Questions on Nature*, Movement six, voice only, measures 1-6.

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Example 1.13. *Questions on Nature*, Movement seven, voice only, measures 1-3.  
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The choice of instruments is also of particular interest. They are selected carefully as “surrounding evocative instrumentation, which carries the intimations of the wonder in the text.”<sup>62</sup> The oboe with its characteristic timbre complements the musical texture as an interacting voice, almost portraying the other voice in the conversation. The tam-tam is used for its mystical color as well as to paint certain images. In movement two, measures 11-15, the tremolo executed with a soft brush creates an airy sound as to portray the “immovable sphere of heav’n” (Example 1.14).

Voice

11 *pp subito* 15 *poco rit.*

The out - er most adn the im - mov - a - ble sphere of heav'n

Oboe

*legato* *pp subito* *poco rit.* *ppp*

Tam Tam

*soft stick* *pp tr* *poco rit.* *mp* *pp*

Piano

*legato* *pp subito* *poco rit.*

8vb - - - - - 8vb - - - - -

Example 1.14. *Questions on Nature*, Movement two, measures 11-15.  
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<sup>62</sup> Petersen, *op. cit.*, 238.

Tam-tam is used again for its airy sound at the beginning of movement three (Example 1.15). Here tremolo with a brush portrays the wind in the text.

Moderato  
*con eccitazione*

Voice *mp*  
Whence the winds a - rise.

Oboe *espr. tr*  
*mp*

Brush *tr*  
Tam Tam *pp*

Example 1.15. *Questions on Nature*, Movement three, measures 1-4.  
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The glockenspiel (used interchangeably with tam-tam) also has a coloristic effect. In movement one, at the question “where a stone thrown into it [the earth] would fall,” the fall of the stone is imitated with two quarter notes played with hard mallet (Example 1.16).

14

Voice  
Where a stone thrown in - to it would fall.  
*pp subito* *p subito*

Oboe *p subito*  
3

Glockenspiel *p* *mp*

Piano *pp subito*  
*loco* *8va-b1*

Example 1.16. *Questions on Nature*, Movement one, measures 14-15.  
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The subject matter of *Rhymes from the Hill* (1968) for voice, clarinet, violoncello and marimba is humorous and burlesque.<sup>63</sup> Here again the choice of instrumental colors reflects the descriptive nature of the poems. The third and the fourth songs, “Die Korfsche Uhr” and “Palmströms Uhr,” are musical depictions of clock mechanisms. Gideon uses marimba in metronomic eighth notes to create the appropriate sound<sup>64</sup> (Example 1.17).

Example 1.17. *Rhymes from the Hill*, “Die Korfsche Uhr,” measures 1-6.

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<sup>63</sup> Petersen, *op. cit.*, 238.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

Lester Trimble characterizes the musical language of the work as “fluent, even more elegant and intimate of lyricism.”<sup>65</sup> He adds,

*Rhymes from the Hill* has a hint of coloristic and lyrical inspiration that adds an element of naturalness and frankness to the Expressionistic ethos, an ingredient one does not expect. This always seems to me one of Gideon’s particular strengths as a composer: her ability to take both the refractory twelve-tone method and Expressionism in hand and make them the servant of very personal imagery. Hers is American Expressionism, not Central European.<sup>66</sup>

In another vocal cycle, *The Seasons of Time* (1969) for voice, flute, cello and piano or celesta, Gideon once again demonstrates creativity in using the instruments “sparingly to achieve a delicate and transparent texture.”<sup>67</sup> The texts she chose are Tanka Poems, a form of classical Japanese poetry. The subject matter includes nature, the changing seasons and the passage of time in human life.<sup>68</sup> The delicacy of the images in the texts is reflected again in the sounds of the chosen instruments, each used “with a shimmer like that of a silk screening.”<sup>69</sup>

Although not as many as the chamber vocal works, the choral works of Gideon occupy an important place in her career as a composer. Most of them are sacred in nature, a true manifestation of her spirituality. Here as in the solo vocal cycles the texts are chosen from various sources, subject matter varies from deeply personal to more universal.

Two early compositions for SATB, *Slow, Slow Fresh Fount* (1941) and *Sweet Western Wind* (1943) are written in a motet style.<sup>70</sup> Gideon herself admits that, at that period

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<sup>65</sup> Lester Trimble, review of *Rhymes from the Hill*, by Miriam Gideon, *American Record Guide* (November 1972), reprinted in Le Page, 126.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid

<sup>67</sup> Phillip L Miller, review of *The Seasons of Time*, by Miriam Gideon, *American Record Guide* (November 1972), reprinted in Le Page, 129.

<sup>68</sup> Petersen, *op. cit.*, 240.

<sup>69</sup> Paul Hume, “Four Women and One Violin,” review of *Rhymes from the Hill*, by Miriam Gideon, *Washington Post* (March 1974), quoted in Zaimont, Overhauser and Gottlieb, eds., 240.

<sup>70</sup> Pinnolis, “An Analysis of Selected Works,” 91.

in her career, her music (including the *Hound of Heaven*) was greatly influenced by sixteenth century counterpoint, which she studied in detail with Roger Sessions and Mark Brunswick.<sup>71</sup>

The first work Gideon wrote for the synagogue service, *Psalm 84: How Goodly Are Thy Tents* (1947) won her immediate recognition and the Ernest Bloch Choral Award.<sup>72</sup> It is scored for SSA or SATB chorus with piano or organ (Example 1.18). According to Pinnolis,

**Moderato** ♩ = 112

Soprano *p* Thy dwell - ings, o

Alto *p* How good - ly are thy tents o - Ja - cob

Tenor *p* Thy dwell - ings, o

Bass *p* How good - ly are thy tents o - Ja - cob

5

S Is - ra - el Thy dwell - ings o Is - ra - el,

A Thy dwell - ings o Is - ra - el,

T Is - ra - el Thy dwell - ings o Is - ra - el,

B Thy dwell - ings o Is - ra - el,

Example 1.18. *How Goodly are Thy Tents*, measures 1-9.  
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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>72</sup> Wisser, "An Interview with Miriam Gideon," 14.

the work exhibits many of Gideon's typical traits, such as beginning with a pair of voices in octaves and dominance of modal harmonies.<sup>73</sup> Other characteristics are, "sensitivity to the text in a syllabic context with repetition of text only in a small areas; change of meter to establish flow and throw off a sense of beat; and voice crossing."<sup>74</sup> The modal language of the work is expressed in the use of parallel fourths and fifths as well as pedal tones. This reflects the efforts made not only by Gideon, but also by other American Jewish composers to achieve a melodic atmosphere, that resembles traditional Jewish music.<sup>75</sup>

After *The Hound of Heaven* and the above-mentioned works from the same period, Gideon switched from linear to vertical (harmonic) approach. She stated, "I feel my music is highly charged harmonically. I kind of piece things in a vertical construction. I tend to do that more than linearly. I tend to get my ideas from harmonic constructions."<sup>76</sup> This change of compositional style is reflected in the motet, *Adon Olam* (1954), for SAT soli, SATB chorus, oboe, trumpet, and string orchestra. The work was commissioned by Hugo Weisgall for Temple Chizuk Amuno in Baltimore. It is also her first setting in Hebrew. The texture of the motet is predominantly chordal with scarce counterpoint (Example 1.19). The music does not contain any traditional material; on the contrary, Gideon experiments with the permutation of the triad, which becomes another important feature of her music.<sup>77</sup> The only traditional element is the text and its specific accentuation and inflection.

While the choir parts move mostly in octaves, the instruments contribute to the creation of the harmony. According to Pinnolis this pairing of voices an octave apart, at the beginning of the work, is one of Gideon's "typical traits," already exhibited in the earlier

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<sup>73</sup> Pinnolis, "An Analysis of Selected Works," 95.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Pinnolis, "An Analysis of Selected Works," 95.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 91.

*How Goodly are Thy Tents.*<sup>78</sup> As will be noted further in this paper, the same trait is displayed at the beginning of *The Habitable Earth*.

Deciso

Oboe

Trumpet in C

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

1

2

Cello

Double Bass

*f*

*f*

*f*

*sf*

*unis.*

*f*

*unis.*

*sf*

*pizz.*

*sf*

A - don o - lom, a - sher mo-lach - B' - ter - em kol - y - tsir niv-ro,

A - don o - lom, a - sher mo-lach - B' - ter - em kol - y - tsir niv-ro,

Example 1.19. *Adon Olam*, measures 1-8.  
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(example 1.19 continued)

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 92.



Ob.

C Tpt.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Soprano

Bass

Vc.

D.B.

L' - es na - a - so, B' - chef - tso - kol, A - zay - me - lech sh' mo - nik - ro.

L' - se na - a - so, B' - chef - tso - kol, A - zay - me - lech sh' mo - nik - ro.

An interesting part of the motet is the contrasting seven measure instrumental interlude, which separates the choir exposition from the following solo section. Gideon often includes such instrumental passages within the work in order “...to ensure that the text is absorbed and not spun out in too rapid delivery.”<sup>79</sup> When the choir returns at measure 43, it

<sup>79</sup> Petersen, *op. cit.*, 240.

is doubled by the instruments and is no longer in unison, instead all voices move in parallel fourths (Example 1.20). This intended ‘acoustic archaism’ matches perfectly the text, “My soul savior, the rock of my strength.”

43 Tempo I ♩ = 126

Flute *f*

Trumpet in C *f*

Violin I *f* *P sub*

Violin II *f* *P sub*

Viola *f* *P sub*

1 *f* V'-hu. E - li, v' - chav go - a - lee, V' - tsur chev - lee, b' - es - tso - ro, V' - hu.

2 *f* V'-hu E - li, v' - chav go - a - lee, V' - tsur-chev - lee, b' - es - tso - ro, V' - hu.

Cello *f* *P sub*

Double Bass *f* *P sub* pizz.

Example 1.20. *Adon Olam*, measures 43-47.  
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As mentioned above, Gideon's two sacred services are important landmarks not only in her career but also in the history of Jewish sacred music. They are quite contrasting from one another, and both are deeply personal and equally representative of composer's spiritual beliefs. *Sacred Service for Sabbath Morning* (1970) for cantor, soloists, mixed chorus and ensemble of instruments, was commissioned by the music director of the temple in Cleveland, David Gooding. Given a great freedom in choosing her own style and musical language, Gideon decided to incorporate the atonal idiom of her solo vocal works.<sup>80</sup>

Although the musical style is freely atonal with no reference to any liturgical melodies, Gideon managed to convey both her strong beliefs and the spirit of the Hebrew Liturgy. She felt that quite often the liturgical texts were set to particular musical formulas and stereotypes, which diminish their expressiveness. Therefore she searched for an intense musical atmosphere with deeply personal harmonic language.<sup>81</sup> Weisser notes,

Miss Gideon certainly knows her Jewish musical substances-cantillation, psalmody, missinai tunes, etc. But she has chosen to perform a really creative musical act. What is especially striking is the skill and total freshness with which she has set the thrice-familiar texts. So idiosyncratic is her craft here that it were as though we were encountering the prayers for the first time.<sup>82</sup>

Although such language is highly unusual in the framework of the synagogue music, the work was praised as "...the finest service yet composed by a native-born American-Jewish composer and very probably the most important advance in the form since Darius Milhaud's *Service Sacre* (1947)."<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Pinnolis, "An Analysis of Selected Works," 128.

<sup>81</sup> Albert Weisser, "An Interview with Miriam Gideon," 39.

<sup>82</sup> Albert Weisser. "Miriam Gideon's new service," *Congress Bi-Weekly* 39 (June 30, 1972): 23.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

For the second service, *Shirat Miriam L'Shabbat*, (1974) for cantor, mixed chorus and organ, Gideon was asked to make the service more traditional.<sup>84</sup> She recalled a conversation with cantor David Putterman, who commissioned the work for the Park Avenue Synagogue: “You write exactly what you feel like. We’ll do it. Anything you write we’ll use, but if you want it to be used more than once, I suggest that you write a more traditional service.”<sup>85</sup>

Gideon did write a more traditional service. She was constantly aware of creating a work, which would appeal not only to the musicians but also to the whole Jewish congregation. She incorporated many traditional melodies, which remained recognizable and unchanged throughout the work.<sup>86</sup> For example the Organ Prelude (Example 1.21) and the two Silent Prayers (Examples 1.22 and 1.23) are all based on Palestinian shepherd songs.



Example 1.21. *Shirat Miriam L'Shabbat*, Organ Prelude, measures 1-3.  
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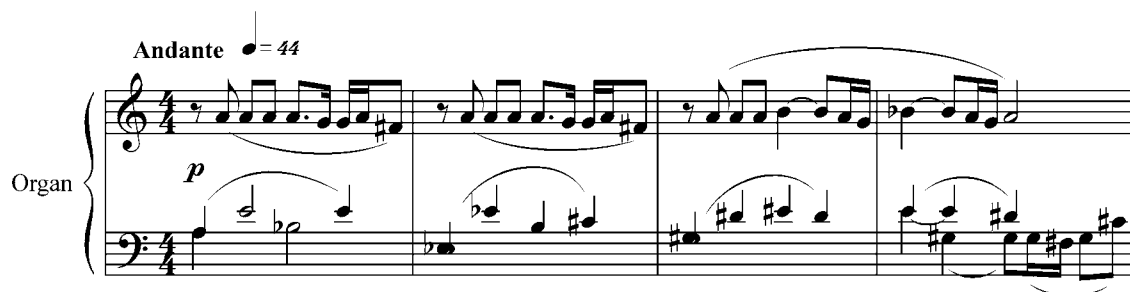


Example 1.22. *Shirat Miriam L'Shabbat*, Silent Prayer No. 8, measures 1-4.  
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<sup>84</sup> Pinnolis, “An Analysis of Selected Works,” 135.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.



Example 1.23. *Shirat Miriam L'Shabbat*, Silent Prayer No. 11, measures 1-4.  
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Along with the more traditional melodic and harmonic language, Gideon also used long pedal tones (in organ) as an accompaniment to the cantorial solos as well as antiphonal procedures.<sup>87</sup> The choral writing is predominantly homophonic, due to the syllabic setting of the text (Example 1.24).

Example 1.24. *Shirat Miriam L'Shabbat*, “Sh’ma,” measures 1-26.  
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(example 1.24 continued)

<sup>87</sup> Pinnolis, “An Analysis of Selected Works,” 135.

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Organ

*f* Sh' - ma Yis - ra - el a - do - nai e - lo -

10

S

A

T

B

Org.

hei - nu - a - do - nai e - - - chad.

(example 1.24 continued)

CANTOR

15

Ba - ruch Shem k' - vod mal-chu - to l' - o - lam va - ed.

*p* *cresc.* *f*

Organ

*p* *cresc.* *f*

Soprano

21 *p* *cresc.* *f* 25

Ba - ruch shem k' - vod mal-chu - to l' - o - lam va - ed.

Alto

*p* *cresc.* *f*

Ba - ruch shem k' - vod ma-chu - to l' - o - lam va - ed.

Tenor

8 *p* *cresc.* *f*

Ba - ruch shem k' - vod ma-chu - to l' - o - lam va - ed.

Bass

*p* *cresc.* *f*

Ba - ruch shem k' - vod ma-chu - to l' - o - lam va - ed.

Organ

*p* *cresc.* *f*

*p* *cresc.* *f*

Ped.

In another positive review Albert Wisser writes,

One clearly remembers that special Friday evening when a wide variety of composers of the avant-garde, middle of the roaders, minimalists, neo-classicists,

proto-Romanticists and what you've gathered in separate clusters to hear Miss Gideon's work. What was astonishing was almost total agreement that what they had heard was moving and engendered a living religious experience. There is a little doubt in my mind that this service is the closest thing to a genuinely populist work that Miriam Gideon has achieved. It should be widely performed and cherished.<sup>88</sup>

The significance of both *Sacred Service for Sabbath Morning* and *Shirat Miriam*

*L'Shabbat* on the development of the contemporary Jewish music is reflected in Pinnolis' words,

With her services, Miss Gideon has completed a cycle in attitudes. These sacred works represent her 'moderate' and 'traditional' identities for music, having intended them to be specifically 'Jewish.' Originally, Gideon claimed that her first service would be free from set formulas and stereotypes and only highly personal. Yet the personal idiom is subordinated to textual, rhythmic, melodic and other specifically Jewish parameters. In her second service, contrary to her established compositional style, she very often actually quotes from traditional sources in order to paint an atmosphere of ethnic continuity and comfortable exchange with the past.<sup>89</sup>

Outside of the Jewish liturgical tradition are two other choral works, *The Habitable Earth* and *Spiritual Madrigals*, both composed in 1965. *The Habitable Earth* is a cantata based on the Book of Proverbs for SATB soli, SATB chorus, oboe and piano (or organ). The work is dedicated to the memory of Henry Gideon. Here again in her own language Gideon created a highly engaging setting in which the variety of music styles is influenced by the variety of textual images. She demonstrated great maturity of compositional style, exceptional command of form and knowledge of the genre. As in the style of the traditional cantata, one can find instrumental preludes and interludes, massive choral sections, recitative-like passages, vocal ensembles and solo numbers.

While the texts of the three *Spiritual Madrigals* for TTB chorus, bassoon, viola and cello are neither Jewish nor liturgical they express Gideon's spirituality and beliefs in a

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<sup>88</sup> Albert Weisser, "Review of New Music: Miriam Gideon: Shirat Miriam L'Shabbat," *Journal of Synagogue Music* 9/3 (1979), reprinted in Le Page, 134.

<sup>89</sup> Pinnolis, "An Analysis of Selected Works," 147.



unique way. Here she used the poetry of three German authors: one contemporary, her husband, Frederick Ewen; one 13<sup>th</sup> century author, Seuskint von Trimperg; and the great Heinrich Heine. Seemingly the three poems have different subjects but the unifying theme is the human heart as a masterpiece of creation. The term “madrigal” is most appropriate for their musical style: they are little trifles in which the words and the music engage in interplay.

Here, as in most of her choral works, traditional formal devices coexist along with a modern musical language. Three examples from the third piece “Halleluja” demonstrate this fusion of traditional and contemporary. Example 1.25 shows the first nine measures of the piece, set in the style of a chorale. The text is set syllabically; each line is separated by a break. The rhythm is rather uniform.

**Moderato** ♩ = 92

Tenor I  
8 Am Him - mel Sonn und Mond und Stern, sie zeu - gen von der  
*f*

Tenor II  
8 Am Him - mel Sonn und Mond und Stern, sie zeu - gen von der  
*f*

Bass  
8 Am Him - mel Sonn und Mond und Stern, sie zeu - gen von der  
*f*

Example 1.25. *Spiritual Madrigals*, “Halleluja” measures 1-10.

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(example 1.25 continued)

TI  
8 Macht des Herrn, und schaut des From - men Aug nach o - ben

TII  
8 Macht des Herrn, und schaut des Fromm - men Aug nach o - ben

B  
8 Macht des Herrn, und schaut des From - men Aug nach o - ben

TI  
8 den Schop - fer wird er prei - sen lo - ben.

TII  
8 den Schop - fer wird er prei - sen lo - ben.

B  
8 den Schop - fer wird er prei - sen lo - ben.

Example 1.26 demonstrates the use of responsorial technique. The bass carries the

**Marcato** ♩ = 72

51  
Tenor I  
8 *f* Glo - ri - a, Glo - ri - a, Glo - ri - a, Glo - ri - a,

Tenor II  
8 *f* Glo - ri - a, Glo - ri - a, Glo - ri - a, Glo - ri - a,

Bass  
8 *f* Gross is der Her-ren Glo - ri - a hier

Example 1.26. *Spiritual Madrigals*, “Halleluja”, measures 51-66.

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(example 1.26 continued)

TI 55 8

Glo - ri - a, Glo - ri - a,

TII 8

Glo - ri - a, Glo - ri - a,

B

un - ten - gross wie in der Hoh. Ich sing - e ihm ein Ky - ri - e E - le - i -

TI 60 8

Glo - ri - a, Glo - ri - a, Glo - ri - a, Glo - ri - a, Glo - ri - a, - - - Hal - le - lu -

TII 8

Glo - ri - a, Glo - ri - a, Glo - ri - a, Glo - ri - a, Glo - ri - a, Hal - le - lu -

B

son, und Hal - le - lu - ja, Hal - le - , Hal - le - lu -

TI 65 8

ja, Hal - le - lu - ja Hal - le - lu - ja - - - !

TII 8

ja, Hal - le - lu - ja - , Hal - le - lu - ja - - - !

B

ja - - - , Hal - le - - - lu - ja - - - !

full text and both tenor one and tenor two respond with refrain “Gloria,” based on short triplet motives in parallel fourths. Note that the rather dissonant harmonies resolve into open fourths at the end.

87 **Marcato *f***

Tenor I  
8 Hal - le - - - - - ku - ja, Hal - le - lu -

Tenor II  
8 Hal - le - - - - lu - ja, Hal -

Bass  
Hal - le, - Hal - le - lu - ja,

Example 1.27. *Spiritual Madrigals*, “Halleluja”, measures 87-96.  
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Gideon's instrumental works also share a fair amount of recognition, performances and recordings. Among her earliest compositions is *Lyric Piece* (1941) for string orchestra. In his review of the 1979 performance of the work by the New England's Women Symphony, conducted by Rachel Worby, David St. George writes, "The piece shows Gideon at the beginning of her career, experimenting with the kinds of sonorities, textures and contrasts in writing for massed strings that interested a number of American composers in the early and mid-forties, including Copland, Carter and Barber."<sup>90</sup>

In 1953, upon commission from Fritz Jahoda, music professor at the City College of New York, Gideon wrote another orchestra piece, *Symfonia Brevis*. She remembers,

I asked him if I should temper my style and he said, 'No you can write anything you want and we'll play it.' So I wrote a really difficult piece for large orchestra, and they played it remarkably well. Since then, it has been recorded by a professional orchestra in Europe and is a revealing example of the vehement style of my 'middle period.'<sup>91</sup>

This style is characterized by the use of wide dissonant intervals, broad melodic lines, intense, dissonant harmonies and strong dramatic contrasts.<sup>92</sup>

Apart from her fascination with poetry, Gideon showed an interest in ethnic music. In *Fantasy on a Javanese Motive* (1948) for cello and piano (Example 1.28), she imitates the sonorities of a gamelan orchestra as well as the intervallic structure upon which the instruments are tuned.<sup>93</sup> The instruments of the gamelan orchestra are made of bronze, iron, wood or bamboo and are mainly of percussive nature. Along with the various gongs and

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<sup>90</sup> David St. George, review of *Lyric Piece for String Orchestra* by Miriam Gideon, *Boston Globe* (February 13, 1979), reprinted in Le Page, 123.

<sup>91</sup> Rosenberg, "Interview with Miriam Gideon," 66.

<sup>92</sup> David Ewen, *Composers since 1900* (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1969), 223.

<sup>93</sup> David Ewen, *American Composers, a Biographical Dictionary* (New York: G.P.Putnam, 1982), 259.

drums, metallophones and xylophones are also used. The tuning is based on pentatonic, four-note or three note scales, depending on the region.<sup>94</sup>

♩ = 72

Violoncello

Piano

Vc.

Pno.

5

10

*f*

*p*

cresc.

*f*

*p*

\*

Example 1.28. *Fantasy on a Javanese Motive*, measures 1-15.

© 1948 Highgate Press, a division of ECS Publishing, Boston, MA.

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<sup>94</sup> Stanley Sadie, ed. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians Second Edition* (New York: Grove's Dictionaries, 2001), s.v. "Gamelan Orchestra," by Margaret Cartomi, vol. 9, 499.

Gideon managed to create an interesting sound atmosphere. For the main motive of the work she chose a scale comprising five notes: F#, A#, B, D# and E. These same pitches and their various combinations also form the piano accompaniment. In order to better present the style of the Gamelan music, Gideon used the piano for its percussive qualities. Melodic and rhythmic ostinati in high register resemble the sound of the marimba. In the score, she insisted that the pedal marks should be observed carefully. Measures 1-15 are played with one pedal so that all sounds resonate as long as possible.

In *Fortunato* (1954-56), opera for soloists and orchestra based on the Spanish play by Serafin and Joaquin Quintero, she used authentic folk songs from the Madrid area.<sup>95</sup> An interest in Irish folk music is apparent in *Fantasy on Irish Folk Motives* (1975) for an ensemble of instruments.<sup>96</sup>

Gideon did not hesitate to expose young audiences to her music. In 1960, she composed a children's play, *The Adorable Mouse*, based on a French folk tale, for voice and chamber group. In it, she "dares to experiment with the most modern dissonances in a way that might even help young listeners to enjoy more serious music of our time."<sup>97</sup>

Gideon's numerous awards speak highly of her contribution to the world of modern music. Some of her highest achievements are the awarding of the Doctorate of Sacred Music in composition (1970) and the honorary Doctorate in music from the Jewish Theological Seminary (1980). She is also the second woman composer to be elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters (1975). In 1969, Gideon received an award from the National

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<sup>95</sup> Ewen, *Biographical Dictionary*, 259.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Paul Kresh, review of *The Adorable Mouse*, by Miriam Gideon, *Stereo Review* (December 1973), reprinted in Le Page, 127.

Federation of Music Clubs and from the American Society of Music Composers, Authors and Publishers, for her contributions to symphonic literature.<sup>98</sup>

An accomplished artist, who has always had a fair share of recognition, Gideon was warm, generous, informal and down to earth. Pinnolis writes, “Miriam Gideon impresses one by her positive outlook toward life and her work. ‘Let Art be all it can be and not be afraid’ is her motto. She is not constantly comparing herself to others, but rather to herself: ‘Is that really me, is that communicating?’”<sup>99</sup>

A true evaluation of Gideon, the person and the composer is in the words of Linda Ardito, “Gideon’s fulfilling and distinguished career stands as testimony to what is achievable when the process of music composition is inspired by imagination, intelligence and the sheer love of music.”<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Ewen, *Biographical Dictionary*, 259.

<sup>99</sup> Pinnolis, “An Analysis of Selected Works,” 158.

<sup>100</sup> Ardito, “Memorial Tribute,” 204.



## CHAPTER 2

### *THE HABITABLE EARTH: TEXT AND FORMAL STRUCTURE*

#### Text

The text of the cantata, *The Habitable Earth*, is based on selected verses from the Book of Proverbs. The Book of Proverbs is part of a large collection known as the *Wisdom Literature*<sup>101</sup> of Israel. To describe the term, “wisdom literature,” and identify all the sources that belong to this category is not an easy task, but, in general, it is “many kinds of writings: artistic, didactic, meditative.”<sup>102</sup> Dermot Cox writes, “One meets people, who teach, pray or find both pleasure and amusement in literary creation. This naturally results in a more broad-minded and artistic approach to life. What distinguishes it [the *Wisdom Literature*] from the rest of the Old Testament tradition is its didactic nature, and its emphasis on the human and secular side of life.”<sup>103</sup>

Early prototypes of the Israelite *Wisdom Literature* are found in sources from Babylonia, Arabia and Egypt.<sup>104</sup> Hebrews were not only familiar with the foreign writings, but they also borrowed a great deal from them. In *The Book of Proverbs*, Whybray writes,

It is not difficult to understand how Israel came to borrow this literary tradition. When Israel first became a national state and began to develop settled national institutions, in the time of David and Solomon, it drew upon the experience of other more well established states such as Egypt. The Egyptian civil servants who helped these Israelite kings to set up their national organizations – including an educational system – were themselves trained in the Egyptian schools, and they brought with them, and handed on, the literary wisdom tradition which has been the basis of their own education.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Dermot Cox, *Proverbs with an Introduction to the Sapiential Books* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1982), 3.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Charles Fritsch, “The Book of Proverbs: Introduction and Exegesis,” in *The Interpreter’s Bible. The Book of Psalms and The Book of Proverbs, Vol 4.* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1955), 767.

<sup>105</sup> Roger Norman Whybray, *The Book of Proverbs* (Cambridge University Press, 1972), 4.

He adds that the difference between the Egyptian and Israelite writings lies in their form. While the former are just short moral and religious instructional teachings, the latter are elaborated poetic forms, concerned with both sacred and secular subject matter.<sup>106</sup>

The authorship of the Book of Proverbs is uncertain and controversial. Some chapters are titled, "Proverbs of Solomon," "Words of Agur," and "Words of King Lemuel;" others are contributed to the "wise men," a broad term, which in the Old Testament, was applied to individuals whose knowledge and experience placed them in a respectable social position.<sup>107</sup> The book is traditionally attributed to King Solomon as the prototype of Israelite wisdom. It is believed that he gathered and recast many proverbs as well as elaborated on many universal truths.<sup>108</sup> In *The Book of Proverbs: A Survey of Modern Study*, Roger Whybray writes, "It is generally acknowledged that the book [Proverbs] is the work of a number of different authors of different periods--indeed, multiplicity of authorship is proclaimed in the book itself in the headings prefaced to its different parts."<sup>109</sup>

From the difference of the writing styles exhibited through the chapters it is also possible that many other "wise men" were involved in the creation of the proverbs.<sup>110</sup> According to Cox, the "wise," were individuals who had a closer relationship to secular affairs--"an intellectual elite, intelligent and educated."<sup>111</sup> It is evident from the language of the writings, and the poetic forms used that the "wise" possessed not only a high degree of education, but also fine literary interests.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Whybray, *The Book of Proverbs*, 4.

<sup>107</sup> Cox, *Proverbs*, 20.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid..

<sup>109</sup> Roger Norman Whybray, *The Book of Proverbs: A Survey of Modern Study* (Leiden, New York: Brill, 1995), 150.

<sup>110</sup> Cox, *Proverbs*, 21.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

The dating of the Book of Proverbs is also quite uncertain (as it is for most of the books of the Old Testament). Whybray writes: "Most writers on Proverbs have made attempts to date the book, but the opinions that have been expressed are often contradictory."<sup>113</sup> He adds,

The wisdom books of the Old Testament are notoriously difficult to date. With Proverbs in particular this is largely due to the fact that, whether or not the book is to be considered as so alien as to be incompatible with the religion of the Old Testament, it is undeniable that it contains almost no obvious links with the normative faith of Israel.<sup>114</sup>

In general, most scholars agree that the proverbs were composed between the 10<sup>th</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. and were collected into written statements about 300 B.C.<sup>115</sup>

As mentioned above, most of the writings in the Book of Proverbs are fine poetic forms. These short enigmatic statements employ different literary idioms such as analogy, metaphor and allegory.<sup>116</sup> The most common device used is parallelism, described as "a balance between rhythm and ideas."<sup>117</sup> By using parallelism, the writer can express two contrasting or complementing points of view, rather than supply facts. The reader then is provoked to choose and use his own judgment, which is another very important feature of the proverbial literature.<sup>118</sup>

Parallelism may be *synonymous*, in which the second clause repeats the thought of the first in different words ("A fool's mouth is his ruin, and his lips are the snare of his soul," 18:7); *antithetic*, as the second clause presents a contrast to the first ("Chasten thy son, for there is hope, but seek not his destruction," 19:18) and *synthetic*, in which the second clause

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<sup>113</sup> Whybray, *Proverbs: A Survey of Modern Study*, 150.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Alex Preminger, ed., *Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, New Jersey, 1965), 680.

<sup>117</sup> Cox, *Proverbs*, 8.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 11.

continues the thought of the first ("Speak not in the ears of fool, for he will despise the wisdom of thy words," 23:9). Comparison brings the two statements together through resemblance ("As vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singeth songs to a heavy heart," 10:26).<sup>119</sup>

While many verses are purely instructional, some are witty, playful and amusing ("The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his desire, but the belly of the wicked shall want," 16:5). The proverbs are predominantly in binary form, consisting of two, three or four sentences. Some longer and more narrative ones can also be found. The "Wisdom's monologue" (8:22 -8:33) and the "Drunkard's Lament" (23:29) are an example of the latter.

One of the most important features of the Hebrew wisdom literature as exhibited in the Book of Proverbs, is the personification of the Wisdom. According to Dermot Cox such personification is uniquely Israelite because in the other parallel sources (the "Instruction writings" of Egypt), the wisdom is only a human attribute with no abstract value.<sup>120</sup> He points out that there may be two reasons for such personification. The first one is to add a poetic emphasis and vividness to the idea, the second, to express certain abstract qualities in an object.<sup>121</sup>

Charles Fritsch writes, "He [the Hebrew] believed that this wisdom came ultimately from God. It was an easy matter then for the Hebrew to personify this principle that was in the world about him as well as intimately connected with his own personal affairs. The next step naturally was to regard wisdom as a distinct or separate personality."<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Reverend A.Cohen, *Proverbs. Hebrew Text and English Translation with an Introduction and Commentary* (Hindhead, Surrey: The Soncino Press, 1993), xiii.

<sup>120</sup> Cox, *Proverbs*, 71.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Fritsch, "The Book of Proverbs: Introduction and Exegesis," 773.

Gideon's choice of text for *The Habitable Earth* emphasizes this aspect. She selected verses, which exhibit the uniqueness and the versatility of the personified wisdom. Although Gideon herself did not name the three movements of the cantata, the subject matter may be described as “Wisdom’s Monologue,” “The Many Faces of Wisdom” and “Praise of Wisdom.”<sup>123</sup>

The first movement is based on selected verses from chapter eight from the First Book of Proverbs. According to Dermot Cox this particular chapter is "...the most theologically rich, where Wisdom is once again personified and her relationship with God and mankind are more intimate."<sup>124</sup> Chapter eight has an interesting structure. Although its material is formally organized into short sayings in standard binary form, the information unfolds into a lengthy narration. It is impossible to single out a “proverb,” or a “moral;” the main purpose is telling the story of the creation of Wisdom. Here is the text, as it appears in Part I of *The Habitable Earth*:

8:1. Does not wisdom call?  
And understanding put forth her voice

8:4. ‘Unto you oh, man, I call  
And my voice is to the sons of men.

8:22. The Lord made me at the beginning of His way  
The first of His works of old.

8:23. I was swept up from everlasting,  
from the beginning or ever the earth was.

Example. 2.1. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, text.  
(example 2.1 continued)

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<sup>123</sup> The titles are given by the author of this paper to summarize the subject of each movement.

<sup>124</sup> Cox, *Proverbs*, 146.

8:24. When there were no depths,  
I was brought forth;

8:26. While as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields,  
nor the beginning of the dust of the world.

8:27. When He established the heavens, I was there  
When He set a circle upon the face of the deep,

8:28. When He made firm the skies above  
When the fountains of the deep showed their might,

8:29. When He gave the sea His decree  
That the waters should not transgress  
His commandment,  
When He appointed the foundation of the earth;

8:30. Then I was by Him  
And I was daily all delight.

8:31. Playing in His habitable earth,  
And my delights are with the sons of men.'

In the first two verses of this monologue, Wisdom calls to men to receive her instructions. In the following verses, she is “so distinctly personalized that it is well on the way of being hypostatized.”<sup>125</sup> She describes her own creation as well as the creation of the world, “watching and sporting before God as he did his work.”<sup>126</sup>

The text of the second movement contains proverbs from various chapters on a variety of subjects (Example 2.2). It is divided into two large sections. The first one, based on chapter 23:29-35, sets a sharp contrast to the divine nature of the creation described in

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<sup>125</sup> Fritsch, “The Book of Proverbs: Introduction and Exegesis,” 776.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

movement one This monologue, often described as the “Drunkard’s Lament,”<sup>127</sup> sets a rather earthly mood. Full of witty and vivid metaphors<sup>128</sup> it is a fine example of the highly artistic nature of some of the writings in the Book of Proverbs.

23:29. Who crieth: ‘Woe? Who: “Alas’?  
Who hath contentions? Who hath ravings?  
Who hath wounds without cause?  
Who hath redness of eye?

23:30. They that tarry long at the wine  
They that go to try mixed wine.

23:31. Look not upon the wine when it is red  
When it giveth its color in the cup,  
When it glideth down smooth

23:32. At the last it biteth like a serpent,  
And stingeth like a basilisk.

23:30. Thine eyes shall behold strange things

23:35. When shall I awake?  
I will seek it yet again.’

Example 2.2. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, section one, text.

Here again we find another exception to the standard short binary form. Instead it is a lengthy narrative, a humorous description of man's weakness. Cox describes it as “a little gem, one of the finest pieces of imaginative writing in the whole Book of Proverbs...it would be a mistake to take it as serious instruction, since it is meant to raise laughter, and perhaps a wry memory!”<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Cox, *Proverbs*, 193.

<sup>128</sup> Fritsch, “The Book of Proverbs: Introduction and Exegesis,” 915.

<sup>129</sup> Cox, *Proverbs*, 194.

In the following section, Gideon expanded further the subject of wisdom by adding more verses, this time randomly selected (Example 2.3). Here the lengthy narration is replaced by short moral truths. In the music these short proverbs are set as separate phrases, each one with its own texture and musical language.

27:14. He that blesseth his friend in a loud voice  
rising early in the morning,  
it shall be counted a curse to him.

23:9. Buy the truth and sell it not.  
Speak not in the ears of a fool  
for he will despise the wisdom of thy words.

14:4. Where no oxen are, the crib is clean,  
but much increase is by the strength of the ox

19:18. Chasten thy son, for there is hope,  
but seek not his destruction.

10:26. As vinegar upon nitre so is he  
that singeth songs to a heavy heart"

17:3. The refining pot is for silver and the furnace is for gold,  
but the Lord trieth the heart.

Example 2.3. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, section two, text.

The text of the third movement contains an exact repetition of the two initial verses from the first movement, followed by three verses (3:13, 16, 17), in which “through wisdom, humanity can return once more to the lost garden of paradise”<sup>130</sup> (Example 2.4).

8:1. Does not wisdom call?  
And understanding put forth her voice

8:4. ‘Unto you oh, man, I call  
And my voice is to the sons of men.

Example 2.4. *The Habitable Earth*, Part III, text.

(example 2.4 continued)

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<sup>130</sup> Cox, *Proverbs*, 120



3:13. Happy is the man that findeth wisdom  
She is more precious than rubies

3:16. Length of days is in her right hand,  
in her left hand are riches and honor

3:17. Her ways are the ways of pleasantness  
and all her paths are peace.

Dermot Cox calls verses 3:11-18 “A Hymn to Wisdom.” By this he implies the praising character of the text and its “more homogenous structure.”<sup>131</sup> The metrical nature of the verses and their strophic organization is reflected in their English translation.

In the translation, the metrical foot of verses 3:13, 3:16 and 3:17 is ‘trochee.’ This rhythm appears in popular verses, like songs, chants, nursery rhymes and is also quite common for riddles and proverbs.<sup>132</sup> It contains one stressed syllable, followed by another, unstressed one, thus creating a very distinctive rhythm of strong/weak.<sup>133</sup> In Example 2.5 the indented syllables represent the strong foot, the regular, the weak foot.

3:13. *Happy* is the *man* that *findeth* wisdom  
*She* is more *precious* than *rubies*

3:16. *Length* of *days* is in her *right* hand,  
in her *left* hand are *riches* and *honor*

3:17. Her *ways* are the *ways* of *pleasantness*  
and *all* her *paths* are *peace*.

Example 2.5. *The Habitable Earth*, Part III, verses 3:13, 3:16 and 3:17.

Gideon’s continual fascination with words, their sound and meaning led to a painstaking search for the most expressive version of the text. When choosing the verses for *The Habitable Earth*, she did not simply resort to a single text source; instead she combined

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>132</sup> Alex Preminger, *Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, 870.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

proverbs from two different Bible editions. It is this author's belief that Gideon intended to find the most appropriate poetic expression to set to the music. The two Bible editions are the King James Version and the American Standard Version. It is also interesting to find that in some instances, Gideon substituted with her own words, perhaps to accommodate the musical flow.

Tables 1, 2 and 3 illustrates the text of movement one of *The Habitable Earth*, as it appears in the two Bible versions and in Gideon's rendition. The italicized words are the ones, which are same in Gideon and either King James or the American Standard Version or both; the bold ones are Gideon's free changes.

Thus, there is no particular consistency to which Gideon adhered when choosing verses from either of the sources. The three initial verses, 8:1, 8:4 and 8:22 are same in both King James and the American Standard Version; therefore it is not clear which edition Gideon chose (Table 1). It is interesting to note that she did not agree with the word 'doth' (possibly because of the combination with 'not,' another short word with 'o', which requires the same amount of stress) and changed it to 'does'. In verse 8:23 Gideon preferred the King James' 'from the beginning or ever the earth was' to 'from the beginning before the earth was.'

From Table 2, it is obvious that the differences between all three versions of the text are minimal. Both the King James and the American Standard Version are the same and apparently Gideon closely followed both of them. As seen from the words in the bold script she changed a small number of words, again perhaps to accommodate a musical idea and rhythm, she may have had in mind. The new verses in movement three (Table 3) are exact same in King James, the American Standard Edition and in Gideon.

Table 1. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, text.

| King James Version  | American Standard Version  | Gideon   |
|---|--|--|
| 8:1 Doth not wisdom cry?<br><i>And understanding put forth her voice</i>  | Doth not wisdom cry?<br><i>And understanding put forth her voice</i>   | <b>Does</b> not wisdom <b>call</b> ?<br><i>And understanding put forth her voice</i>   |
| 8:4 <i>Unto you o, men I call</i><br><i>And my voice is to the sons of men</i>                                  | <i>Unto you o, men I call</i><br><i>And my voice is to the sons of men</i>   | <i>Unto you o, men I call</i><br><i>And my voice is to the sons of men</i>   |
| 8:22 <i>The Lord possessed me</i><br><i>at the beginning of his way,</i><br><i>before His works of old</i>      | Jehovah possessed me<br><i>at the beginning of his way</i><br><i>before his works of old</i>                                 | <i>The Lord</i> <b>made me</b><br><i>at the beginning of his way</i><br><b>the first</b> of His works of old                 |
| 8:23 <i>I was set up from everlasting,</i><br><i>from the beginning or ever the earth was</i>                   | <i>I was set up from everlasting,</i><br><i>from the beginning, before the earth was</i>                                     | <i>I was set up from everlasting,</i><br><i>from the beginning or ever the earth was</i>                                     |
| 8:24 <i>When there were no depths,</i><br><i>I was brought forth</i>  | <i>When there were no depths,</i><br><i>I was brought forth</i>  | <i>When there were no depths,</i><br><i>I was brought forth</i>  |
| 8:26 While as yet he had not made the earth<br>nor the fields, nor the highest part<br>of the dust of the world | <i>While as yet he had not made the earth</i><br><i>nor the fields, nor the beginning</i><br><i>of the dust of the world</i> | <i>While as yet he had not made the earth</i><br><i>nor the fields, nor the beginning</i><br><i>of the dust of the world</i> |
| 8:27 When he prepared the heavens<br>I was there, when he set a compass<br>upon the face of the depth           | <i>When he established the heavens</i><br><i>I was there, when he set a circle</i><br><i>upon the face of the deep</i>       | <i>When he established the heavens</i><br><i>I was there, when he set a circle</i><br><i>upon the face of the deep</i>       |
| 8:28 When he established the clouds above<br>when he strengthened the fountains<br>of the deep became strong    | <i>When he made firm the skies above,</i><br><i>when the fountains of the deep</i><br><i>became strong</i>                   | <i>When he made firm the skies above</i><br><i>when the fountains of the deep</i><br><b>showed their might</b>               |

(table 1 continued)

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**King James Version****American Standard Version****Gideon**

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8:29 When he gave to the sea *his decree*  
that the waters should not pass  
his commandment  
When he appointed  
the foundation of the earth

*When he gave to the sea his bound*  
*that the waters should not transgress*  
*his commandment*  
*When he appointed*  
*the foundation of the earth*

*When he gave the sea his decree*  
*that the waters should not transgress*  
*his commandment*  
*When he appointed*  
*the foundation of the earth*

8:30 *Then I was by him*  
*and I was daily his delight*

*Then I was by him*  
*and I was daily his delight*

*Then I was by him*  
*and I was daily his delight*

8:31 Rejoicing *in his habitable earth*  
*and my delights were with the sons of men*

Rejoicing *in his habitable earth*  
*and my delight was with the sons of men*

**Playing** *in his habitable earth*  
*and my delights are with the sons of men*

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Table 2. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, text.

| King James Version   | American Standard Version   | Gideon   |
|--|---|--|
| 23:29 Who hath woe?<br>Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions?<br>Who hath complaining? Who hath wounds<br>without cause? Who hath redness of eyes?   | Who hath woe?<br>Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions?<br>Who hath bubbling? Who hath wounds<br>without cause? Who hath redness of eyes?   | Who <b>crieth</b> woe?<br>Who <b>Alas</b> ? Wha hath contentions?<br>Who hath <b>ravings</b> ? Who hath wounds<br>without cause? Who hath redness of eye?  |
| 23:30 They that tarry long at the wine<br>they that go to seek mixed wine<br>23:31 Look not thou upon the wine<br>when it is red,<br>when it giveth its color in the cup<br>when it moveth itself aright | They that tarry long at the wine<br>they that go to seek out mixed wine<br>Look not upon the wine<br>when it is red,<br>when it sparkleth in the cup<br>when it goeth down smoothly | They that tarry long at the wine<br>they that go to <b>try</b> mixed wine<br>Look not upon the wine<br>when it is red<br>when it giveth its color in the cup<br>when it <b>glideth</b> down smoothly |
| 23:32 At least it biteth like a serpent<br>and stingeth like an adder  | At least it biteth like a serpent<br>and stingeth like an adder   | At least it biteth like a serpent<br>and stingeth like a <b>basilisk</b>   |
| 23:33 Thine eyes shall behold<br>strange women   | Thine eyes shall behold<br>strange things   | Thine eyes shall behold<br>strange things  |
| 23:35 When shall I awake,<br>I will seek it yet again  | When shall I awake,<br>I will seek it yet again   | When shall I awake,<br>I will seek it yet again  |
| 27:14 He that blesseth his friend<br>in a loud voice<br>rising early in the morning<br>it shall be counted a curse to him  | He that blesseth his friend<br>in a loud voice<br>rising early in the morning<br>it shall be counted a curse to him   | He that blessed his friend<br>in a loud voice<br>rising early in the morning<br>it shall be counted a curse to him   |

(table 2 continued)

| King James Version  | American Standard Version  | Gideon   |
|---|--|--|
| 23:23 Buy the truth and sell it not<br>23:9 Speak not in the hearing of a fool<br>for he will despise the wisdom of thy words | Buy the truth and sell it not<br>Speak not in the hearing of a fool<br>for he will despise the wisdom of thy words | Buy the truth and sell it not<br>Speak not in the <b>ears</b> of a fool<br>for he will despise the wisdom of thy words |
| 14:4 Where no oxen are, the crib is clean,<br>but much increase<br>is by the strength of the ox                               | Where no oxen are, the crib is clean,<br>but much increase<br>is by the strength of the ox                         | Where no oxen are, the crib is clean,<br>but much increase<br>is by the strength of the ox                             |
| 19:8 Chasten thy son, while there is hope,<br>and let not thy soul spare for his crying                                       | Chasten thy son, seeing there is hope,<br>and set not thy heart on his destruction                                 | Chasten thy son, for there is hope,<br>but <b>seek not</b> his destruction   |
| 10:26 As vinegar to the teeth<br>and as smoke to the eyes<br>so is the sluggard to them than send him                         | As vinegar to the teeth<br>and as smoke to the eyes<br>so is the sluggard to them that send him                    | As vinegar <b>upon nitre</b><br><br><b>so is he that singeth songs to a heavy heart</b>                                |
| 17:3 The refining pot is for silver<br>and the furnace is for gold<br>but the Lord trieth the hearts                          | The refining pot is for silver<br>and the furnace is for gold<br>but Jehovah trieth the hearts                     | The refining pot is for silver<br>and the furnace is for gold<br>but the Lord trieth the heart                         |

Table 3. *The Habitable Earth*, Part III, new text.

| King James Version  | American Standard Version  | Gideon   |
|---|--|--|
| 3:13 Happy is the man<br>who findeth wisdom<br>She is more precious than rubies   | Happy is the man<br>who findeth wisdom<br>She is more precious than rubies   | Happy is the man<br>who findeth wisdom<br>She is more precious than rubies   |
| 3:16 Length of days is in her right hand<br>in her left hand are riches and honor | Length of days is in her right hand<br>in her left hand are riches and honor | Length of days is in her right hand<br>in her left hand are riches and honor |
| 3:17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness<br>and all her paths are peace             | Her ways are ways of pleasantness<br>and all her paths are peace             | Her ways are the ways of pleasantness<br>and all her paths are peace         |

## Formal Structure

As in any vocal work the text cannot only serve as an inspiration for building musical images, but may also be a skeleton of the musical form. Although *The Habitable Earth* is a seemingly short three-movement piece, it fits well the commonly accepted definition for ‘cantata’- “...a vocal genre (of the Baroque), consisting of recitatives, arias, duets, choruses.”<sup>134</sup> Gideon carefully organized the different verses into choral sections, solos, duets, and recitatives. One also finds an instrumental prelude to open the work, as well as instrumental interludes placed at other strategic points throughout the work. The concluding choral section, with its simpler harmonies and homophonic style, resembles a chorale, which, in the traditional Baroque cantata often ended the work.

*The Habitable Earth* is organized into three movements. Parts I and III are similar in musical material and overall texture and they are predominantly choral and homophonic. Moreover, the first nineteen measures of Part III are an exact repetition of the corresponding measures in Part I, suggesting a recapitulation at the end of the work. Tables 4 and 5 show the overall structures of Parts I and III.

Part II has not only the most diverse text but also the most complex structure, due to the large number of verses, as well as the use of various musical idioms. Instead of being a unified section, it is build upon contrast and variety. Here Gideon incorporated traditional cantata forms such as duets, recitatives and arioso, as well as many instrumental interludes.

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<sup>134</sup> Stanley Sadie, ed. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians Second Edition* (New York: Grove’s Dictionaries, 2001), s.v. “Cantata,” by Colin Timms, vol 5, 8..



Table 4. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, overall structure.

|           | Prelude                     | Choir introduction | Interlude  | Choir narration | Bass solo                           | Choir                                      | Interlude                | Choir closing |
|-----------|-----------------------------|--------------------|--|-----------------|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------------|---------------|
| Measures  | 1.....9                     | 10.....20          | 21.....24  | 25.....31       | 32.....38                           | 39.....57                                  | 58.....59                | 60.....72     |
| Choir     | -----                       |                    | -----  |                 |                                     |  | -----                    |               |
| Bass solo |                             |                    |  |                 | -----                               |  |                          |               |
| Oboe      | -----                       |                    |  |                 | -----                               |  | -----                    |               |
| Piano     | -----                       |                    | -----  |                 | -----                               |  | -----                    |               |
| Text      | <i>Does not wisdom call</i> |                    | <i>The Lord had made<br/>Me at the beginning</i> |                 | <i>When there were<br/>no depth</i> | <i>When He established<br/>the Heavens</i> | <i>Then I was by Him</i> |               |
| Proverbs  | 8:1, 8:4                    |                    | 8:22, 8:23                                       |                 | 8:24, 8:26                          | 8:27, 8:28, 8:29                           | 8:30, 8:31               |               |

Table 5. *The Habitable Earth*, Part III, overall structure.

|          | Prelude | Choir recapitulation        | Chorale-like section                           |  | Interlude | Closing                            |
|----------|---------|-----------------------------|--|--|-----------|------------------------------------|
| Measures | 1.....9 | 10.....19                   | 20.....29                                      | .....31  | 32.....34 | 35.....42                          |
| Choir    |         | -----                       | -----  |  |           | -----                              |
| Oboe     | -----   |                             |  | -----  | -----     |                                    |
| Piano    | -----   |                             | -----  |  | -----     |                                    |
| Text     |         | <i>Does not wisdom call</i> | <i>Happy is the man<br/>who findeth wisdom</i> | <i>Her ways are the ways<br/>of pleasantness</i> |           | <i>and all her paths are peace</i> |
| Proverbs |         | 8:1, 8:4                    | 3:13, 3:16                                     | 3:17   |           |                                    |

In Part II, there are two main sections, based on the text and the musical texture. The first section (mm. 1-37) is set to the “Drunkard’s Lament,” Proverbs 23:29-35, for SATB soloists, oboe and piano. Various combinations between the voices and the instruments are used throughout. Table 6 shows the overall structure of the “Drunkard’s Lament,” Part II, measures 1-37.

The second section (mm. 38-end) contains various proverbs that are in the form of short moral truths. Each proverb is set for a soloist and either piano or oboe, or both. There is a distinctive separation between each verse, indicated by double bars and sharp changes of tempo, meter and register (Table 7).

The last proverb, “The refining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold; But the Lord trieth the hearth,” is the climax of the entire piece. According to Cohen the text expresses the power of God to test the character. He states that, “...while man possesses the ability to test material things, so far as the human heart is concerned, the analogous power is possessed by God alone.”<sup>135</sup>

To reflect on this powerful statement, Gideon creates an appropriate musical atmosphere. A nine measure piano interlude (mm. 114-122), which is based on driving sixteenth notes, prepares the apotheosis “But the Lord trieth the heart,” sung by tenor solo, over grand chords in the piano.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Cohen, *Proverbs*, 111.

<sup>136</sup> For detailed discussion of the music see Chapter III, pages 152-154.

Table 6. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, “Drunkard’s Lament,” overall structure.

|          | Drunkard’s Lament                    |   |                                   |   |   |   |
|----------|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Measures | 1.....5                              | 6.....16                                    | 17.....21                         | 22.....28                                       | 29.....31   | 32.....38   |
| Soprano  | -----                                | -----                                       | -----                             | -----   |   |   |
| Alto     | -----                                | -----                                       | -----                             | -----   |   |   |
| Tenor    | -----                                | -----                                       | -----                             | -----   | -----   | -----   |
| Bass     | -----                                | -----                                       | -----                             | -----   |   |   |
| Oboe     |                                      | m.13-----16                                 |                                   | m.24-----28                                     |   | m.37-----   |
| Piano    | -----                                |   | m.19                              | m.27-----                                       |   |   |
| Text     | <i>Who crieth Woe?<br/>who Alas?</i> | <i>They that tarry<br/>long at the wine</i> | <i>Look not upon<br/>the wine</i> | <i>At the last it biteth<br/>like a serpent</i> | <i>Thine eyes shall behold<br/>strange things</i> | <i>When shall I awake, I will<br/>seek it yet again</i> |
| Proverbs | 23:29                                | 23:30                                       | 23:31                             | 23:32   | 23:30   | 23:35   |

Table 7. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, section two, overall structure.

|          | Miscellaneous Proverbs                                |                                      |   |  |
|----------|---|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| Measures | 38.....44   | // 45.....57                         | // 57.....63                                    | // 64.....85 //  |
| Soprano  | -----   |                                      |   |  |
| Alto     | -----   | A/T Duet-----                        |   | A/Oboe Duet-----   |
| Tenor    | -----   | -----                                |   |  |
| Bass     | -----   |                                      | -----   |  |
| Oboe     |   | -----                                |   | -----  |
| Piano    | -----   | -----                                | -----   | -----  |
| Text     | <i>He that blessed his friend<br/>in a loud voice</i> | <i>Buy the truth and sell it not</i> | <i>Where no oxen are, the crib<br/>is clean</i> | <i>Chasten thy son, but seek not his<br/>destruction</i> |
| Proverbs | 27:14   | 23:9                                 | 14:4  | 19:18  |

(table 7 continued)

|          | Miscellaneous Proverbs       |                                       |                                      |
|----------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Measures | 86.....104                   | 105.....115                           | 116.....118 119.....123              |
| Soprano  | -----                        |                                       |                                      |
| Alto     | -----                        |                                       |                                      |
| Tenor    | -----                        | -----                                 | -----                                |
| Bass     | -----                        | -----                                 |                                      |
| Oboe     | -----                        |                                       |                                      |
| Piano    | -----                        | Ostinati-----                         | Interlude-----                       |
| Text     | <i>As vinegar upon nitre</i> | <i>The refining pot is for silver</i> | <i>But the Lord trieth the heart</i> |
| Proverbs | 10:26                        | 17:3                                  | 17:3                                 |

## CHAPTER 3

### *THE HABITABLE EARTH: ANALYSIS*

#### **Analytical Techniques**

In his book *A Guide to Musical Analysis*, Nicholas Cook writes,

There is something fascinating about the very idea of analyzing music...when you analyze a piece of music, you are in effect recreating it for yourself, you end up with the same sense of possession that a composer feels for a piece he has written. You develop an intuitive knowledge of what works in music and what doesn't, what's right and what isn't, that far exceeds your capacity to formulate such things in words or to explain them intellectually.<sup>137</sup>

In order to achieve that “intuitive knowledge” and to answer the main question of how the musical piece works from within, it is of great importance to possess good and reliable analytical tools. Cook continues,

It is not so much to invent new techniques, nor to go to endlessly refining those we already have, but rather to make the full possible *use* of them. One way in which the techniques can be made more useful is through their being employed in combination with one another. But the most important way in which today's techniques of analysis can become more useful is through more people using them.<sup>138</sup>

There are two very important preliminaries, which should precede the analysis, familiarization with the music and establishing applicable concepts and analytical techniques. When establishing such concepts and techniques it is of great importance to approach the musical piece from the composer's own standpoint.

The departure point of the analysis of *The Habitable Earth* will be Gideon's own description of her musical style, “...free atonality; something that means or at least in my

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<sup>137</sup> Nicholas Cook, *A Guide to Musical Analysis* (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1987), 1.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

case means, I am not using any precompositional elements, that is no rows, no series. I'd say it is dissonant without a basic key center."<sup>139</sup>

In *Serial Composition and Atonality: An Introduction to the Music of Schoenberg, Berg and Webern*, George Perle writes,

Atonality originates in an attempt to liberate the twelve notes of the chromatic scale from the diatonic functional associations they still retain in 'chromatic' music--to dissociate, so to speak, the chromatic scale from 'chromaticism.' The expanded harmonic vocabulary of late nineteenth-century music had extended the range of tonal relationships to the point where traditional articulative procedures were no longer adequate. The final step in this development was taken by Arnold Schoenberg in a radical stylistic departure based upon rejection of any general principles regulating simultaneity and progression.<sup>140</sup>

The term "atonality" itself has been subject of controversy and disagreement among composers and theorists alike. Perle comments on its ambiguity, when used to imply a total absence of tonal center,

The *American College Dictionary* defines it [atonality] as 'the absence of key or tonal center'. However, the rise and dissemination of an 'atonal' type of music has imbued the term 'tonal center' as well as other conventional terms with a certain ambiguity. If the term 'tonal center' is defined as a note, or complex of notes which functions as a relatively stable element or point of reference, then it is clear that almost all 'atonal' music-though not all of it--does have 'tonal centers.' The distinctive feature of atonal music lies in the manner in which such 'tonal centers' are established and dis-established.<sup>141</sup>

Schoenberg, who himself adopted the atonal idiom for his early works, also agreed on the inappropriateness of the term,

The expression 'atonal music' is nonsense. Tonal is that which *pertains* to tone; tonality is used in the sense of a special application of this concept; since it must mean that in a musical space everything is referable back to one tone (the tonic), there is a significant imprecision here. 'Atonal' cannot be something in which tones occur, something that does not pertain to tone,

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<sup>139</sup> Pinnolis, "An Analysis of Selected Works," 102.

<sup>140</sup> George Perle, *Serial Composition and Atonality* (Berkeley, LA: University of California Press, 1981), 1.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.



having no connection to it. Even in the sense in which tonality is used, atonal cannot be applied since a succession of tones that in no way relate to one another is not a succession.<sup>142</sup>

To avoid the negativity associated with atonality, Perle introduces concepts such as “free atonality” and “dodecaphony” or “serial composition.” The former refers to compositional procedures based on unordered complex of notes; the latter two imply procedures with ordered sets and the twelve-tone row. In the analysis of *The Habitable Earth*, the definition of ‘free atonality’ as stated by Perle can be applied,

The ‘free’ atonality that preceded dodecaphony precludes by definition the possibility of a statement of self-consistent, generally applicable compositional procedures. A referential complex of tones may be restricted to a single pitch level in one piece, freely transposed in another, and entirely voided in a third, even where these are different movements of single opus. The ‘rightness’ of a particular note depends not upon its possible containment within a preestablished harmonic unit, as it does in tonality, but upon larger compositional factors whose meaning must be discovered within the work itself.<sup>143</sup>

Another concept associated with the emerging of the atonal style is the “emancipation of the dissonance.” In Schoenberg’s words it is “a progressive loss of power of dissonant chords to disrupt the listener...they [the dissonant chords] gradually became equivalent to consonant chords in their structural role and comprehensibility, no longer in need of special treatment such as preparation or resolution, and inherently neither harsh, nor beautiful.”<sup>144</sup>

Although this concept applies partially to chords, which belong to tonal music,<sup>145</sup> its general application to atonal music is also valid. Because of such emancipation, the aural world has expanded and the ears have become tuned to wide range of sonorities. Because the dissonance has invaded totally the musical composition and all twelve notes have become

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<sup>142</sup> Bryan R. Simms, *The Atonal Music of Arnold Schoenberg* (Oxford University Press, 2000), 8.

<sup>143</sup> Perle, *SerialComposition*, 9.

<sup>144</sup> Simms, *Arnold Schoenberg*, 15.

<sup>145</sup> The so called “vagrant chords,” which have functional value in two or more keys simultaneously. Such chords are the altered diminished sevenths, augmented sixths and others.

equivalent and nonhierarchical, atonal works are perceived just as well as their tonal counterparts. As Adolph Weiss puts it, “When the unusualness becomes familiar through experience the difficulty disappears.”<sup>146</sup>

One of the difficulties in analyzing atonal music is defining the thematic material. According to Perle, such a problem is “uniquely presented and solved in each atonal work.”<sup>147</sup> He describes the atonal theme as “[one which] emerges only in the course of the composition and does not appear as a salient design at the outset of the work as in tonal music.”<sup>148</sup> This is due to the fact that often the theme is based on a “minute intervallic cell” which may undergo various manipulations such as transpositions, inversions or permutation of its elements. Perle also observes that, “...it [the minute intervallic cell] may operate as a kind of microcosmic set of fixed intervallic content, forming either a chord, a melodic figure, or combination of both.”<sup>149</sup>

This last statement best describes the musical style exhibited not only in *The Habitable Earth*, but also in other compositions by Gideon. In his analysis of *The Hound of Heaven*,<sup>150</sup> George Perle points out the importance of the semitone and the third (including their inversions and enharmonic equivalents) as generators of larger melodic and harmonic events.<sup>151</sup> Judith Pinnolis states that those two intervals also form a “series of small motivic cells,” which are used as a microstructure for larger melodic shapes.<sup>152</sup> She underlines the importance of the interval in Gideon’s music as, “It is not the pitch, but what lies between pitches that is the distinguishing thing here. Specific pitch is relevant in regard to the

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<sup>146</sup> Adolph Weiss, “The Lyceum of Schönberg,” *Modern Music* 9/3 (March-April 1932):100.

<sup>147</sup> Perle, *Serial Composition*, 9.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> George Perle, “The Music of Miriam Gideon,” 4.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Pinnolis, “An Analysis of Selected Works,” 73.

interval. That is the pitch *in its relationship* to other specific pitches at that moment is significant.”<sup>153</sup>

In “A Woman’s Way of Responding to the World: Miriam Gideon’s *Night is my Sister*,” Ellie Hisama offers an analysis using the concept of pitch-class sets. She demonstrates how the two main trichords of the song, pitch class sets [013] and [014], have the function of germ cells and create compositional coherence. The presentation of the trichords as pitch- class sets successively demonstrates that Gideon favors particular intervallic structures. The interval class 1 is indicative of either a semitone or its inversion M7, interval classes 3 and 4 respectively represent the m3 and M3 as well as their inversions, m6 and M6. Hisama also shows that the semitone is the core of melodic formations, and voice leading maneuvers.

In the same article, she provides an interesting insight to Gideon’s compositional technique. Hisama quotes an interview with Milton Babbitt in which he stated, “...the concept of motivic saturation, or the immersion of a musical motive in a composition, was very familiar to Miriam...she considered herself a motivic composer.”<sup>154</sup> This statement agrees with all of the above analyses in which the importance of the interval as a motive was described.

The concept of pitch-class sets is based on the fact that “The repertory of atonal music is characterized by the occurrence of pitches in novel combinations as well as by the

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>154</sup> Hisama, *Gendering Musical Modernism*, 152.

occurrence of familiar pitch combinations in unfamiliar environments.”<sup>155</sup> Allen Forte further explains his system,

As a consequence of octave equivalence and enharmonic equivalence any notated pitch belongs to one and only one of 12 distinct pitch-classes. This can be seen readily if the usual letter names are replaced by the integers 0,1,2...11. We then speak of *integer notation*, as distinct from staff notation. The integer 0 has been assigned to C (which is equivalent to B-sharp and D-double-flat); the integer 1 has been assigned to C-sharp (which is equivalent to both B-double-sharp and D-flat) and so on until the integer 11 has been assigned to B, completing the octave. A *pitch-class set* then, is a set of distinct integers (i.e. no duplicates) representing pitch classes. A pitch class set is displayed in square brackets—for example [012].<sup>156</sup>

One of the most interesting features of Forte’s system is that register does not count and therefore it is not important if the distance between two pitches is presented as a M3 or as its inversion m6 (for example the major triad C-E-G is always [037] even though in the music it may also be presented as E-C-G or G-C-E). This feature of the integer notation is of great importance because it shows that if two pitch collections have the same number as a pitch class set, they have the same amount of pitches, same collection of intervals between pitches, and they are in some way aurally equivalent.

Through integer notation one can identify what intervals form the sets and accordingly compare their content. In doing so, we should keep in mind that in pitch-class space register does not count, therefore an interval, its inversion and its compound interval may be assigned the same interval class. Example 3.1 illustrates the interval classes, which correspond to the individual intervals and their inversions.

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<sup>155</sup> Allen Forte, *The Structure of Atonal Music* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 1.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

| Interval class | Interval | Inversion |
|----------------|----------|-----------|
| 0              | unison   | octave    |
| 1              | m2       | M7        |
| 2              | M2       | m7        |
| 3              | m3       | M6        |
| 4              | M3       | m6        |
| 5              | P4       | P5        |
| 6              | Aug 4    | Dim5      |

Example 3.1. Interval class table.

According to Perle, “From its harmonic aspect the atonal music is especially refractory to analysis...In general the tendency is towards a total interpretation of harmonic and melodic elements rather than a partial interpretation of functionally differentiated planes, as in tonal music.”<sup>157</sup> The use of pitch-class sets in the analysis of *The Habitable Earth*, will demonstrate that despite the lack of basic tonality, certain melodic and harmonic formations (which favor particular intervals among which most prominent is the semitone) have important functions in the overall music scheme.

In their search for best describing the compositional elements of atonal music the theorists have come up with definitions such as “secundal chords,” “quartal chords,” “tertian chords with split chord members,” and others.<sup>158</sup> Such formations, though only occasional in tonal music, have become a norm and convention in the atonal oeuvre. Rather conservative, Gideon made extensive use of the latter type described above, the “tertian chords with split chord members.” In *Materials and Techniques of Twentieth Century Music*, Stefan Kostka describes them as “...a special kind of added-note chord [s], that are split by adding a note a

<sup>157</sup> Perle, *Serial Composition and Atonality*, 24.

<sup>158</sup> Stefan Kostka, *Materials and Techniques of Twentieth Century Music* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1990), 55.

m2 away. Common examples are triads and seventh chords with split thirds, but split roots, fifths and sevenths also occur. The aural effect is one of extreme dissonance competing with the sound of a pure triad.”<sup>159</sup>

In a *Study of Twentieth-Century Harmony: A Treatise and Guide to the Student-Composer of Today*, Mosco Carner calls this phenomenon “a sounding together the ‘true’ note with its neighboring or changing note.”<sup>160</sup> To Perle, such chords result from the power of the semitone to operate in all musical levels to such extent that it has become a stylistic feature of Gideon’s style. His interpretation is,

A melodic or harmonic idea will recur with one or more individual elements inflected by the semitone, a shade of difference that may or not have a larger structural meaning but that imbues her music with a kind of personal, reflective quality, almost as though the composer’s search for the ideal formulation of her thought had become part of the composition itself.<sup>161</sup>

Lastly, another important feature of Gideon’s style is a unique method of doubling, which Barbara Petersen calls a “subtle heterophony with the singer’s notes scattered among different instruments or octaves.”<sup>162</sup> Thus, what seems to be an independent instrumental line accompanying the voice is actually a derived variant of the very same voice. In some instances Gideon creates an even more embellished accompaniment, one which is derived from two different vocal parts.

## Part I

Part I is divided into three sections, distinguished by tempo, texture and articulation. Section I has an introductory character and includes an instrumental prelude for oboe and

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Mosco Carner, *A Study of Twentieth Century Harmony: A Treatise for the Student Composer of Today* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1976), 30.

<sup>161</sup> Perle, “The Music of Miriam Gideon,” 2.

<sup>162</sup> Petersen, *op. cit.*, 243.

piano (mm. 1-9) followed by a choral introduction on the words “Does not Wisdom call” (mm. 10-19). The tempo marking is *moderato maestoso*, quarter note equals 72.

Section II has a developmental character and could be further divided into four segments: a short piano interlude (mm. 20-23); choral narration on the words “The Lord had made me at the beginning” (mm. 24-30); bass solo “When there were no depths” (mm. 31-37); and another choral narration “When he established the heavens” (mm. 38-56). The tempo is slightly faster, *poco piu mosso* with quarter note equals 88. The use of various textures and voice groupings contributes to the more dynamic character of this section.

Section III forms the conclusion of the movement and is marked by a short oboe and piano interlude (mm. 56-57) and choral closing on the words, “Then I was by Him.” Although there is not a tempo change from the previous section, there is a definite change of texture and character. The closing section sounds subdued due to the simpler homophonic style.

In the instrumental prelude of section I the oboe and the piano establish important melodic and harmonic formations. There are three gestures: introduction of the cell motive (mm. 1-3), harmonic operations (mm. 4-6), and transition (mm. 7-9).

In gesture one, the oboe plays a four-note cell motive that despite its brevity already contains important operational information. In the manner of a ‘nucleus’ in which the most pertinent information about the cell is coded, it contains pitches and intervals that are of great significance to the movement as a whole. The ascending m2 B-C (interval class 1) is mirrored by the descending B-A# (interval class 1) after a M7 leap from C2 to B3. Note that the M7 is also interval class 1 (Example 3.2).

**Moderato maestoso** ♩ = 72

Oboe

Piano

*f*

*f*

[0134]

M7

M7

M7

M7

M7

Example 3.2. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures 1-3.  
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The semitone cell is immediately utilized in the harmony of the following three measures where the bass line is formed by three parallel M7 (G $\sharp$ -G, B-A $\sharp$  and B-C). The pitch B is reiterated and doubled in the piano's right hand. This draws further attention to it. The harmony of the first full measure, G $\sharp$ -G-B-A $\sharp$  (note the two semitones G $\sharp$ -G and A $\sharp$ -B), forms the pitch class set [0134], a prominent sonority of gesture number two.

In gesture two, a series of short motives form the melody (Example 3.3).

Oboe

Piano

*mp*

*cresc.*

*f*

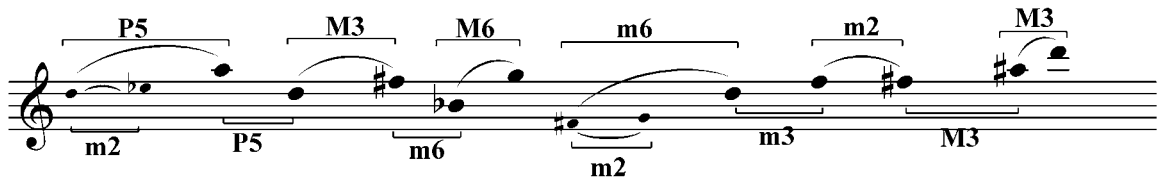
*mp*

*cresc.*

Example 3.3. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures 4-6.  
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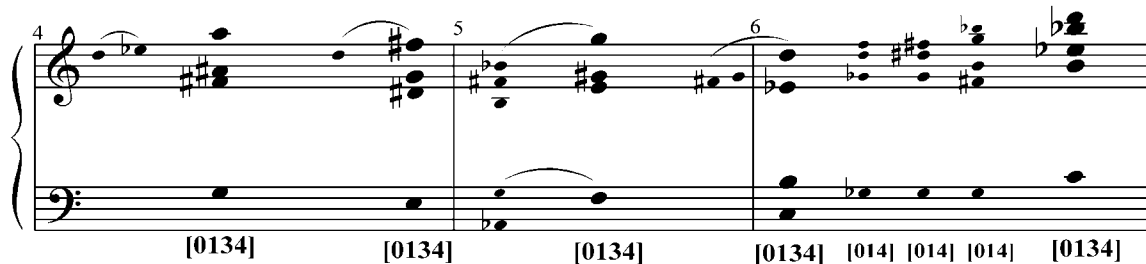
Here new intervals are introduced: P5, M3 and m2, M6 and m6. The M3 and its inversion, the m6, form the interval class 4, the m3 and the M6 form interval class 3. The m2 now is present in the background only as a connecting cell between the new intervals. These new intervals have great impact on the formation of future harmonic structures. As will be shown, they form the pitch class sets [014], [0147] and [0347], which are used at important structural points throughout the piece. Example 3.4 shows a simplified version of the melodic line of gesture two.



Example 3.4. Part I, melodic line, measures 4-6.

The harmonic operations of this second gesture are based on the conventional method of sequencing. According to Perle, "...any harmonic element is automatically justified through literal or sequential reiteration."<sup>163</sup> The subject of this operation is the first chord of measure four, G-F#-A#-A [0134], which is identical in intervallic content with the opening chord G#-G-B-A#, only transposed a semitone lower. This [0134] is further transposed down m3 (m. 4, end of beat three), then up a semitone (m.5, second beat) and down P4 (m. 6 second eighth note of beat one). The last chord of measure six is the same chord [0134], this time transposed an octave higher with one more note added, Bb. Example 3.5 shows a simplified version of the harmonic progression of measures 4-6.

<sup>163</sup> Perle, *Serial Composition*, 9.



Example 3.5. Part I, harmonic progression, measures 4-6.

The rhythm of this second gesture presents a great deal of ambiguity making it difficult to discern primary chords from secondary. In fact, each [0134] appears on either weak beat or in syncopation. A clue to structurally important chords and appoggiaturas is the inflection of the melodic line. The notion is clearly towards the higher note of the motive, further reiterated by a leap. Each pitch class set [0134] forms a harmony with this more important note. The change of meter for each measure (3/4 to 2/4 to 8/8) gives the passage great flexibility and avoidance of aural predictability, often inherent in harmonic progressions in tonal music.

In the transitional gesture a new harmony is introduced, the pitch class set [0148] that contains an augmented triad (Example 3.6). In measure 7, the [0148] resolves to a triad with split third (pitch class set [0347]). In measure 9 it settles into the familiar [014].

Example 3.6. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures 7-9.  
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This transitional gesture leads to the choir introduction in which the B-A# dyad (interval class 1) is presented horizontally, the B-C dyad, vertically (Example 3.7). The B

The musical score for Example 3.7, measures 10-13, is presented below. It features a choir introduction with lyrics and instrumental accompaniment.

**Measures 10-13:**

- Choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass):** The lyrics are "Does not wis - - - dom call? and". The vocal lines are marked *p* (piano).
- Oboe:** The Oboe part is marked *p* (piano).
- Piano:** The Piano part is marked *p* (piano).

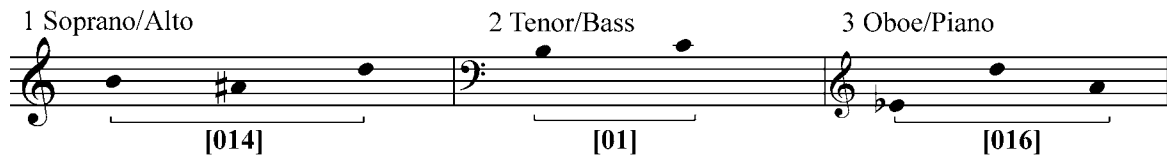
**Measures 14-17:**

- Choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass):** The lyrics are "un - der - stand - - - ing put forth her voice?". The vocal lines are marked *cresc.* (crescendo) and *mf* (mezzo-forte).
- Oboe:** The Oboe part is marked *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *espr.* (espressivo).
- Piano:** The Piano part is marked *cresc.* (crescendo) and *mp* (mezzo-piano).

Example 3.7. *The Habitable Earth, Part I*. measures 10-13.  
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is in unison choir parts, the C, in the piano's right hand as pedal tone. Because of the distance created by the register, this highly dissonant M7 does not sound as harsh as it would if all pitches were in the same register. Albert Weiss notes that in Schoenberg's harmonic practices "...there is an inclination to soften the dissonance through a separation of individual notes."<sup>164</sup> The same procedure is in effect here; the low C has almost coloristic effect as to add more volume to the sound without disturbing the dynamic level *pianissimo*.

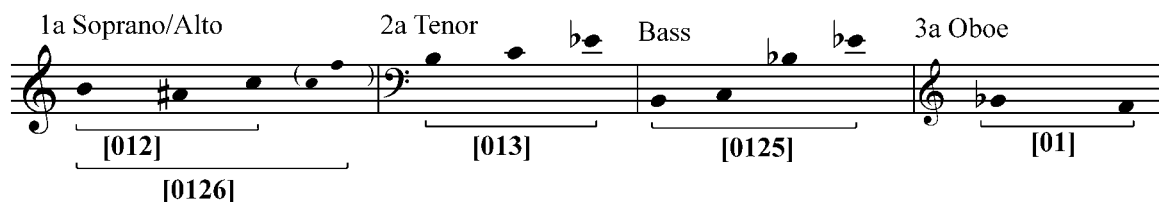
The first four measures (mm. 10-13) are based on the alternation between choir and instruments. In measures 10 and 11, there are three motivic cells, all of which contain a semitone. The first, B-A#-D is in soprano and alto (m. 10). It is mirrored by the second, B-C, in tenor and bass (m. 10). The third, Eb-D-A is in oboe and piano (m. 11). The register shift in the oboe part, which puts the D a M7 from the Eb, does not alter the interval class. Example 3.8 presents a simplified version of the three motives along with their pitch class set content.



Example 3.8. Part I, melodic motives, measures 10 and 11.

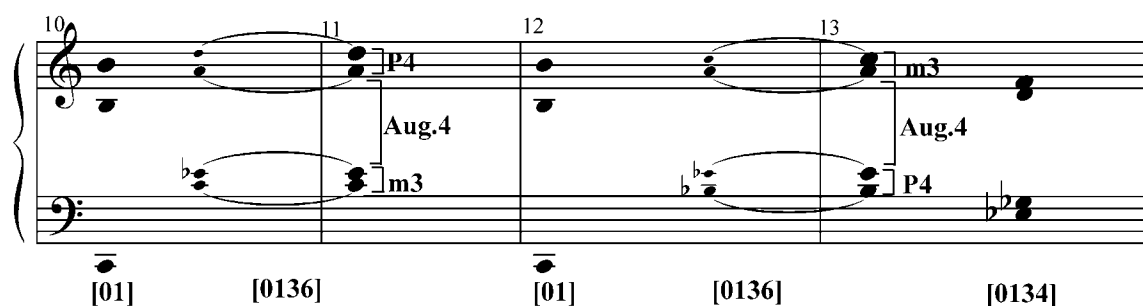
In measures 12-13 the soprano/alto motive undergoes a transformation to B-A#-C. A two-note extension C-F is added to it at measure 13, and the set B-A#-C-F is formed. The tenor /bass motive changes to B-C-Eb in tenor and B-C-Bb-Eb in bass, the oboe motive is now only a semitone Gb-F (Example 3.9). Despite the transformations all motives contain the interval class 1, presented as m2 or its inversion, M7.

<sup>164</sup> Weiss, "The Lyceum of Schönberg," 106.



Example 3.9. Part I, melodic motives, measures 12-13.

The harmony of measures 10-13 is based on the alteration between the C-B dyad [01] and two presentations of the pitch class set [0136] (Example 3.10). The first [0136], C-Eb-



Example 3.10. Part I, harmonic progression, measures 10-13.

A-D, utilizes the pitches from motive 1 in oboe, to which a C is added. The second [0136], Bb-Eb-A-C is only slightly different. Both sets have identical intervallic content as well as three common pitches, Eb, A and C. In addition, in the first set, the P4 is on top, the m3 on the bottom; in the second the positions are exchanged to P4 in the bottom, m3 on the top. These two intervals rotate and exchange around the Aug.4 Eb-A. The last sonority, Eb-Gb-D-F, forms the familiar pitch class set [0134]. This technique reveals a great deal of economy, which prevails in the entire work

At measure 14, contrapuntal activities between soprano and alto are based on short motives, which are formed by the familiar intervals, m2, m3, m6 and P4 (Example 3.11).

Soprano

Alto

S

A

14

17

*p* Un - to you, oh men, I call and my voice is *poco cresc.*

*p* To you, oh men, I call and my *poco cresc.*

to the sons of men, to *mf* the sons of *f* men. *ritard.* [014]

voice is to the sons of *mf* men, the sons of *f* men. *ritard.*

Example 3.11. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures 14-19.  
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On the downbeat of measure 14, a Bb-Db-D-F [0347] is established. This sonority is a triad with split third. It is interesting to trace its connection with the last chord of measure 13, Eb-Gb-D-F [0134] (Example 3.12). Here again very economically, Gideon retains two of the pitches, D and F (right hand piano and oboe), and moves the other two Eb and Gb upward to a Bb and Db (piano left hand).

Oboe

Piano

13

14

[0134]

[0347]

Example 3.12. Part I, measures 13-14.

Measure 19 concludes Section I, with a short cadence in which the sonority D-F-Db [014] is established (as marked in Example 3.11; the D in parenthesis is actually in piano's left hand an octave lower). The pitch-class set [014] was prominent in the introduction both by its own, and as a subset of sets [0134], [0347] and [0148]. Example 3.13 demonstrates the relationship between pitch class sets [014], [0134] and [0347]. For clarity all sets are written with actual pitches, starting from C as 0.

|        |   |    |    |     |
|--------|---|----|----|-----|
| [014]  | C | C# | E  |     |
| [0134] | C | C# | Eb | E   |
| [0347] | C |    | Eb | E G |

Example 3.13. Comparison table

Section II begins with a four-measure piano interlude (Example 3.14). A two-

Example 3.14. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures 20-23, piano.

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measure motive in monotonous eighth notes is based on the repetition of M3, A-F in the left hand and M2, A-B in the right hand. A semitone, A-Ab is presented vertically on the downbeats of measures 20, 21 and 22. In measure 23 it is transposed a m2 lower to Ab-G and inverted to a M7.

Another motivic transformation takes place in the piano's right hand. The first two notes of measure 20, Ab and Bb are repeated in measure 21. A third note, Gb is added and

the new three-note motive, Ab-Bb-Gb is repeated in measure 22, followed by a fourth added note, lower Gb. This again demonstrates what Weiss calls “musical mitosis-the continued subdivision of the original germ-cell.”<sup>165</sup> In left hand, the M3, A-F remains constant for three measures and only ‘transforms’ ones into its inversion, m6, Ab-E in measure 23.

Following is the choral entrance on the words “The Lord had made me at the beginning of his way” (Example 3.15).

Example 3.15. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures 24-30. The score shows the choral entrance for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass, along with the Piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "The Lord made me at the beginning of his way, the". The music is in 3/4 time and one flat key signature. The piano part features a constant M3 (A-F) in the left hand, which transforms into its inversion (Ab-E) in measure 23.

Example 3.15. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures 24-30.  
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(example 3.15 continued)

<sup>165</sup> Weiss, “The Lyceum of Schönberg,” 101.



26

S first of his works of old *mf* I was ste up from ev - er

A first of his works of old *mf* I was set up from ev - er

T 8 first of his works of old *mf* I was set up from ev - er

B first of his works of old *mf* I was set up from ev - er

Pno.

Fanfare motive 1

Fanfare motive 2

28

S last - ing, from the be - gin - ning or ev - er the *f* earth was.

A last - ing from the be gin - ning or ev - er the *f* earth was.

T 8 last - ing from the be - gin - ning or ev - er the *f* earth was.

B last - ing from the be - gin - ning or ev - er the *f* earth was.

Pno.

Fanfare motive 3

Fanfare motive 4

30

Although the melodic lines in measure 24 slightly resemble the ones from measure 10 in the presence of the semitone and the pairing of the voices, the material that follows takes a new direction towards more energetic texture, filled up with short fanfare motives (Example 3.15). The new character is further enhanced by the voicing. Choir parts are in parallel octaves and doubled by the piano.

The first fanfare motive, F-Bb-B-D# (m. 27) is ascending with sharp triplet rhythm. The second, B-Bb-F-Gb (mm. 27-28) is descending. The Gb in soprano is a m9 higher (to recall Perle again, “a sudden exposure of individual notes”) thus emphasizing the word ‘everlasting.’ The third fanfare motive (last beat of m. 28) is only slightly varied to F-B-Bb-D (note that Bb and B trade places and D is natural) and is followed by the fourth, Eb-E-A-D (last beat of m. 29). Example 3.16 shows the simplified versions of the fanfare motives and the corresponding pitch class sets. All motives include m2 and P4, with varying order and direction.

The image displays four musical staves, each representing a fanfare motive. Above each staff are labels for the motives: 'Fanfare Motive 1', 'Fanfare Motive 2', 'Fanfare Motive 3', and 'Fanfare Motive 4'. Below each staff are interval labels (P4, m2) and pitch class sets in brackets. Motive 1 has intervals P4 and m2, and pitch class set [0 1 5 7]. Motive 2 has intervals m2 and P4, and pitch class set [0 1 5 6]. Motive 3 has intervals P4 and m2, and pitch class set [0 1 3 5]. Motive 4 has intervals m2 and P4, and pitch class set [0 1 2 7].

Example 3.16. Part I, melodic motives, measures 27-29.

The similarity between the pitch class sets [0157], [0156], [0127] and [0135] can be also presented in terms of intervallic structure, as shown in Example 3.17. Here again the three pitch-class sets are written from C.

|        |   |    |   |    |
|--------|---|----|---|----|
| [0157] | C | C# | F | G  |
| [0156] | C | C# | F | F# |
| [0127] | C | C# | D | G  |
| [0135] | C | C# | E | G  |

Example 3.17. Comparison table

The last measure of this choir section (M. 30) is another interesting cadence, formed by two chords, a Major triad with a split fifth, Bb (A#)-F#-A-D [0148] and a chord F#-B-D-Bb-F [01478] (Example 3.18). Both chords share three pitches, D, F# and B (A#), forming

The image shows a musical score for measure 30. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains three notes: Bb (labeled as A#), F#, and A. The bass staff contains three notes: D, F#, and Bb. Dashed lines connect the notes between the two staves, illustrating the transformation from the first chord [0148] to the second chord [01478]. The first chord [0148] is represented by the notes Bb (A#), F#, and A in the treble staff, and D, F#, and Bb in the bass staff. The second chord [01478] is represented by the notes F#, B, and D in the treble staff, and Bb, F, and D in the bass staff. The labels [0148] and [01478] are placed below the respective chords.

Example 3.18. Part I, cadence, measure 30.

an augmented triad, pitch class set [048]. One pitch, A, is lost and two alterations are added, F-natural and B-natural. The voice leading is also of particular interest. Gideon could have retained the common pitches, and move the altered ones stepwise. Instead she creates an ‘inversion,’ by changing the root position and shifting the notes into different voices, creating a fresher and newer sonority by altering the existing one.

The bass solo “Where there were no depths” (mm.32-38) brings sudden contrast. The texture is reduced to a solo voice and repetitious piano accompaniment. The dynamic level is *piano* and the overall low register transmits darker color. The M7 downward shift from Bb

to B natural in measure 32 portrays the word ‘depths’ as though as the melody itself reaches its ‘depth’ (Example 3.19).

31 Bass *p* When there were no depths I was brought forth, while as

Piano *p* 3 3

35 B yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields,

Pno.

37 B *sempre p* nor the be - gin - ning of the dust of the world.

Pno. *sempre p*

Example 3.19. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures 31-37.  
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The vocal line can be divided into three motives according to the text (Example 3.20).

Motive 1 [0147] When there were no depths I was brought forth

Motive 2 [0125] [0147] while as yet he had not made the earth nor the fields

Motive 3 [01] [01] [01] [0145] nor the beginning of the dust of the world

Example 3.20. Part I, melodic motives, measures 31-37.

The first motive, F-Bb-B-D forms the pitch class set [0147]. The second, contains two sets, D-F-F# G [0125] and G-Bb-B-E [0147]. The third is formed by three semitone cells, F#-G, D#-E and G-G# and a set C-D#-E-B [0145]. The Gb on measure 31 is considered a foreign note (not melodically important to the set), the G-natural in measure 35 is contained in both [0125] and [0147].

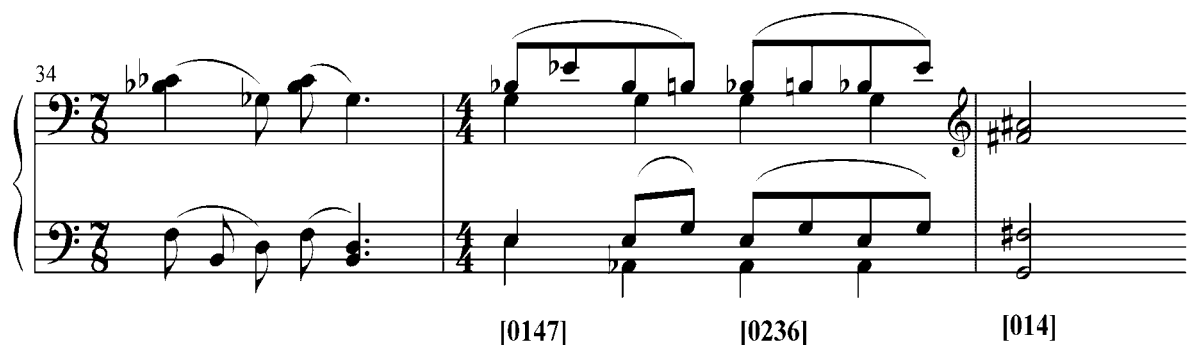
The piano accompaniment is economical. Pitches from the bass line are dispersed between the two piano hands. The rhythmic structure is based on the familiar eighth-note pattern from the instrumental interlude of measures 20-23 (Example 3.21).

Piano

31 [0148] [0236] [0148]

Example 3.21. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures 31-35, piano.  
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(example 3.21 continued)



The motivic structure of this accompaniment provides yet another example of “musical mitosis.” The germ cell in the right hand is presented as M3, Bb-Gb (m. 31) with triplet rhythm. In the following two measures (mm. 32-34), the rhythm changes (from a triplet to two groups of eighth notes) and extra pitches are added thus ‘dividing’ the germ cell into new cells. The two extra pitches are Db and Cb, the new cells, Db-Gb-Db-Cb and Gb-Cb-Gb-Cb (m. 32), and Gb-Cb-Bb-Gb (mm. 33 and 34).

The same process follows in the left hand. The germ cell is m3, F-D. To it a B natural is added, and a diminished triad is formed. In measure 35 both right hand and left hand germ cells transform again, more dramatically than before. The M3 Gb-Bb germ cell (right hand) transposes to a G natural –Bb and from this top note Bb a new variant is formed, Bb-Eb-Bb-B-natural. The F-D in left hand fuses to a single pitch E, from which an E-G cell is formed on the second beat of measure 35.

The vertical combination of the germ cells and their newly formed variants, produce sonorities, which can be identified as familiar pitch class sets (marked in Example 3.21). The first is at measure 31, where Bb-Gb-D-F forms the set [0148]. With the addition of the Db and Cb in the next two measures (32 and 33) a [0236], and another [0148] are formed. Two pitch class sets, [0147] and [0236], occur on the first and second beats of measure 35. The

[0147] set in piano shares is similar to the [0147] set of Motive 2 in the vocal line. Both share three identical pitches, E, G and B and have same intervallic content, a semitone and two thirds

The harmony G-F#-A# on the downbeat of measure 36 forms the very important [014], which through a [0145] on the downbeat of measure 37 connects to another [014], B-D#-D to form another cadence (Example 3.22).

[014]                      [0145]      [014]

Example 3.22. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures 36-37.  
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The next choral section, “When he established the heavn’s,” starts with brief homophonic progression. The harmony is based on the familiar [0137], [0347] and [0148] sets (Example 3.23).

A lyrical duet between soprano and alto “...when he set a circle upon the face of the earth” follows (Example 3.24). Here the unique doubling technique described by Barbara Petersen<sup>166</sup> is demonstrated. The oboe and the piano parts are derived from the pitches of both alto and soprano, interchangeably. Octave shifts are added and a highly embellished accompaniment, based on existing pitches is created.

<sup>166</sup> Petersen, *op. cit.*, 243.

38 *dolce pp* 40

Soprano When he es - tab - lished the heavn's I was there;

Alto *dolce pp* When he es - tab - lished the heavn's I was there;

Tenor *dolce pp* When ne es - tab - lished the heavn's I was there;

Bass

Oboe *dolce p*

Piano *pp*

[0137] [0137] [014] [0137] [0148]

Example 3.23. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I measures 38-40.  
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41 *p* 43

Soprano When he set a cir - cle up - on the face of the deep

Alto *p* deep -

Oboe *p dolce*

Piano *p*

8vb

Example 3.24. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures 41-44.  
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The soprano line is formed by two motives G#-B-D and C#-A#-E (both diminished triads [036]), the alto is formed by various pitch combinations of [014] (Example 3.25).

Example 3.25. Part I, melodic motives, measures 41-43.

In the following four measures (mm. 44-48), the duet is between women's and men's voices (Example 3.26).

Example 3.26. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures 44-48, choir.

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Both soprano and tenor lines contain a diminished triad [036] both alto and bass lines contain a Major triad [037] (Example 3.27).

Example 3.27. Part I, melodic motives, measures 44-48.

At measure 49, the choir returns in full force with more fanfare motives and a massive sound achieved by tripling of the vocal parts by the piano. The voices are in pairs: soprano/tenor versus alto/bass, and all move in parallel motion (Example 3.28).

Example 3.28. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures 49-52.  
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(example 3.28 continued)

51

S not trans - gress his com - mand - ment

A not trans - gress his com - mand - ment

T not trans - gress his com - mand - ment

B not trans - gress his com - mand - ment

Ob.

Pno.

The first fanfare motive is formed by two cells: the first is descending (P4 in soprano and tenor and Dim5 in alto and bass), the second ascending (P4 in soprano and tenor and Dim5 in alto and bass) (Example 3.29).

cell 1

cell 2

cell 1

cell 2

P4

P4

P4

Dim5

Aug4

Dim5

Soprano/Tenor

Alto/Bass

Example 3.29. Part I, fanfare motives, measures 49-51.

The interplay between the Eb, Bb and E-natural, members of the pitch class set [016], results in both horizontal and vertical juxtaposition of P4 and tritone. These three pitches are also utilized as a vertical sonority on the downbeat of measure 49 (Example 3.28)

The second fanfare motive is also formed by two cells. In the first cell the pitches are the same, but the intervals are different in each voice. In the soprano the interval is a

descending m3, in the alto, ascending P4, in the tenor, descending P4, and in the bass, ascending P5. The second cell is different in each voice (Example 3. 30).

Example 3.30 shows four voices: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. Each voice has two cells of intervals. Soprano: Cell 1 (m3), Cell 2 (m3, P4, Dim5). Alto: Cell 1 (P4), Cell 2 (P4, m3, m3). Tenor: Cell 1 (P4), Cell 2 (P4, Aug4). Bass: Cell 1 (P5), Cell 2 (m2, M2).

Example 3.30. Fanfare motive, Part I, measures 50-52.

A brief oboe appearance (m. 52) introduces the closing section. The F#-G-F-Db motive resembles the B-C-B-A# from the beginning, although it is varied and transposed (Example 3.31).

Example 3.31 shows the Oboe and Piano parts. The Oboe part has a brief appearance in measure 52. The Piano part has a recurring motive [014] in measures 1-2 and 52-54.

Example 3.31. *The Habitable Earth* Part I, measures 1-2 and 52-54.  
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While the first interval in both is a semitone, the following leap now is a m7, rather than a M7, and the interval between the last two notes becomes a M3 rather than a semitone. The rhythm is also altered to two eighth notes and two quarters. The two eighth notes sound less urgent than their counterparts from the beginning, the two sixteenth notes. The quarter note length on the leap (along with the ‘softer’ m7 interval) does not sound as “yearning” as the dotted quarter (on M7 leap) from the beginning. The sonorities that accompany this oboe motive also form the pitch class set [014].

A choral tutti, “when he appointed the foundation of the earth” (mm. 53-56), interrupts the quasi-return of the oboe (Example 3.32). This homophonic progression is

Example 3.32. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures 53-56. ©1965 American Composers Alliance. Used by Permission.

based on the alteration of two chords, B-Eb-Bb-D and Gb-Bb-F-A, both pitch class set [0145], which resolve into Ab-E-B-G [0347], a triad with split third.

The interrupted oboe phrase resumes in measures 56-57 and again in 63-64. In both segments Gideon recapitulates only a fragment from the introductory oboe solo, the ascending line of measures 5 and 6 (Example 3.33). While some elements are preserved in

Example 3.33. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures 5-6, 56-57, and 63-64, oboe.

all three variants, others are changed. The register, the overall ascending contour and most important the timbre remain the same and strongly remind us of the introduction. The rhythm and the intervallic content are slightly changed.

The closing of Part I (mm. 58-71) is governed entirely by harmonic activities. It can be further divided into two homophonic phrases, separated by the oboe solo of measures 63-64 (Example 3.34).

58 *p dolce* 60

Soprano *p* Then I was by Him, and I was dai - ly all de -

Alto *p* Then I was by Him and I was dai - ly all de -

Tenor *p* Then I was by Him, and I was dai - ly all de -

Bass *p* Then I was by Him, and I was dai - ly all de -

Oboe *p*

Piano *p*

63 65 *cresc.*

S light. play - ing in his hab - i - ta - ble earth,

A light. play - ing in his hab - i - ta - ble earth,

T light. play - ing in his hab - i - ta - ble earth,

B light. play - ing in his hab - i - ta - ble earth,

Ob. *f*

Pno. *cresc.*

Example 3.34. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures 58-71.

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(example 3.34 continued)

68 *f* and my de - lights are with the sons of men.

A *f* and my de - lights are with the sons of men.

T *f* and my de - lights are with the sons of men.

B *f* and my de - lights are with the sons of men.

Ob. and my de -

Pno. *f*

In both phrases, pitch class sets form the harmony. A new pitch-class set [0236] dominates. This set contains two highly dissonant intervals, a semitone and a tritone, which make it unstable. At the end of each musical phrase it resolves to either [0147], a triad to which root a semitone is added, or to [0347], a triad with split third. Example 3.35 illustrates the harmonic profile of the closing.

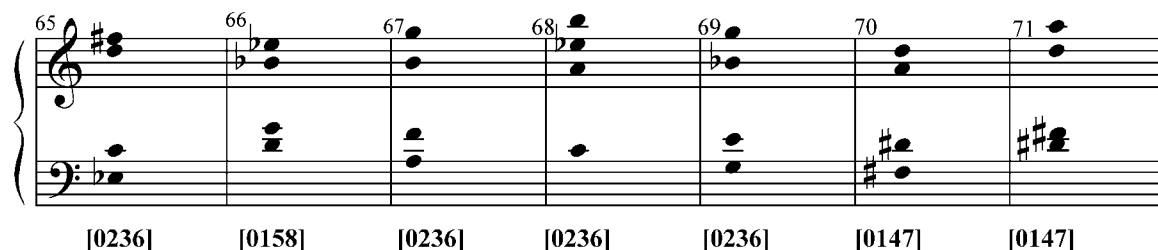
58 59 60 61 62 63 64

[0236] [0147] [0236] [0147] [0347] [0136] [0148] [0157]

Example 3.35. Part I, harmonic progression, measures 58-71.

(example 3.35 continued)





## Part II

Part II is highly sectionalized and diversified. It contains an extensive amount of text based on different chapters. The selected proverbs cover variety of subjects. Part II is set for soprano, alto, tenor and bass soloists with increasing use of the piano and the oboe as solo instruments. Texture, voicing, tempo, dynamics, melodic and harmonic formations change abruptly and are unique to each separate proverb. Although there is a lack of recurring elements (melodic or harmonic cells) from Part I or across the separate proverbs, the operational techniques exhibited in Part I are used here as well. Part II may be divided into two sections: section one, “Drunkard’s Lament” (mm. 1-38); and section two, miscellaneous proverbs (mm. 39-end).

The “Drunkard’s Lament” is itself highly sectionalized. The text is grouped into four segments that are musically defined by change of voicing, texture and tempo. The first segment (mm. 1-5) corresponds to Proverb 23:29 “Who crieth woe” (Example 3.36). The voices exchange short motives on the text “Who crieth woe, who alas, who hath contentions.” The urgency and anxiety portrayed in the text are reflected in the tempo indication, *Agitato*, as well as in the rhythm and the shortness of the motives. Furthermore each motive contains a leap, which despite its size and direction, creates a feeling of uncertainty.

Agitato ♩ = 66

Soprano: Solo, Motive 1 variant, Who, "A-las"?

Alto: Solo, Motive 1, Who cri-eth "woe"? (p), Motive 2, Who hath con-ten-tions?

Tenor: Solo, "Woe" (p), "A-las"

Bass: Solo, "Woe" (p), "A-las"

S: Motive 2 variant, Who hath rav-ings? (3), Motive 3 variant, Who hath wounds with-out cause? (cresc.), Who cries "A-las"? (mf) (5)

A: Motive 3, Who hath wounds (cresc.), wounds with-out cause? Red-ness of eye? Who cries "A-las"? (mf) (3)

T: "A-las" (8), red-ness of eye? Who cries "A-las"? (mf) (3)

B: Motive 3 variant, Who hath wounds (cresc.), wounds with-out cause? Red-ness of eye? Who cries "A-las"? (mf) (3)

Example 3.36. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 1-5.  
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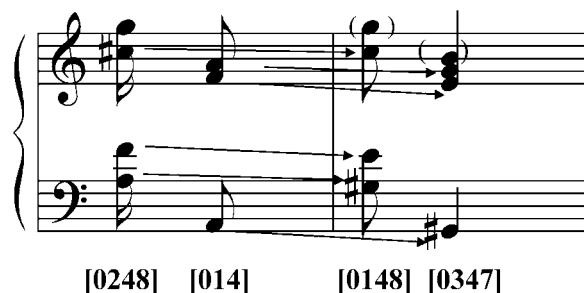
The first motive “Who crieth woe?” (m. 1) is presented by the alto line and contains two semitones F#-E# and C-B, connected with an ascending leap of Dim5 (Example 3.36). The semitone cells are imitated by tenor and bass, which join on the last word “woe.” A

variant “who alas” in the soprano line also contains an ascending leap and a semitone cell D-C#, on the word “alas.” Tenor and bass join again with corresponding cells F#-E# and Bb-A.

The second motive, “who hath contentions?” (m. 2), also in the alto, contains a rising m3, C#-E, followed by a semitone E-F (Example 3.36). It is answered by another variant in the soprano line (m. 3) as a descending P4, B-F#, followed by an ascending semitone, F#-G. These two motives are similar in interval content, both contain a leap and a semitone, the alto’s C#-E-F forms the pitch class set [014], the soprano’s B-F#-G forms [015].

A third motive on the words “who hath wounds” is presented again in the alto line (Example 3.36). Its pitches are D-F-E-B [0136], and they form a rising m3, a descending semitone and a descending P4. Soprano and bass also join with corresponding variants, C#-C-G-D [0127] and A-G#-D#-B [0137] (Example 3.36).

Alto, tenor, and bass unite in “redness of eye,” moving in parallel tritones. In “Who cries Alas,” the soprano line joins and all four voices, except tenor, move in parallel descending leaps. This last question, “Who cries Alas?” is also the cadence of the first segment. This cadence is formed by two gestures with similar rhythmic and intervallic content (Example 3.37).



Example 3.37. Part II, cadence, measures 4-5.

The sixteenth note pick-up to a quarter note in the first gesture is augmented to an eighth note pick-up and a half note in the second. The first gesture is formed by the chords

A-F-C#-G and A-F-Ab, pitch class sets [0248] and [014]; the second by, G#-E-C-G and G#-E-G-B, pitch class sets [0148] and [0347]. In addition, the second gesture is almost an exact transposition of the first, a semitone lower. The two exceptions are the top G, which remains the same (instead of moving to F#), and the addition of B to the last chord that makes it the familiar [0347], a triad with a split third. The brevity of this cadence and the lack of a traditional harmonic progression are compensated by its rhythmic profile and the descending melodic motion, both of which produce a “stop” in the music flow.

The harmonic language of this first segment is based on parallel augmented triads, pitch class set [048]. This harmonic cell is first introduced by the piano (m.1) as G-D#-B and again as F#-D-A#, a semitone apart (Example 3.38).

The musical score for Example 3.38 shows measures 1 and 2 of the piano part from *The Habitable Earth, Part II*. The piano part is written for Alto and Tenor/Bass staves. The Alto staff is in treble clef, and the Tenor/Bass staff is in bass clef. The time signature is 4/4. The piano part begins with a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic in measure 1, followed by a piano (p) dynamic in measure 2. The vocal parts, Soprano and Tenor/Bass, enter in measure 1. The score is divided into two measures, with measure 1 containing two beats and measure 2 containing two beats. The piano part is marked with [048] - [048] for both measures, indicating the pitch class set [048] is used throughout. The vocal parts are also marked with [048] - [048] for both measures.

Example 3.38. *The Habitable Earth, Part II*, measures 1-2, piano.

With the entrance of the voices (shown in the piano reduction of Example 3.38), a short sequence is formed and the harmonic cell moves a semitone higher to G#-E-C and G-D#-B (third beat of m. 1), and one more time to A#-F#-D and A-F-C# (last eighth note of m. 1 to second beat of m. 2). The augmented triads continue to dominate the harmonic language of the next two measures as well as the cadence at measure five (Example 3.39).

Example 3.39. Part II, harmonic progression, measures 1-5.

The second segment of the “Drunkard’s Lament” (mm. 6-16), is separated by both tempo, *poco piu mosso* (quarter note equals 76), and texture. It corresponds to verse 23:30, “They that tarry long at the wine” (Example 3.40). Here again, short motives engage in contrapuntal activities. Two familiar operations are used: “musical mitosis,” the continuing permutation of the germ cell; and the unique doubling of the voices by the piano.

Example 3.40. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 6-16.

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(example 3.40 continued)

8

S tar - ry they that go to try mixed wine, Motive 2

A tar - ry they that go to try mixed wine, Motive 2

T *p* they that ta - rry, they that go to tar - ry, Motive 3

B tar - ry, they that tar - ry, Motive 2

11

S *mf* they that ta - ry long at the wine, at the wine Motive 3

A *mf* tar - ty long at the wine they that tar - ry, Motive 3

T

B

The first motive F#-B-F#-G is stated in the soprano line (m. 6) and two and a half beats later imitated (actually mirrored) by the alto line as F#-C-C-F#-F. The interval content of P4 and a semitone in the soprano line is changed to an Aug4 and semitone in the alto line (Example 3.41).

Soprano

Alto

P4 m2 m2 Aug4 m2 m2

Example 3.41. Part II, melodic motives, measures 6 and 7.

The Aug4 (and its inversion the Dim5) becomes motive two that is imitated by all voices throughout the following measures (Example 3.42).

Example 3.42. Part II, melodic motives, measures 6-10.

A third motive C#-D-D-F#, is first stated in the alto line (last three notes of m. 7 and first two notes m.8). It is transformed to A-B-C-A in the tenor line (m. 8), as E-E-D#-B in the soprano line (m. 11) and as D#-D-C#-E in the alto line (m. 12). All motives contain a semitone and a M3 or m3, which are varied in order and placement (Example 3.43).

Example 3.43. Part II, melodic motives, measures 7-12.

Although, from the perspective of tonal music, these motives may seem unrelated, from the perspective of atonal music it is the contrary. Not only their “memorable shape and contour”<sup>167</sup> are preserved, but their rhythm as well. All motives are set syllabically to four eighth notes, corresponding to the four syllables, “they that tarry.”

<sup>167</sup> Weiss, “The Lyceum of Schönberg,” 100.

Measures 15 and 16 form the cadence of this segment (Example 3.44). Two clusters

Example 3.44. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 15-16. © American Composers Alliance. Used by permission.

form the harmonic profile. The first, D-E, is a M2, the second, D-E-F, is a m2 added to the M2. In the oboe line these clusters are utilized into descending melodic M9. The two clusters resolve to a M3 at measure 16 (Example 3.45).

Example 3.45. Part II, cadence, measures 15-16.



This cadence is also well defined and despite its unconventional realization, it provides an ending of this portion of the music. Factors other than melody and harmony also play an important role. The gradual slow down is reflected not only in the *poco ritardando* but also in the use of longer note values, pedal-like quarter notes in bass and a half note for all voices on the resolution. These are accompanied by an increase in dynamic level, a gradual *crescendo*, and the arrival of *forte* at measure 16.

Another unique feature is the piano accompaniment. As mentioned before it is characteristic for Gideon to disperse pitches from the vocal parts among the instruments or to embellish the doubled line so that the part sounds completely fresh and independent. This latter technique is in effect here (Example 3.46).

The musical score for Example 3.46, measures 6-9, is presented below. It features five staves: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and Piano. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/4 at measure 7. Dynamics include piano (*p*) and forte (*f*). The lyrics are: "They that tar - ry long at the wine they that tar - ry".

**Soprano:** Measures 6-9. Lyrics: "They that tar - ry long at the wine they that tar - ry". Dynamics: *p* at measure 6, *f* at measure 9.

**Alto:** Measures 6-9. Lyrics: "They that ta - rry long, they that tar - ry". Dynamics: *p* at measure 6, *f* at measure 9.

**Tenor:** Measures 6-9. Lyrics: "they that ta-rry,". Dynamics: *p* at measure 6, *f* at measure 9.

**Bass:** Measures 6-9. Lyrics: "they that tar - ry,". Dynamics: *p* at measure 6, *f* at measure 9.

**Piano:** Measures 6-9. Dynamics: *p* at measure 6, *f* at measure 9.

Example 3.46. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 6-9.  
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While the left hand of the piano doubles the voices literally, the right hand engages in a variation in which selected pitches are used for melodic and rhythmic embellishment. The melodic embellishment consists of octave shifting; the rhythmic embellishment contains short sixteenth note motives, played mostly on the offbeat.

The “Drunkard’s Lament” continues with segment three (mm. 17-28) as sudden changes of dynamics and texture bring more contrast. The text is based on the combination of verse 23:30, “Look not upon the wine,” and 23:32, “At the least it biteth like a serpent.” A brief two measure homophonic passage on the words “Look not upon the wine when it is red” (mm. 17-18) precedes a series of unaccompanied recitatives sung by each voice separately (Example 3.47). The harmony of the homophonic passage is based on tritone sonorities. The outer voices outline a diminished fifth.

17 *a tempo* ♩ = 76

Soprano *pp* Look not up - on the wine when it is red,

Alto *pp* Look not up - on the wine when it is red,

Tenor *pp* Look not up - on the wine when it is red,

Bass

Piano *pp* Dim5 Dim5 Dim5 Dim5 Dim5

Example 3.47. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 17-18.  
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The soprano carries the first recitative line on the words, “when it giveth its color in the cup.” The alto carries the next line of text, “when it glideth down smoothly,” and its melody imitates the beginning of the soprano line (Example 3.48).

Example 3.48 shows musical notation for Soprano and Alto parts. The Soprano part (measures 19-22) has lyrics "When it giv - eth its col - or in the cup" and is marked with a piano *p* dynamic. The Soprano melody is constructed from three motives: [014] (D-B-A#), [026] (A-C#-G), and [036] (Ab-F-D). The Alto part (measures 19-22) has lyrics "when it gli - deth down smooth - ly" and is also marked with a piano *p* dynamic. The Alto melody imitates the beginning of the Soprano line with the pitch class set [014] (C-A-G#).

Example 3.48. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 19-22.  
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The soprano melody is constructed by three short motives; D-B-A# (pitch class set [014]), A-C#-G (pitch class set [026]) and Ab-F-D (pitch class set [036]). The third motive is a variant of the second. The sizes of the intervals are slightly changed and their direction inverted. Thus the ascending M3 A-C# is inverted to a descending m3, Ab-F, and the descending tritone C#-G is inverted to an ascending M6, F-D. The alto melody, C-A-G# also forms pitch class set [014].

Tenor continues with “and at the last it biteth like a serpent.” Its melodic line is quite simple containing three successive semitones, D-Eb, Eb-E and E-F (Example 3.49). To create a subtle change in the overall contour, Gideon inverts the first semitone to an ascending M7. This M7 is imitated in the following oboe gesture but in the opposite direction.

Example 3.49. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 22-26.  
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The bass concludes this series of recitatives with two short motives on “and it stingeth like a basilisk.” The first motive B-A#-A is an inversion of the oboe gesture, just heard, the second, F-B-A# is a variant. In both, the ascending M7 dominates (Example 3.49).

Another short homophonic passage, “like a basilisk, basilisk” (m. 27-28), concludes this segment of the “Drunkard’s Lament”(Example 3.50).

Example 3.50. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 27-28.  
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The last segment of the “Drunkard’s Lament” is a tenor recitative, “Thine eyes shall behold strange things”(mm. 29-38). It contrasts the preceding section, the tempo is *poco meno mosso*, quarter note equals 66, and the character markings are *tranquillo* and *dolce* (Example 3.51).

Poco meno mosso ♩ = 66  
Tranquillo

Tenor  
8 Thine eyes shall be-hold strange things: When shall I a - wake?  
*p dolce* *pp*

Oboe

Piano  
8  
*p* *pp*  
[0148] [0148]

T  
8 I will seek it yet a - gain!  
M7 M7

Ob.  
*morendo* *ppp*

Pno.  
[0148] [014]

Example 3.51. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 29-38.  
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The melodic line of the first three measures forms a descending pentachord, F-E-D-C-B, outlining a tritone. It is followed by two three short phrases “When shall I awake,”

“I will seek it,” and “yet again” in all of which the first interval is a descending M7, a result of an octave shift of m2.

This recitative is accompanied quite conservatively by the piano. At the end of each vocal phrase, the same G#-E-G-C (pitch class set [0148]) is played, the third time inverted to E-G#-C-G (m. 35-36). A two measure instrumental postlude in which the oboe joins the piano, concludes the segment and the “Drunkard’s Lament.” The oboe plays an ascending gesture, C#-D-C#-G, which contains m2, M7 and tritone (pitch class set [016]). The piano settles into F#-D-F, which forms the already familiar [014].

An abrupt change of rhythm, tempo, texture and voicing marks the second large section of Part II. The first proverb, “He that blesseth his friend,” starts with two-chord piano introduction. The first line of text, “He that blesseth his friend in a loud voice,” is set for soprano and alto (Example 3.52). Both soprano and alto lines utilize pitches from the

The musical score for Example 3.52 consists of three staves: Soprano, Alto, and Piano. The Soprano and Alto staves are in 4/4 time, while the Piano staff is in 2/4 time. The tempo is marked 'Piu Mosso' with a tempo of 92, and the style is 'Briskly'. The Soprano and Alto parts begin with a rest in the first measure, followed by a vocal phrase starting in the second measure. The Piano part begins with a two-chord introduction in the first measure, marked with a forte dynamic (*f*), and continues with a melodic line in the second measure, marked with a mezzo-forte dynamic (*mf*). The piano part includes pitch class set labels [025] [016] and [014].

Example 3.52. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II measures 39-41.  
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piano's right hand (G-Bb in the soprano and E-F in the alto). The two introductory chords in piano form pitch class sets [025] and [016]. At the last beat of measure 41 the soprano, the alto, and the piano form the pitch class set [014].

The second line of text, “rising early in the morning,” starts as a tenor and bass duet and is soon imitated by soprano and alto (Example 3.53). The main motive D-G-G#-D#, is

Example 3.53. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 42-43. ©1965 American Composers Alliance. Used by Permission.

in the bass and contains ascending P4, a semitone and a descending P4. The tenor joins on the words “in the morning” with a parallel descending P4, D-A. In measure 42, the soprano and the alto sing another set of ascending motives containing various sizes of fourths and fifths. The ascending contour of these motives corresponds to the word “rising.” The melodic interplay of fourths and fifths is also reflected in the harmony in the piano (m. 43).

The last line of text, “it shall be counted a curse to him,” has a conclusive character. Soprano, alto and tenor move in parallel chords, the first and the last of which contain an augmented triad C-E-G# [048] (Example 3.54).

Example 3.54. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 44-45. ©1965 American Composers Alliance. Used by Permission.

The harmonic progression of this final statement contains the following chords: F-C-E-G# [0148], a passing F-Bb-E-A [0156] and Db-Ab-E-C [0148]. The last two chords [0156] and [0148] are repeated once again in piano.

The last two-chord gesture in piano corresponds to measure 39. Although different in pitch content, the rhythm and the overall melodic contour are identical. Both gestures contain a sixteenth note pick up to a quarter and both are ascending. Despite its brevity, this



two-chord gesture has structural importance by serving both as an opening and closing of the musical unit.

The next proverb, “Buy the truth and sell it not,” contains three text statements, set to contrasting music. The first statement “Buy the truth and sell it not,” is for tenor, oboe and piano (Example 3.55).

*Poco meno mosso* ♩ = 80

**Tenor**

46 8 *f* (resolutely)

Buy the truth and sell it not - - - -

**Oboe**

*non legato f* **opening motive**

**Piano**

*non legato f*

Example 3.55. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 46-49.  
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A fanfare-like sound is achieved through the use of P5 and P4. The opening oboe motive E-F-Bb-E, sets up the character not only with its melodic profile, but also with the rhythm, three sixteenth notes leading to a quarter. Gideon chooses a slower tempo, *poco meno mosso*, quarter note equals 80, only to emphasize the articulation of this fanfare-like phrase. The piano part is another example of recycling pitches from the vocal line into harmonic material. The right hand of the piano uses all four pitches sung by tenor, in various melodic combinations.

The following two lines of text, “Speak not in the ears of a fool,” and “for he will despise,” are set for alto and oboe. A change of character is implied by the *subito piano* and the indication *calmly* (Example 3.56). The oboe and the alto exchange overlapping

50 *p* (*calmly*)  
 Alto Speak not in the ears of a fool,  
 Oboe *p subito*

54  
 A for he will de - spise the  
 Ob

56  
 A wis dom of thy words.  
 Ob. closing motive

Example 3.56. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 50-53.  
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phrases and thus create a continuous musical flow. This creates an impression of the oboe as an extension of the voice.

For example the ending of the first alto phrase (m. 49-51) overlaps with the starting of the oboe phrase. Both share a common pitch C, which in the oboe is in octave higher. The ending of this oboe phrase (m. 52) does not overlap with the beginning of the next alto

phrase, but the alto starts with the same pitch Eb, which was just played in oboe. The ending of this alto phrase (m. 56) coincides with the beginning of the next oboe phrase (same measure) and is on the same pitch, A.

In this duet, motivic transformation continues to take place. The alto line of measures 50-52 is imitated and only slightly varied by the oboe, measures 52-53 (Example 3.57).

The image displays two musical staves. The top staff is labeled 'Alto' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Oboe'. The Alto staff shows measures 50-52 with notes G4, A4, Bb4, and A4. Above the staff, interval markings are placed: 'm2' between G4 and A4, 'm2' between A4 and Bb4, 'M2' between Bb4 and A4, and 'm7' between A4 and the final A4. The Oboe staff shows measures 52-53 with notes G4, Ab4, Bb4, and A4. Above the staff, interval markings are placed: 'm2' between G4 and Ab4, 'm2' between Ab4 and Bb4, 'M2' between Bb4 and A4, and 'M7' between A4 and the final A4. The notes are written in treble clef on a five-line staff.

Example 3.57. Part II, melodic motives, measures 50-53.

In the remainder of the proverb (mm. 55-58), the oboe exchanges short gestures derived from the alto pitches with playful octave shifting. The last five notes in the oboe line (marked as closing motive in Example 3.56) are strikingly similar to the opening fanfare motive, not only in rhythm, but also in pitch content and order. This again demonstrates Gideon’s unique way of creating musical unity.

The proverb, “Where no oxen are, the crib is clean,” is set for bass and piano. It is short, laconic and in quicker tempo. The vocal line is based on short motivic cells, which correspond to the phrases in the text (Example 3.58).

58

Bass

Motive 1

Motive 2

Motive 3

*mf* Where no ox - en are, the crib is clean, but much in - crease

Piano

*mf*

ta ta ta

62

B

Motive 4

Motive 5

is by the strenght of the ox.

Pno.

*cresc.*

*f*

Example 3.58. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 58-63.  
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The piano accompaniment is a combination of a doubling with octave shifting in the right hand and parallel M7 in the left hand. A short arpeggio gesture, based on the Ab-G dyad in piano's left hand (m. 63) concludes the proverb.

“Chasten thy son” is set as another lyrical duet between alto and oboe this time accompanied by the piano. The short alto lines are surrounded by extended instrumental passages for both oboe and piano. A lengthy seven-measure instrumental postlude concludes the proverb.

In the first four measures, a basic motive first stated in the oboe, operates as a germ cell (Example 3.59). This oboe motive has a very interesting structure, two semitones on the

*Poco piu mosso* ♩ = 100  
*Tenderly*

Alto  
 65 68  
*p*  
 Chast - en thy son, - - - - -

Oboe  
*p*  
 cell motive cell motive

Piano  
*p*  
 cell motive

Example 3.59. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 65-68.  
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outside (the second shifted to M7) and m3 in the middle. After a closer look it is evident that it consists of two identical cells, pitch class [014] (Example 3.60).

Oboe (mm. 65-66)      Alto (mm. 66-67)      Oboe (mm. 67-68)      Piano (m. 68)

[014] [014] [01] [0147]

[014] [014] [01]

Example 3.60. Part II, melodic motives, measures 65-68.

When imitated by the alto, the motive retains the original rhythm and intervallic structure, except for the last interval, which is m2 instead of M7. This slight change does not affect the size of the two pitch class sets [014]. In the second appearance in the oboe line, the rhythm is preserved, but the middle interval is altered to a semitone. Finally, the motive is stated in the piano with a new rhythm and a slightly varied interval content. The piano version forms the pitch class set [0147].

The cell motive continues to evolve and in measures 69-71, it appears in the alto, oboe and piano with altered rhythm and pitch content (Example 3.61). In the alto line, the

The musical score for measures 69-71 of 'The Habitable Earth, Part II' is presented in 3/4 time. It consists of three staves: Alto, Oboe, and Piano. The Alto staff contains the lyrics 'for there is hope,'. The interval [015] is indicated above the Alto staff, spanning measures 69 and 70. The Oboe staff shows a melodic line with the interval [014] marked above it in measure 71. The Piano staff features a harmonic accompaniment with the interval [014] marked below it in measure 71.

Example 3.61. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 69-71.  
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rhythm is changed to a syncopated figure that adds subtle emphasis on the words “there is hope.” The interval content is changed to a semitone and M3 that form the pitch class set [015]. In the oboe line, the rhythm remains the same but the intervals are changed to a Dim5, M7 and m10. In the piano, the rhythm is changed, but the interval content preserved. The pitch class set [014] is also utilized as a harmony on the downbeat of measure 71.

In the following four measures the piano plays a short interlude, based on three-note cells, dispersed throughout the octaves (Example 3.62).

Piano

72

*p*

*poco cresc.*

75

*mf*

[012] [012] [036] [015] [034] [034] [034] [013]

Example 3.62. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 72-75.  
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Following this piano interlude is the final statement of text, “but seek not, seek not his destruction.” The alto motive forms the familiar pitch class set [014], only upwards. This [014] cell is also contained in the longer oboe line of measures 76-79 (Example 3.63).

Alto

75

*p* But seek not

*mf* seek not his de - struc-tion

Oboe

78

*p*

*mf*

[014] [014] [014]

Example 3.63. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 76-79.  
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The last seven measures suggest an instrumental closing (Example 3.64). The piano accompaniment is formed by more arpeggiated figures, based on three-note motives. The

last presentation of the cell motive [014] (mm. 85 and 86) is quite interesting. The semitone appears as a melodic interval, first in the oboe line and then in the piano's left hand. The m3 appears as harmonic interval, first between the oboe line and the piano's right hand, next between the piano's two hands.

Example 3.64. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 80-86.  
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“As vinegar upon nitre,” is set for quartet of soloists, oboe and piano. Its much slower tempo *animato*, quarter note equals 60, brings calmer character to the music. The texture and voicing varies according to the individual lines of text. Here again, Gideon uses plenty of motivic transformation. The first line of text, “as vinegar upon nitre,” is set in a very interesting manner. The voices exchange short triplet motives on the words “as vinegar,” or only “vinegar” (Example 3.65).



87 *animato* ♩ = 60

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Oboe

Piano

*mf* vin - e - gar

*mf* As vin - e - gar

*mf* vin - e - gar

m2 / unison

m2 / unison

m2 / unison

3

3

3

3

3

3

90

S

A

T

B

Ob.

Pno.

as vin - e - gar up - on ni - tre

vin - e - gar up - on ni - tre.

m2 / m2

m2 / M2

m2 / unison

m2 / m7

3

3

3

3

3

3

3

3

Example 3.65. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 87-92.  
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Each motive is in a different register and on a different beat. The intervallic structure is a semitone (either rising or descending) followed by unison. The last three motives (two in the soprano line and one in the bass) are slightly varied (Example 3.65, mm. 90-92). The rhythm is changed to accommodate the inflection of the text. The interval content is also varied. At measure 90, the soprano line contains two ascending semitones, at measure 91, a descending semitone and an ascending M2. At measure 92 the bass line imitates the soprano but the ascending M2 is inverted to a descending m7 (Example 3.65).

The vocal palette is rather simple and transparent. It is enhanced by rhythmically and melodically embellished motives in the oboe, also dispersed among the different beats of the measures. The piano accompaniment is very economical. Selected pitches borrowed from the vocal parts are dispersed among the beats and the octaves.

The oboe's motives are of particular interest. All are similar with slight changes in interval size and rhythm. Their overall contour (a downward leap followed by a larger upward one) remains unchanged (Example 3.66).



Example 3.66. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 87-92, oboe.

The second line of text, “so is he that singeth songs, “ is set for alternating pairs of voices. The text is repeated three times, making this middle section of the proverb longer than the rest (Example 3.67). Although the dynamic level is softer, *piano subito*, the texture is fuller, and the vocal lines, longer and more lyrical. Underneath these longer lines, short three-note cells continue to operate among the voices.

The musical score is divided into two systems, measures 93-95 and 96-99. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and instrumental parts (Oboe, Piano) are shown. The time signature changes from 2/4 to 3/4, then to 3/8, and finally to 4/4. The lyrics are: "So is he that sing - eth songs, sing - eth songs, So is he, he that sing - eth songs, is he, so is he, he that sing - eth songs, is he, he that sing - eth, is he, So is he, he". The score includes dynamic markings such as *p subito* and *p*. The instrumental parts include Oboe and Piano, with the Piano part featuring complex rhythmic patterns and a *p* marking. The vocal parts are labeled with "cell 1" and "cell 2" indicating specific musical cells. The Soprano part starts at measure 93, the Alto at 94, the Tenor at 95, and the Bass at 96. The Oboe and Piano parts start at measure 93. The Soprano part has a *p subito* marking at measure 93. The Alto part has a *p subito* marking at measure 94. The Tenor part has a *p subito* marking at measure 95. The Bass part has a *p* marking at measure 96. The Oboe part has a *p subito* marking at measure 93. The Piano part has a *p subito* marking at measure 93 and a *p* marking at measure 96. The Soprano part has a "cell 1" marking at measure 93. The Alto part has a "cell 1" marking at measure 95. The Tenor part has a "cell 1" marking at measure 95. The Bass part has a "cell 1" marking at measure 95. The Soprano part has a "cell 2" marking at measure 96. The Alto part has a "cell 2" marking at measure 96. The Tenor part has a "cell 2" marking at measure 96. The Bass part has a "cell 2" marking at measure 96.

Example 3.67. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 93-99.  
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The piano accompaniment consists of precise doubling of the vocal parts and the oboe continues to interact in the texture, by making short appearances. The oboe's last appearance at measures 103-104 is a cadenza-like passage, marking the closing of the proverb (Example 3.68).

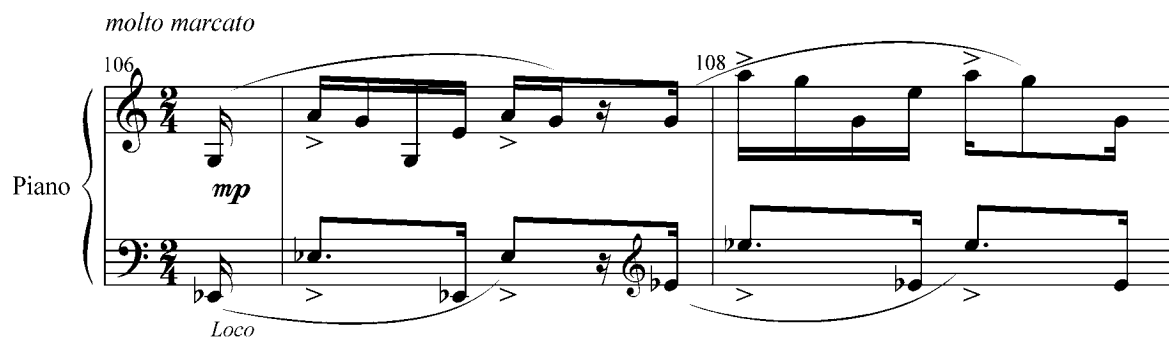
The musical score for measures 102-105 of *The Habitable Earth, Part II* is presented in four staves. The Soprano and Alto parts are vocal lines with lyrics "heav - y heart." and are marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The Oboe part features a melodic line with a crescendo and a piano (*p*) dynamic. The Piano part features a harmonic line with a crescendo and a piano (*p*) dynamic. The score includes pitch class set labels [014] and [048] at various points, indicating the harmonic structure. The time signature changes from 3/8 to 2/4 at measure 103.

Example 3.68. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 102-105.  
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In this closing, both melodic and harmonic events are based on the pitch class sets, [014] and [048]. The pitch class set [014] is first played as a harmony on the downbeat of measure 102. At the same time it occurs melodically in the oboe (m.103). It is used again as an ending chord at measure 105. The pitch class set [048] is played as a harmony at measures 102 and 103 and occurs melodically in the alto part.

“The refining pot is for silver” is the last proverb, set for tenor and bass solo and accompanied by piano. Here the role of the piano changes from accompanying instrument to a solo to which the voices are subordinate.

A two-measure piano introduction is based on the repetition of a melodic motive G3-A4-G4-G3-E4-A4-G4. The repetition is exact, only an octave higher. The rhythm of sixteenth note pick up, four sixteenths and two sixteenths is also preserved (Example 3.69). The sixteenth notes in piano’s right hand form short motives that are related on the basis of either pitch or contour.



Example 3.69. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 106-108.  
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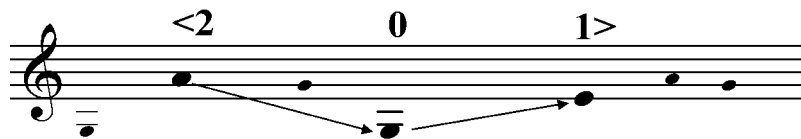
The recognition of the melodic contour as unifying element is reflected in Michael Friedman’s article, “A Methodology for the Discussion of Contour: Its Application to Schoenberg’s Music.” He writes,

The implications of contour study in twentieth century music are even more significant for the listener than for the composer. Perception of contour is more general than perception of pitch, and for those listeners who have difficulty grasping the complex world of pitch, interval, and set-class relationships as outlined in atonal theory, the contour of a musical unit may be the melodic parameter that is most easily grasped and related to other music features.<sup>168</sup>

<sup>168</sup> Michael Friedmann, “A Methodology for the Discussion of Contour: Its Application to Schoenberg’s Music,” *Journal of Music Theory* (1985): 224.

In “New Directions in the Theory and Analysis of Musical Contour,” Robert Morris points out that, “...a combination of contour and pitch-class analysis can help us understand continuity and coherence in a composition. We have also seen that looking for similar and/or equivalent contours is in analogy to looking for pc sets.”<sup>169</sup> Morris also gives a contour-reduction algorithm, which reduces any set of pitches to a prime form. Here as in pitch-class sets, repetition is omitted.

Using Morris’ algorithm, the melodic contour of the piano introduction motive is <201>. Simplified, its direction is as follows: a downward leap from the highest note to the lowest is filled with an upward leap to a note, the register of which is between the first and the second (Example 3.70).



Example 3.70. Melodic and graphic presentation of contour class <201>.

Following the instrumental introduction are two two-measure segments, corresponding to the first two lines of text. In between there is a one measure short interlude (Example 3.71). This segmentation is suggested by the piano’s left hand, which for the most part moves in descending parallel octaves in dotted rhythm. At the end of measure 113, the change of register, rhythm and most importantly direction (the intervals switch from descending to ascending), contribute to the formation of a minute cadential point.

<sup>169</sup> Robert Morris, “New Directions in the Theory and Analysis of Musical Contour,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 15/2 (Fall 1993):212.

108 *mp* Tenor The re - fin - ing pot is for sil - - - ver,

*mp* Bass The re - fin - ing pot is for sil - ver, for sil - ver

*mp* Piano

112 *mf* T and the fur-nace is for gold,

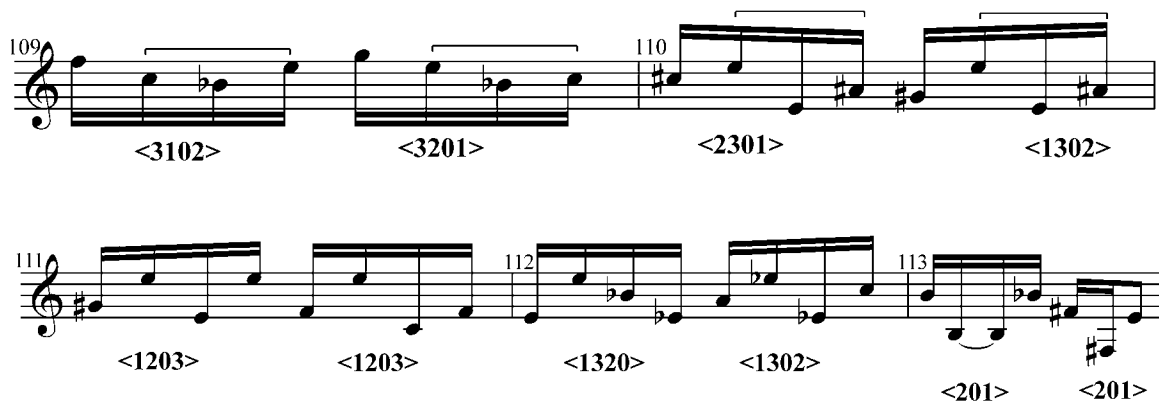
*mf* B and the fur-nace is for gold,

*cresc.* *mf* Pno.

Example 3.71. *The Habitable Earth*. Part II, measures 108-113.

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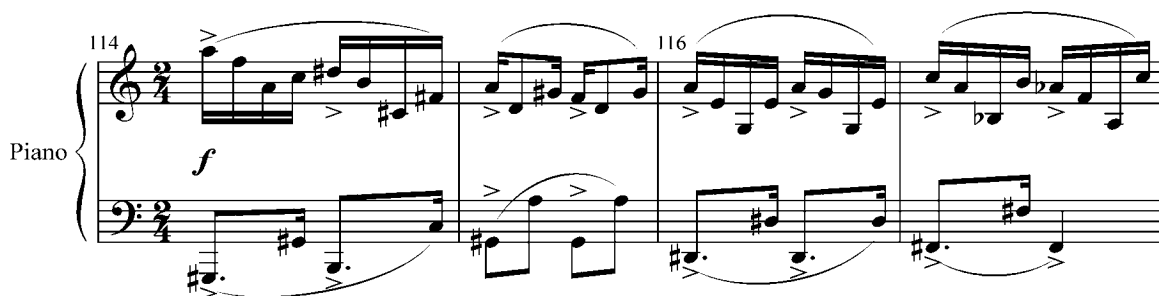
Melodic and contour presentations of the piano motives of measures 109-113 reveal that each measure contains a motive and its alteration (Example 3.72). In measure 109 the



Example 3.72. Part II, measures 109-113, piano

contour is different, but the pitch content almost identical. Each motive shares with its variant three common pitches (indicated by the brackets). The same procedure is in effect in measure 110. In measures 111, the contour is identical, the pitch content, different. This is also true for measure 113.

Measures 114 through 122 form an instrumental interlude that could be subdivided in two segments: one based on the activities in the piano's left hand; and the other, based on the motivic development in the piano's right hand. The first segment (Example 3.73) is formed by two two-measure phrases. The now ascending bass line continues to move in octaves, its rhythmic organization suggests another development towards a minute cadence at measure 117.

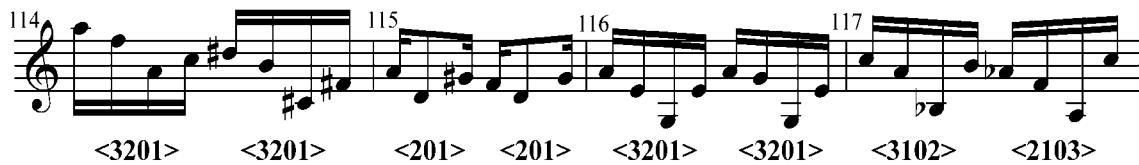


Example 3.73. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 114-117.

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On the melodic plane, the contour is once again invariable, while pitch and intervals vary within the established shape (Example 3.74). In measure 114 both motives form the



Example 3.74. Part II, measures 114-117, piano.

contour class <3201>. Furthermore, the second motive is a transposition of the first. In measure 115 both motives contain only three notes and form the contour classes <201> and <102>. Note that <102> is a retrograde of <201>. The motives in measure 116 form contour class <3201> and have all four pitches identical, the ones in measure 117 form contour classes <3120> and <2130>.

The second segment of the piano interlude is also formed by two two-measure phrases, with the addition of one measure conclusion (Example 3.75).

Example 3.75. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 118-122.

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Measures 118 through 121 form a short sequence based on the contour (Example 3.76). The

118 m3 A4 <2130> M3 D5 M7 <2130> m3 M7 <3102> m3

120 m3 A4 <2130> m3 A4 M7 <2130> m3 <3102> m7 <210> m3

Example 3.76. Part II, measures 118-121, piano.

material of measures 118 and 119 serves as a basis for imitation in measures 120 and 121. The order of the contour sets of measure 119 is reversed in measure 121. Each motive and its imitation also share identical intervals. Thus the first set of sixteenth notes in measure 118 has two identical intervals with the first set of measure 120; the second set of the same measure has two identical intervals and one slightly altered with the corresponding set of measure 120. This resemblance continues in measures 119 and 121.

Measure 122 serves as a mini-closing of this piano interlude. Its pitch content is identical with the one of measure 107 (Example 3.77). In the right hand the same pitches

107 <3201> 122 <3201>

Example 3.77. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 107 and 122.

A-G-E are transposed an octave higher and in different order. This slight variation does not change the contour class <3201>, which is exactly the same as in measure 107. In left hand the descending octave Eb5-Eb4 is now presented enharmonically as an ascending D#2-D#3.

Measures 113-117 form the closing of the proverb and the whole movement as well. The last verse of text, “But the Lord trieth the heart,” is sung by tenor, and it is followed by a short two and a half measure codetta (Example 3.78).

The musical score for Example 3.78, measures 123-127, is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 123-127) features a Tenor voice and Piano accompaniment. The Tenor part begins at measure 123 with the lyrics "But the Lord trieth the" and ends at measure 127. The Piano part begins at measure 123 with a "cell motive" and ends at measure 127. The score includes dynamic markings such as *f*, *ff*, *mf*, and *cresc.*, as well as articulation like *allargando* and *espr.*. The Piano part features a "Loco" section and a "cresc." section. The score is labeled with measure numbers 123, 125, and 127. The Tenor part is labeled "Tenor" and the Piano part is labeled "Piano". The score includes contour class labels [014] and [0148].

Example 3.78. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 123-127.  
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The text, the articulation, the dynamic level and the density of the piano accompaniment suggest grandioso character. This musical statement is the climax of the entire piece, well-prepared by the preceding section in which the energy of the driving sixteenth notes built intensity and expectation of a resolution.

In measure 123, the cell motive A-G-A, (accompanied by D#-D# in the bass) serves again as a brief opening. The harmony of the following measures is based on the familiar pitch class sets [0148] and [014]. In measures 123 and 124, the sonority G#-C#-A-F, [0148] in piano, is utilized in tenor as G#-A-F, [014]. This pitch class set [014] becomes a prominent harmonic element in the instrumental codetta of measures 125-127. The final chord A-F-Ab also forms the pitch class set [014]. Here again the register, the dynamics and the articulation help to reach a true grandioso effect.

### **Part III**

Part III can be divided into three sections: first, a recapitulation of the instrumental prelude and the choral narration, “Does not Wisdom call?” from Part I; second, a chorale-like section; and third, a closing. After the highly sectionalized second movement in which contrast and diversity of musical idioms are exhibited, there is a return to one of the most stable sections of the piece, the instrumental introduction and the choral narration from the beginning. The return is almost literal with only few harmonic and textural changes that do not disturb the overall stability but rather demonstrate the composer’s originality and creativity. The inclusion of a chorale-like section demonstrates once again Gideon’s sensitivity to the text.

In the instrumental prelude, the initial oboe motive that opened Part I is now preceded by a short imitation in piano, a P5 lower (Example 3.79). Along with the piano motive



Measure 5 is identical with its corresponding measure in Part I. In measure 6 another transposition takes place. The ascending line and its harmony are transposed down a P4. Because the transposition is literal, the exact intervallic content of the accompaniment is preserved. Here, as in Part I, all harmonic activities are based on the pitch class set [0134].

The transition also undergoes minor changes. It is shortened from three measures in Part I to only two in Part III (Example 3.81). The oboe part in measure 9 is slightly changed.

Example 3.81 shows musical notation for Oboe and Piano across measures 8 and 9. The time signature is 2/4. The piano part features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 8, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The oboe part has a single note in measure 8, also marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. In measure 9, the piano part has a triplet of eighth notes, and the oboe part has a single note. The pitch class sets [0148], [0347], and [014] are indicated below the piano part. The interval M7 is marked above the oboe part in measure 9.

Example 3.81. *The Habitable Earth*, Part III, measures 8-9.  
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The interval is a M7 instead of a P5. The first chord, pitch class set [0148] is transposed up m3, but its intervallic content remains the same. The following chords [0347] and [014] have exactly the same pitch content as in the corresponding measures of Part I.

The choral narration, “Does not Wisdom call?” is repeated in its entirety with two minor changes. The length of the oboe motive connecting the text phrases is shortened due to the meter change from 4/4 in Part I to 2/4 in Part III (m.11) and from 5/4 to 4/4 (m. 13). Despite these changes the pitch content and the intervallic structure of the motives are exactly the same (Example 3.82).

10 *pp*

Soprano Does not wis - - - dom call? and

Alto *pp* Does not wis - - - dom call? and

Tenor *pp* Does not wis - - - dom call? and

Bass *pp* Does not wis - - - dom call? and

Oboe *pp*

Piano *pp*

*cresc.*

S un - der - stand - - - ing put forth her voice?

A *cresc.* un - der - stand - - - ing put forth her voice?

T *cresc.* un - der - stand - - - ing put forth her voice?

B *cresc.* un - der - stand - - - ing put forth her voice?

Ob. *cresc.*

Pno. *cresc.*

Example 3.82. *The Habitable Earth*, Part III, measures 10-13.  
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The duet between the soprano and the alto, “unto you oh, men,” is now shifted to the tenor and the bass (Example 3.83). The oboe part remains exactly the same, while the piano

14 *mf* Tenor Un-to you, oh, men. I cal and my voice is

*mf* Bass To you, oh, men, I call, adn my

*mf* Oboe

*mf* *mp* Piano

17 *cresc.* *f* T to the sons of men, to the sons of men.

*cresc.* *f* B voice is to the sons of men, the sons of men.

*cresc.* *f* Ob.

*cresc.* *f* Pno.

Example 3.83. *The Habitable Earth*, Part III, measures 14-19.  
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changes its register according to the voices. In measures 16-19, the piano's right hand is an octave higher than in Part I, the left hand, reinforced by octave doubling. This produces a fuller, more dramatic sound that is in concurrence with the overall dynamic level for this section, *mf* rather than *subito p*.

Following this is a section based on the hymnal verse, "Happy is the man who findeth wisdom." The nature of the text,<sup>170</sup> the syllabic setting, the homophonic texture, as well as the diatonic harmonies in choir, suggest a resemblance to a chorale. The slower tempo (*poco meno mosso*, quarter note equals 60) and the subdued character (*Tranquillo*) bring a peaceful resolution at the end of the piece. In this chorale-like section, four musical phrases reflect

*Poco meno mosso* ♩ = 60  
**Tranquillo**

20 *p subito*

Soprano  
Hap - py is the man that find - eth wis - dom

Alto  
Hap - py is the man that find - eth wis - dom

Tenor  
Hap - py is tha man that find - eth wis - dom

Bass  
Hap - py is tha man that find - eth wis - dom

Piano  
*p subito*

Example 3.84. *The Habitable Earth*, Part III, measures 20-22.  
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<sup>170</sup> For detailed discussion of the text see Chapter II, pages 64-65.

each line of text. The first phrase, “Happy is the man who findeth wisdom,” is constructed from sonorities that contain a diatonic triad and an alteration of either one of its members (Example 3.84).

The diatonic triads are parallel first inversion Major chords, with semitone alterations in the piano. The harmony on the downbeat of measure 20 contains a Major triad, Db-F-Ab, a minor triad, D-F-A and a diminished one, D-F-Ab. It may be viewed as a Db triad with split root and split fifth. The rest of the triads contain only one altered pitch.

The second phrase, “She is more precious than rubies,” is formed by chords, which contain stacked fourths (Example 3.85).

23

Soprano

She is more pre - cious than ru - bies.

Alto

She is more pre - cious than ru - bies.

Tenor

8 She is more pre - cious than ru - bies

Bass

She is more pre - cious than ru - bies

Piano

Example 3.85. *The Habitable Earth*, Part III, measures 23-24.  
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The third phrase, “Length of days is in her right hand,” is slightly shorter than the first, but it is constructed in a similar way (Example 3.86). Parallel Major first inversion

The musical score for Example 3.86, measures 25-28, is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 25-26, and the second system covers measures 27-28. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and Piano accompaniment are shown. The lyrics for measures 25-26 are "Lenght of days is in her right hand, in her". The lyrics for measures 27-28 are "left hand are rich - es and ho - nor". The score includes a key signature change from C major to B-flat major between measures 25 and 27. The piano accompaniment features a parallel major first inversion.

**Measure 25:** Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass all sing "Lenght of days is in her right hand, in her". The piano accompaniment features a parallel major first inversion.

**Measure 26:** Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass all sing "Lenght of days is in her right hand, in her". The piano accompaniment features a parallel major first inversion.

**Measure 27:** Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass all sing "left hand are rich - es and ho - nor". The piano accompaniment features a parallel major first inversion.

**Measure 28:** Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass all sing "left hand are rich - es and ho - nor". The piano accompaniment features a parallel major first inversion.

Example 3.86. *The Habitable Earth*, Part III, measures 25-28  
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chords in choir are doubled by the piano, with semitone alteration of one of the pitches is added. The fourth phrase, “in her left hand are riches and honor,” resembles the second in which chords with stacked fourths are formed (Example 3.86).

Measures 29-41 mark the conclusion of the movement and the cantata as well. The phrase, “Her ways are the ways of pleasantness,” continues in the chorale-like manner (Example 3.87). The choir parts in parallel triads, an altered note added in the piano, steady duple meter and syllabic setting of the text. The oboe, omitted in the chorale, appears again.

29 *sempre p*

Soprano *sempre p* Her ways are the ways of plea-sant-ness

Alto *sempre p* Her ways are the ways of plea-sant-ness

Tenor *sempre p* Her ways are the ways of plea-sant-ness

Bass *sempre p* Her ways are the ways of plea-sant-ness

Oboe *sempre p*

Piano *sempre p*

Example 3.87. *The Habitable Earth*, Part III, measures 29-31.  
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In measure 32, the attention is suddenly attracted by the oboe part that recapitulates a previously heard motive from the closing of Part I (Example 3.88). When it first appeared in



The musical score for Example 3.89, measures 34-38, features six staves. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and the Piano part all begin at measure 34. The Oboe part begins at measure 37. The lyrics for the vocal parts are: Soprano: "and all her paths and all her"; Alto: "and all her paths, and all her paths, her"; Tenor: "and all her paths, her paths, her"; Bass: "and all her paths, her paths, her". The dynamics for all parts are *p* (piano) at the start, *poco cresc.* (poco crescendo) in the middle, and *mf* (mezzo-forte) at the end. The time signature changes from 2/4 to 3/4 at measure 37. The Oboe part has a triplet of eighth notes in measure 38. The Piano part has a triplet of eighth notes in measure 38.

Example 3.89. *The Habitable Earth*, Part III, measures 34-38.  
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The final cadence is also quite traditional in terms of melodic and harmonic profile (Example 3.90). The soprano moves stepwise III-II-I, the bass (in the piano's left hand) moves V-IV-I, the inner parts move with the smallest possible motion, a semitone. This is in contrast to the leaping manner in which chords are connected throughout the piece. If we borrow the harmonic language of tonal music, the progression of the last three measures could be described as III6-II6-I. True to her unique style, Gideon once again added a subtle semitone alteration to each one of the chords to enhance the harmony. Thus, the harmonies

**Allargando**

Soprano  
Alto  
Tenor  
Bass  
Oboe  
Piano

her paths are peace.  
her paths are peace.  
her paths are peace.  
her paths are peace.

[0147] [0147] [0347]  
III6 II6 I

Example 3.90. *The Habitable Earth*, Part III, measures 38-41.  
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of measures 39 and 40 are, F#-A-D-D# and E-G-C-C#, both forming pitch class set [0147], a triad with a split root. The last chord, B-D-D#-F#, pitch class set [0347] is a triad with a split third.

The careful preparation of the arrival on B, both harmonically and melodically, and the more conservative harmonies throughout the movement suggest that Gideon intended a traditional diatonic closing of the cantata. The use of pitch class sets [0147] and [0347] at the final cadence, where the ultimate stability is intended and successfully reached, once again

demonstrates the importance of these two harmonic formations for the whole piece. As Perle states, "...to her [Gideon] the inherent ambiguity of pitch functions in the contemporary tone-material means that one must be more careful than ever, and this sense of the significance of every note pervades her work."<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> George Perle, "The Music of Miriam Gideon," 2.



## CHAPTER 4

### ADDITIONAL STYLISTIC OBSERVATIONS AND REHEARSAL STRATEGIES

#### Additional Stylistic Observations

Contemporary music presents the performer with equal amounts of challenge and reward: challenge to expand ones musical capabilities, to make adequate artistic decisions, to try and err; reward from discovering and bringing to life often unheard composition, a product of our own time. In addition to the traditional preparation process that includes familiarizing oneself with the score and developing and implementing rehearsal strategies, the conductor is presented with the opportunity to experiment with new analytical techniques. The possibility of communicating directly with the composer and reading reviews and other writings by his/her contemporaries, adds invaluable knowledge and confidence to any performance decisions.

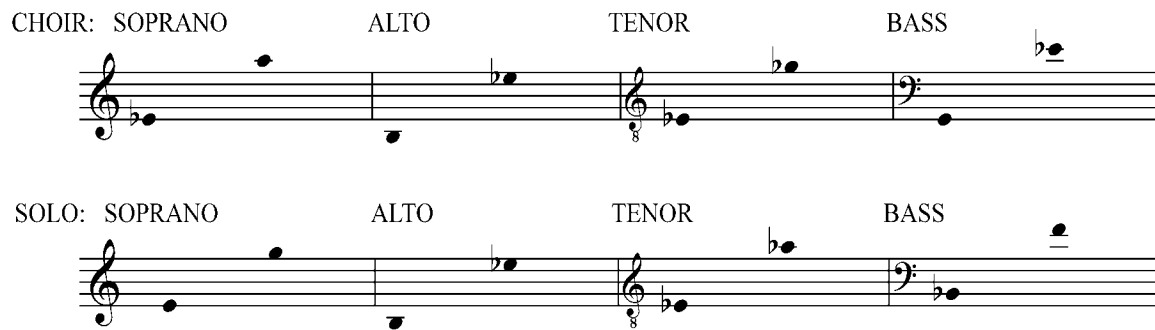
In preparing Miriam Gideon's *The Habitable Earth* for performance, information was gained from writings about her vocal chamber works and the stylistic features exhibited in the cantata as well. As mentioned before, Gideon's main inspiration was the text and all musical decisions were influenced by its most accurate delivery. Barbara Petersen writes, "In crafting her vocal lines, Gideon considers carefully the rhythms of individual words in the text as well as the flow of entire lines and the contrast of poems within a group."<sup>172</sup> Petersen points out that despite the extensive use of dissonance, Gideon's melodies are "...above all, singable, the notes always seem to flow from one to the next."<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Petersen, *op.cit*, 242.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 245.

The overall choir writing is mainly homophonic with occasional imitation. When used, the imitation is limited to only two voices at the time, allowing the text to be heard and understood. The overall range of both choir and solo parts is standard, indeed for the most part the voices move in the very comfortable middle to upper part of the range (Example 4.1).



Example 4.1. Overall range of the choir and the solo parts.

The text is usually set syllabically, in short note values. Repetition of words or phrases is rare and when used, it is for dramatic or descriptive purpose. Such is the case with two passages in Part II, where the text is full of vivid imagery, more so than in Parts I and III, where the text is more narrative. In the first passage (Part II, mm. 6-16), Gideon stretches the text “They that tarry long at the wine” with numerous repetitions, perhaps to portray the drunkard’s blurry thoughts. In the second passage (Part II, mm. 25-28), the word ‘basilisk’ (“and stingeth like a basilisk”) is repeated three times. Here a ‘stinging’ sensation is achieved by repeating the words in a whispering *pianissimo* that emphasizes even more the ‘s’ (Example 4.2).

Example 4.2 shows measures 25-28 of *The Habitable Earth, Part II*. The score is for four voices: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The time signature is 2/4. The Soprano, Alto, and Tenor parts begin with a rest in measure 25 and enter in measure 26 with a melody. The Bass part begins in measure 25 with a melody. The lyrics are: Soprano: like a ba-si-lisk, bas-i-lisk. Alto: like a ba-si-lisk, bas-i-lisk. Tenor: like a ba-si-lisk, bas-i-lisk. Bass: and sting-eth like a bas-i-lisk, like a bas-i-lisk, bas-i-lisk. Dynamics include *pp* (pianissimo) and *p* (piano).

Example 4.2. *The Habitable Earth, Part II*, measures 25-28.  
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Solo parts are used exclusively in Part II, where the variety of images presented by the text is matched by the use of different voice colors. Some portions of Part II are set for a quartet of soloists, others for a duet, or just a solo. As seen from Table 4.1, the range of the solo parts is close to the one of the choir, except for the tenor, who reaches high Ab at the climax of the piece (Part II, measure 121).

Depending on the nature of the text, the solo parts may have a wide melodic span, with frequent register shifts that lead to exposure of individual notes (Example 4.3). Such an angular profile is technically demanding and requires special attention from the performer.

Example 4.3 shows measures 32-36 of *The Habitable Earth, Part II*, featuring a Tenor solo. The time signature is 2/4. The Tenor part begins in measure 32 with a melody. The lyrics are: When shall I a-wake? I will seek it yet a-gain! The dynamic is *pp* (pianissimo).

Example 4.3. *The Habitable Earth, Part II*, measures 32-36, tenor.  
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However, there are many beautifully crafted lyrical melodies, with romantic expressiveness (Example 4.4).

Alto

49 *p* Speak not in the ears of a fool, for he will de -

55 spise the wis - dom of they words.

Example 4.4. *The Habitable Earth*, Part II, measures 49-56, alto.  
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Both the piano and the oboe play a special role in the unfolding of the musical events. The oboe is chosen for its distinguishable color. Its constant interaction with the voices suggests a special role in the piece, the musical personification of Wisdom. Oboe's opening call raises the question "Does not Wisdom call?" long before the choir sings the actual words. The inconclusive, ascending motives of the opening ten measures suggest musical questions (Example 4.5).

Oboe

1 *f*

5 *mp*

6 *f*

7 *p subito*

8 *dim.*

9 *cresc.*

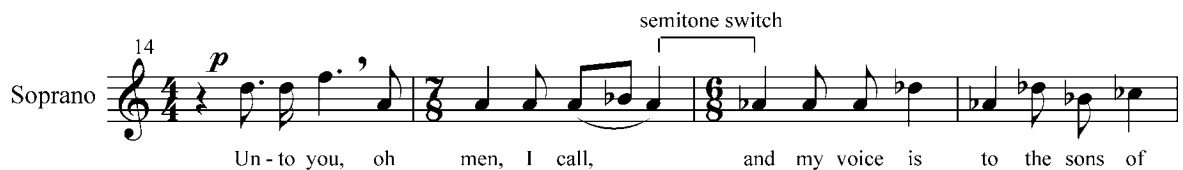
Example 4.5. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures 1-9, oboe.  
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Throughout the piece, the oboe continues to interact with the vocal parts (especially in the two duets with alto, Part II, measures 49-56 and 64-85) in a manner described by

Petersen as “interweaving of instrumental and vocal lines”<sup>174</sup> in which “one is an extension of the other.”<sup>175</sup>

The piano is used both as an accompanying and solo instrument. As a solo instrument it is featured in the short interludes, dispersed throughout the piece. A great emphasis is placed at the end of Part II (mm.105-126), where the closing instrumental postlude has a dramatic function. The driving sixteenth notes facilitate the build up of the climax. As shown in the analysis the seemingly complex texture of this piano postlude is based on carefully crafted melodic and contour patterns.

The construction of the vocal phrases is based on “close-knit intervals (seconds, thirds) or repeated notes.”<sup>176</sup> A unique feature of Gideon’s melodies is the use of chromaticism. A semitone inflection may only be a “subtle shade of difference,”<sup>177</sup> or may have a structural importance for the line. For example, in the following melody, the first part (mm.14 and 15) is based on a minor triad, D-F-A, the Bb being a subtle semitone shade with no structural importance (Example 4.6).



Example 4.6. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures 14-17, soprano.

The second part (mm. 16-17) is based on a tetrachord, Ab-Bb-Cb-Db. All pitches in this second part are flatted, as though as the melody moved from the white keys in the piano to the black ones. This very important move is initiated by what the author of this paper

<sup>174</sup> Petersen, *op. cit.*, 241.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 244.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup> Perle, “The Music of Miriam Gideon,” 2.

would like to call a “semitone switch.” The switch occurs in the middle of the phrase between the A and Ab.

Another feature of Gideon’s style is the breaking of a seemingly flowing line with an insertion of a large interval (often dissonant). When done this causes dramatic effect, associated again with the accentuation of the text. In Example 4.7, the parallel downward leaps in all parts coincide with the break in the text.

38 *dolce* *pp*

Soprano

When he es - tab - lished the heavn's, I was there;

Alto

When he es - tab - lished the heavn's I was there;

Tenor

When he es - tab - lished the heavn's I was there;

Bass

Example 4.7. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures 38-40, choir.  
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In her discussion of the other choral works of Miriam Gideon, Pinnolis observes that most all of them start with choir parts in unison.<sup>178</sup> In the cantata Gideon applies different uses of the unison. She may use it in paired voices (Example 4.8) or in all voices (Example 4.9).

<sup>178</sup> Pinnolis, “An Analysis of Selected Works,” 95.

Example 4.8. *The Habitable Earth, Part I*, measures 10-12, choir.  
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Example 4.9. *The Habitable Earth, Part I*, measures 27-28, choir.  
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As demonstrated in the analysis Gideon uses conventional triads to which she adds subtle shades of semitone alterations. This results in formations with split roots, thirds or fifths. Because of the dissonant nature of such formations, she sets the long harmonic

progressions in rather transparent texture. Such examples are the ends of both Part I and Part III, where the text is set syllabically, the piano doubles the voices literally and if the oboe is used, it utilizes selected pitches from the vocal parts.

Gideon alters the rhythm and frequently changes the meter in order to accommodate the natural inflection of the words. Each line of text is easily heard and understood due to this special care. One may think that such numerous changes will leave the listener with the impression of disjointed and fragmented music. In *The Habitable Earth* these changes blend into the overall dynamic and variable texture.

While the rhythm does not present many difficulties, the constant change of meter does. Especially challenging are the series of measures containing compound meters. In Example 4.10, a measure in 7/8 is followed by one in 6/8, followed by one in 5/8.

The image shows a musical score for Soprano and Alto parts. The Soprano part is on a treble clef staff, and the Alto part is on a bass clef staff. Both parts start at measure 41, marked with a piano (p) dynamic. The music is in 7/8 time for the first measure, then changes to 6/8 for the second, and finally to 5/8 for the third. The lyrics are: "When he set a cir - cle up - on the face of the". The word "circle" is placed on the downbeat of the 6/8 measure.

Example 4.10. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures 41-43, soprano and alto.  
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This is also one of the few places in which the words are set rather oddly (especially in the alto). It is obvious that Gideon intended to stress the word “circle” by placing it on the downbeat of the 6/8 measure. However her rhythmic interpretation of the preceding “set a” (from “when he set a circle”) emphasizes “a” more than the “when” or “he.”



The metric organization of the opening ten measures is also intricate. While measures 1-4 are uniform in meter, the remaining five measures are exactly the opposite, the meter changes from 2/4 to 8/8, back to 2/4 and to 3/4 (Example 4.11).

The musical score for Example 4.11, measures 1-9 of 'The Habitable Earth, Part I', is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 1-4) is in 2/4 time, featuring a forte (f) Oboe melody and a forte (f) Piano accompaniment. The second system (measures 5-8) transitions to 8/8 time, marked with a mezzo-piano (mp) Oboe melody and a mezzo-piano (mp) Piano accompaniment. The third system (measures 9-10) returns to 2/4 time, marked with a piano (p) Oboe melody and a piano (p) Piano accompaniment. The score includes various dynamic markings such as *f*, *mp*, *cresc.*, *dim.*, *subito*, and *p*, as well as articulation marks like accents and slurs. The time signature changes are clearly indicated by the notation and the measure numbers.

Example 4.11. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I measures 1-9.  
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Another metrically challenging place is the transition from the piano interlude (Part I, mm. 20-23) to the following choir entrance (Example 4.12). While the piano plays rhythmic eighth notes in 2/4, the choir enters in a tilting 9/8. In order to avoid excessive pounding on the downbeats of measures 20-24, Gideon indicates with slurs the desired legato articulation of the eighth notes. She also groups them in one long and two short phrases, played softly at a dynamic level *piano*, which invites more lyrical interpretation.

20 ♩ = 88 *poco piu mosso*

Soprano *p* The Lord made me at the be

Alto *p* The Lord made me at the be

Tenor *p* The Lord made me at the be

Bass *p* The Lord made me at the be

Piano *p*

Example 4.12. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures 20-23.  
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### Rehearsal Strategies

The atonal nature of Gideon’s musical language presents a challenge to the singer. The use of “fixed *do*” in the learning process may seem too complex at first (due to the plentitude of accidentals), but in a long run it will ensure better understanding and command

of the music. A major issue is the varying size of the intervals within the melodic lines and across the voices. This presents difficulties with the intonation.

Consider the following line (Example 4.13) in which the semitone inflection changes the size of the fourth from perfect to augmented, and vice versa: Further difficulty is

Soprano



I was set up from ev-er last-ing, from the be - gin-ning or ev - er the earth was.

Example 4.13. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures 27-31, soprano.

presented by the octave displacement of Gb (measure 28, downbeat) and the downward M7 leap from D to Eb (second beat of measure 29).

To ensure precise intonation, the conductor should rehearse these large intervals as a combination of their inversion (m2), plus an octave (Example 4.14, steps 1 and 2). After securing the move, the singers should sing the original interval (Example 4.14, step 3).



di - di di do di di di do do

di - di di do di di di do do

di di di do di di di do do

Example 4.14. Rehearsal suggestions for Part I, measures 27-28.

For accuracy, the text may be substituted with the syllables ‘di’ (for the eighth notes) and ‘do’ (for the quarters and half notes), along with *staccato* and *marcato* articulation. The same rehearsal technique may be applied for the connection between the first and the second beats of measure 29 (Example 4.15, steps 1 and 2) as well as for the connection of measures 29 and 30 (Example 4.16, steps 1 and 2).

1

3

3

di di di di di di do do

2

3

3

di di di di di di do do

Example 4.15. Rehearsal suggestions for Part I, measure 29.

1

3

di di di do do do

2

3

3

di di di di di di do do

Example 4.16. Rehearsal suggestions for Part I, measure 29-30.

Inherent in every atonal work is the lack of solid pitch centers that may be used as a reference especially in transitional sections. Example 4.17 illustrates a transition in which an intonation challenge is presented to the altos. The sopranos not only hear their starting pitch,

13 *mf* put forth her voice? Solo *p* Un - to you, oh

Alto *mf* put forth her voice? Solo *p* To you

Tenor *mf* put forth her voice?

Bass *mf* put forth her voice?

Oboe *mf espr.* *p subito*

Piano *mp* *pp subito*

Example 4.17. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures 13-14.  
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D in the piano's right hand, but also have a whole beat to confirm it. The altos on the other hand hear their starting Gb a whole measure before (in the oboe) and, because of the change of harmony on the downbeat of measure 14, it is unlikely that the altos will be able to enter on Gb. In this instance it may be beneficial for the altos to hum the F (from the oboe) an octave lower and shift a semitone higher to Gb.

Following this is another difficult transition, in which there is no time for the new pitches in the tenor and bass to be prepared (Example 4.18).

Example 4.18. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures 45-47.  
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The rehearsing technique for these and other similar passages should include the following steps in a slower tempo. If the new pitch was heard previously (as in Example 4.17), the voice should hum it when it occurs until the time for its actual execution comes. Once the pitch is solidified, this step may be omitted. If the pitch was not heard previously (as in Example 4.18), the voice/voices, which are about to enter, should derive it from the preceding voices. This process will initially include the singing of a referential part (for tenor, singing the soprano part; for bass, the alto) and stopping on the problematic pitches. After solidifying, the transition should be practiced in actual tempo without stops. When

performing the entire work, the conductor should be careful not to alter the tempo or the dynamics, in order to facilitate these and other intonation difficulties.

The complexity of the harmonic formations (mainly their dissonant nature) also requires extra attention. Since the texture is predominantly homophonic, voices should be combined together and rehearsed simultaneously as soon as possible. Voices with similar intervallic content may be paired and rehearsed together first. In places with particular difficulties, the original rhythm should be ignored and chords should be practiced as long quarter notes.

In Example 4.19, a great deal of difficulty results from the horizontal and vertical interplay between perfect fourths and the tritone. First the parts may be split and rehearsed in

49 *f*

Soprano

When he gave the sea his de - cree, that the wa - ters should

*f*

Alto

When he gave the sea his de - cree, that the wa - ters should

*f*

Tenor

When he gave the sea his de - cree, that the wa - ters should

*f*

Bass

When he gave the sea his de - cree, that the wa - ters should

Example 4.19. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures 49-52.  
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(example 4.19 continued)

S  
not trans - gress his co - mand - ment  
 A  
not trans - gress his co - mand - ment  
 T  
not trans - gress his co - mand - ment  
 B  
not trans - gress his co - mand - ment

pairs, soprano/ tenor and alto /bass, based on similar intervallic content. Next, the passage may be divided in short motives and each one should be practiced individually as a series of quarter notes on a designated syllable (Example 4.20). Third, the connections between motives one and two, and two and three, should be solidified (Example 4.21).

Motive 1                      Motive 2                      Motive 3  
 Soprano  
Do - do - do - do      Do - do - do - do      Do - do - do - do  
 Alto  
Do - do - do - do      Do - do - do - do      Do - do - do - do  
 Tenor  
Do - do - do - do      Do - do - do - do      Do - do - do - do  
 Bass  
Do - do - do - do      Do - do - do - do      Do - do - do - do

Example 4.20. Rehearsal suggestions for Part I, measures 49-52.



Motive 1

Motive 2

Soprano

Do - do - do - do - do - do - do - do - do - do - do - do

Alto

Do - do - do - do - do - do - do - do - do - do - do - do

Tenor

Do - do - do - do - do - do - do - do - do - do - do - do

Bass

Do - do - do - do - do - do - do - do - do - do - do - do

Example 4.21. Rehearsal suggestions for Part I, measures 49-50.

Last, the rhythm and the words of each individual motive should be added with a stop on the first note of the following one (Example 4.22).

Motive 1

Motive 2

Motive 3

Soprano

When he gave the sea sea his de-cree that gress his co-mand - ment

Alto

When he gave the sea sea his de-cree that gress his co-mand - ment

Tenor

When he gave the sea sea his de-cree that gress his co-mand - ment

Bass

When he gave the sea sea his de-cree that gress his co-mand - ment

Example 4.22. Rehearsal suggestions for Part I, measure 49-52.

The closing of Part I (mm. 58-71) and the chorale-like section of Part III should be practiced in the same manner. In both each short phrase is already defined. The chords may

be practiced without rhythm and text as long quarter notes on a chosen syllable. In the chorale-like section the conductor may request little or no vibrato, considering the dynamic level *piano*, and the hymn-like character of the music.

In practicing harmonic formations, it is very important to do so with the piano playing its own part. As discussed in the analysis, the piano not only doubles the voices, but also contains additional dissonant pitches. This results in a “sounding together of the true note with its neighboring or changing note.”<sup>179</sup> As shown in Example 4.23, the piano’s right hand

The musical score for Example 4.23, measures 53-56, is presented in a standard musical notation format. It includes four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "when he ap - point - ed the foun - da - tions of the earth". The score is marked "sempre f" and includes measure numbers 53 and 55. The piano part consists of a right hand with chords and a left hand with a bass line.

Example 4.23. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures. 53-56.  
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<sup>179</sup> Carner, *Twentieth Century Harmony*, 30.

doubles the choir, while its left hand contains a semitone alteration of one of the choir pitches. Thus, in measure 53, D is juxtaposed to Db; in measures 54 and 55, B to Bb and F to Gb (equivalent to F#); in measure 56, G sounds together with Ab (equivalent to G#).

A similar passage is found in the chorale, Part III, 20-22, where the dissonant pitches are in the piano's middle voices (Example 4.24).

**Tranquillo**

The musical score is for a vocal quartet and piano. It is titled 'Tranquillo' and marked with a tempo of 'Tranquillo' and a dynamic of 'p subito'. The score covers measures 20 to 22. The vocal parts are Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The piano part is written for a grand piano. The lyrics are 'Hap - py is the man that find - eth wis - dom.' The piano part features complex chordal textures in the middle voices, with some dissonant intervals.

Example 4.24. *The Habitable Earth*, Part III, measures 20-22.  
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The constant change of meter also presents performance difficulties. In the following section from Part I the change from 9/8 to 7/8 and 3/4 is challenging because of the various triple and duple subdivisions (Example 4.25). The setting of the first beat of the 3/4 measure as a triplet, also complicates the matter.

Soprano *p* 24 The Lord made me at the be - gin-ning of his way, the first of his works of old.

Alto *p* The Lord made me at the be - gin-ning of his way, the first of his works of old.

Tenor *p* The Lord made me at the be - gin-ning of his way, the first of his works of old.

Bass *p* The Lord made me at the be - gin-ning of his way, the first of his works of old.

Example 4.25. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures 24-26.  
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In such passages the rhythm should be first practiced on one pitch, comfortable for all voices (e.g., middle C), with the syllables *ti*, for the eighth note, and *ta* for the quarter note. The conductor should also point out how the text of the 7/8 measure determines the grouping of the eighth notes into 2+2+3. He /she should pay special attention to the triplet in measure 26 where three eighth notes must take the space of only two. The use of the metronome, beating the eighth note, will be very beneficial. After the rhythm is mastered in such way, the text and the actual pitches should be added consecutively.

Tempo is another element that changes quite frequently. In Part II alone there are ten tempo changes that correspond to the changes in texture and voicing of the individual proverbs. Fortunately for the conductor and the performer, Gideon provided an exact metronome indication for each new tempo.

In Part I, the tempo change from *Moderato maestoso* (quarter note equals 72) to *poco piu mosso* (quarter note equals 88) is sudden. The new tempo should start in the piano

interlude (m. 20). In Part III the tempo change occurs at the same place (m. 20), only this time the new tempo is slower, *poco meno mosso* (quarter note equals 66) and there is no instrumental interlude to establish it. The preceding *ritardando* (measures 18 and 19) will help to better transition to the new slower tempo.

In Part II the seemingly numerous tempo changes in fact reflect the overall shape of the movement. For example, the main tempo for the *Drunkard's Lament* (mm.1-37) is *Agitato* (quarter note equals 66), with a deviation of *piu mosso* (quarter note equals 76, mm. 6-28), and return to the initial tempo at measure 29. In the remaining sections the tempo changes with each individual proverb. Example 4.26 demonstrates the changes in tempo according to the text. The conductor's task here is to work out with the soloists all individual tempos as well as the transitions between the proverbs.

|   |                                  |                                     |   |                             |                                      |
|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ♩ = 66  | ♩ = 92                           | ♩ = 80                              | ♩ = 100                                 | ♩ = 60                      | ♩ = 72                               |
| 1 _____ 37 / 38 _____ 44 / 45 _____ 63 / 64 _____ 85 / 86 _____ 104 / 105 _____ 112 |                                  |                                     |   |                             |                                      |
| Who crieth woe<br>who alas...   | He that blessed<br>his friend... | Buy the truth<br>and sell it not... | Chasten thy son<br>for there is hope... | As vinegar<br>upon nitre... | The refining pot<br>is for silver... |

Example 4.26. Tempo changes in Part II.

The articulation of any vocal piece depends highly on the delivery of the text. Although not always, Gideon did provide some articulation markings. The conductor and the performers should observe them closely, because they are intended to enhance the text.

Gideon indicated the desired dynamics with great precision. She even suggested a softer dynamic level for the piano, when accompanying the choir, so that the voices are not

overpowered (e.g., Part I mm.10-11, 49-52). There are few instances in which the dynamic levels can be altered in order to better accommodate the voices. In the following passage, the *pianissimo* in the choir is rather strenuous, especially for the tenor, whose tessitura is high. The conductor should request from the singers a more comfortable dynamic level such as *piano*.

38 *dolce pp*

Soprano

When he es - tab - lished the heavn's, I was there;

*pp*

Alto

When he es - tab - lished the heavn's I was there;

*pp*

Tenor

8 When he es - tab - lished the heavn's I was there;

Bass

Example 4.27. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures 38-40.  
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Similar difficulties are present in the places in which octave shifts or large leaps occur. In measure 27 (Example 4.28), the indicated dynamic level is only *mf*. However, without special attention to the upward leap on the downbeat of measure 28, the landing notes will naturally be performed louder. The conductor should point out to the singers that this is only the beginning of the line and that an overall increase to *forte* will ensure better presentation.

27 *mf* 3 *cresc.* 3 3 *f*

Soprano I was set up from ev-er last-ing, from the be - gin-ning or ev - er the earth was.

Alto *mf* 3 *cresc.* 3 3 *f*

I was set up from ev-er last-ing, from the be - gin-ning or ev - er the earth was.

Tenor *mf* 3 *cresc.* 3 3 *f*

8 I was set up from ev-er last-ing, from the be - gin-ning or ev - er the earth was.

Bass *mf* *cresc.* 3 3 *f*

I was set up from ev-er last-ing, from the be - gin-ning or ev - er the earth was.

Example 4.28. *The Habitable Earth*, Part I, measures 27-30.  
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### Size of Ensemble and Programming

Because of the complexity of the musical language exhibited in *The Habitable Earth*, a well-trained ensemble will be required. The work may be performed by a medium size chorus of 20 –25 singers. Since Part II is performed entirely by soloists, it is this author’s opinion that they should be placed in front of the choir in the manner of the traditional cantata.

Programming decisions may be based on the length of the work,<sup>180</sup> the subject matter of the text, the compositional style, the performance forces and the event of the performance itself. Contemporary music has proved to be just as versatile as its earlier counterparts and to blend well in a carefully planned program. Gideon’s cantata *The Habitable Earth* with its universal subject and refreshing compositional style makes an attractive number in any musical program.

<sup>180</sup> The approximate length of *The Habitable Earth* is 10:35 minutes. This information is based on the only available recording on the CRI label “New Cantatas and Madrigals” by the New Caliope Singers, conducted by Peter Schubert.

## Conclusion

The present study offers a detailed conductor's analysis of Miriam Gideon's cantata, *The Habitable Earth*, and attempts to increase familiarity among choral musicians with this fine twentieth century choral work. A review of the composer's biography and compositional output reveals information about the evolution of Gideon's style. Love for poetry and fascination with the words are exhibited in every work she wrote. Analyses of Gideon's vocal chamber music demonstrate economy of musical material, clarity of forms, expressive delivery of the text, unique treatment of instruments, and innovative melodic and harmonic language.

Analysis of the text and the form of the cantata reveals that the text is used not only as an inspiration for the creation of the music, but also to define important structural points. As in the traditional cantata genre one can find choral tuttis, vocal solo numbers as well as instrumental preludes and interludes. With the inclusion of a chorale-like section at the end of the cantata Gideon paid a true homage to its Baroque counterpart.

The musical analysis of Part I, Part II and Part III of *The Habitable Earth* is based on the application of pitch class set theory. It also defines the terms free atonality, tertian chords with split members, cell motives and cell intervals. As demonstrated in the music Gideon used the described compositional techniques to create musical coherence. Her melodic phrases are based on small intervallic cells and their continual subdivision. An always-present interval is the semitone (or its inversion the M7) that may be used as a subtle shade or may have structural importance. This invasion of the semitone expands to the harmonic formations, another unique feature of Gideon's music. Seemingly conventional, her harmonies are based on triads to which members a semitone is added. This produces tertian



chords with split roots, thirds or fifths, presented as pitch class sets [0147], [0347] and [0478]. Gideon also used the diminished and the augmented triads (pitch class sets [036] and [048] respectively) to which again she added a semitone and created a diminished triad with split third, pitch class set [0236] and an augmented triad with split root, pitch class set [0148].

The musical language of *The Habitable Earth* presents a challenge to both the conductor and the performer. The inherent lack of pitch centers, the constant change of meter and the complexity of the melodic and harmonic formations require developing and implementing of specific rehearsal strategies. However, it is a well-crafted choral piece that can enhance the quality of any musical program. Miriam Gideon's musical style is one of a true contemporary artist. It is challenging but achievable, deeply personal and yet universal for it reflects the atmosphere and the sensitivity of our modern time.

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**APPENDIX**  
**LETTERS OF PERMISSION**

February 4, 2003

Ms. Christa Lyons  
ECS Publishing  
138 Ipswich Street  
Boston, MA 02215

Dear Ms. Lyons,

My name is Stella Bonilla. I am completing a doctoral dissertation at Louisiana State University, entitled "Miriam Gideon's *The Habitable Earth*: Conductor's Analysis." I would like to request your permission to reprint in my dissertation an excerpt from *Fantasy on a Javanese Motive* (measures 1-9) by Miriam Gideon. The excerpt will be included in Chapter I under the discussion of Gideon's compositional output and style.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stella Bonilla', with a stylized, cursive script.

Stella Bonilla

# ECS PUBLISHING COMMITTED TO THE COMPOSER'S CRAFT

February 10, 2003

E. C. Schirmer Music Company  
Galaxy Music Corporation  
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Stella Bonilla  
444 Danbury Lane, Apt. B  
Copley, OH 44321

Dear Ms. Bonilla,

We hereby grant you permission to include in your doctoral dissertation entitled "Miriam Gideon's *The Habitable Earth*, conductor's analysis" the following excerpts:

Fantasy on a Javanese Motives for Cello & Piano mm. 1-15

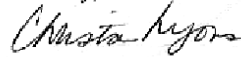
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Sincerely,

  
Christa Lyons  
ECS Publishing

138 Ipswich Street  
Boston, MA 02215-3534  
617.236.1935  
617.236.0261 fax  
office@ecspub.com  
www.ecspub.com



February 5, 2003

Mr. Gene Caprioglio  
Director Rights Clearance Division  
C.F. Peters Corporation  
70-30 80<sup>th</sup> Street  
Glendale, NY 11385

Dear Mr. Caprioglio,

My name is Stella Bonilla. I am completing a doctoral dissertation at Louisiana State University, entitled "Miriam Gideon's *The Habitable Earth*: Conductor's Analysis." I would like to request your permission to reprint in my dissertation the following excerpts from *Shirat Miriam L'Shabbat, for cantor, mixed chorus and organ*, by Miriam Gideon:

1. Organ Prelude, measures 1-3
2. Silent Prayer No.8, measures 1-4
3. Silent Prayer No.11, measures 1-4
4. Sh'ma, measures 1-26

The excerpts will be included in Chapter I under the discussion of Gideon's compositional output and style.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,



Stella Bonilla



C.F. Peters Corporation  
70-30 80th Street  
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February 6, 2003

Stella Bonilla  
44 Danbury Lane / Apt B  
Copley, OH 44321

Dear Ms. Bonilla,

Thank you for your fax of February 5<sup>th</sup>, in which you requested permission to include musical excerpts from Miriam Gideon's SHIRAT MIRIAM L' SHABBAT, FOR CANTOR, MIXED CHORUS AND ORGAN in your dissertation.

We are pleased to grant you this permission, gratis. The excerpts to be used are limited to those outlined in your fax. In your acknowledgements you must include the copyright dates and the credit notice "© 1978 Used by permission of C.F. Peters Corporation".

Our permission extends to University Microfilms International to distribute copies of your dissertation upon request.

With all best wishes for success with your dissertation, I am

Sincerely,

C.F. PETERS CORPORATION

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Gene Caprioglio".

Gene Caprioglio, Director  
Rights Clearance Division

February 5, 2003

Mr. George Strum  
Executive Director  
Music Associates of America  
224 King Street  
Englewood, NJ 07631

Dear Mr. Strum,

My name is Stella Bonilla. I am completing a doctoral dissertation at Louisiana State University, entitled "Miriam Gideon's *The Habitable Earth*: Conductor's Analysis." I would like to request your permission to reprint in my dissertation excerpts from the following works by Miriam Gideon:

*THE CONDEMNED PLAYGROUND*

1. "Hiroshima," measures 18-24 and 26-39

*QUESTIONS ON NATURE*

1. Movement one, measures 1-4 and 14-15
2. Movement two, measures 1-6 and 11-15
3. Movement three, measures 1-5
4. Movement four, measures 1-9
5. Movement five, measures 1-7
6. Movement six, measures 1-6
7. Movement seven, measures 1-3

*RHYMES FROM THE HILL*

1. "Die Korfsche Uhre," measures 1-6

*SPIRITUAL MADRIGALS*

1. "Halleluja," measures 1-10, 51-66 and 87-96

The excerpts will be included in Chapter I under the discussion of Gideon's compositional output and style.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,



Stella Bonilla

**maa** music associates of america  
224 king street • englewood, new jersey 07631

tel: (201) 569•2898  
fax: (201) 569•7023

george sturm  
executive director

February 7, 2003

Stella Bonilla  
444 Danbury Lane / Apt. B  
Copley, OH 44321

Dear Ms. Bonilla:

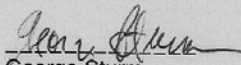
We represent Boelke-Bomart, Inc./Mobart Music Publications, Inc., publishers and copyright owners of Miriam Gideon's *The Condemned Playground*, *Questions on Nature*, *Rhymes from the Hill*, and *Spiritual Madrigals*. This letter, when signed by both parties, shall constitute our agreement to the use of the excerpt cited in your letter of February 5, 2003 in your dissertation entitled "Miriam Gideon's *The Habitable Earth*, Conductor's Analysis," to be filed at Louisiana State University, and made available by UMI on a production-on-demand basis, provided that

- 1) Illustrations are acknowledged in customary scholarly fashion; and
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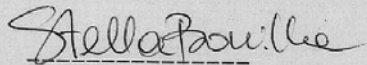
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Please sign both copies hereof and return them to us. A fully executed copy will then be returned to you for your files.

Sincerely,

  
George Sturm

ACCEPTED AND AGREED:

  
Stella Bonilla

March 4, 2003

Ms. Stephanie Walker  
Columbia University Press  
61 West 62<sup>nd</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10023

Dear Ms. Walker,

My name is Stella Bonilla. I am completing a doctoral dissertation at Louisiana State University, entitled "Miriam Gideon's *The Habitable Earth*: Conductor's Analysis." I would like to request your permission to reprint in my dissertation the following excerpts from *The Hound of Heaven*, by Miriam Gideon:

1. Measures 1-15
2. Measures 51-57
3. Measures 141-end

The excerpts will be included in Chapter I under the discussion of Gideon's compositional output and style.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stella Bonilla". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Stella Bonilla

Date:Sun, 09 Mar 2003

From:"Stephanie Walker" <sw2009@columbia.edu>

To:sbonil@yahoo.com

Subject:CUP Permissions

Dear Stella,

I received your request to reprint material from a Columbia University Press publication, Hound of Heaven. Just to let you know, we do not require a formal grant of permission if you are publishing material in a dissertation. If there is a possibility of the dissertation being published, you can contact us again when you have a publisher. Therefore, you are free to use the material. Please attribute the material correctly in your footnote or bibliography.

Good luck with your dissertation,  
Stephanie Walker

Stephanie Walker  
Subsidiary Rights Associate

Columbia University Press  
tel: (212) 459-0600 x7128  
fax: (212) 459-3678

February 5, 2003

Ms. Jasna Radonjic  
Executive Director  
The American Composers Alliance  
73 Spring Street, Rm 505  
New York, NY 10012

Dear Ms. Radonjic,

My name is Stella Bonilla. I am completing a doctoral dissertation at Louisiana State University, entitled "Miriam Gideon's *The Habitable Earth*: Conductor's Analysis." I would like to request your permission to reprint in my dissertation excerpts from the following works by Miriam Gideon:

*ADON OLAM*

1. Measures 1-8 and 43-47

*HOW GOODLY ARE THY TENTS*

1. Measures 1-9

*THREE SONNETS FROM A FATAL INTERVIEW*

1. "Night is my sister," measures 1-19

*THE HABITABLE EARTH*

1. Part I, measures 1-3, 4-6, , 7-9, 10-13, 14-19, 20-23, 24-30, 31-37, 28-40, 41-44, 44-48, 49-52, 52-54, 53-56, 63-64, 58-71.
2. Part II, measures 1-5, 6-16, 17-18, 19-22, 22-26, 27-28, 29-38, 39-41, 42-43, 44-45, 46-49, 50-53, 58-63, 65-68, 69-71, 72-75, 76-69, 80-86, 87-92, 93-99, 102-105, 106-108, 114-117, 118-122, 123-127
3. Part III, measures 1-4, 4-7, 8-9, 10-13, 14-19, 20-22, 23-24, 25-28, 29-31, 32-34, 34-38, 38-41

The excerpts from *ADON OLAM*, *HOW GOODLY ARE THY TENTS*, and *THREE SONNETS FROM A FATAL INTERVIEW* will be included in Chapter I under the discussion of Gideon's compositional output and style. The excerpts from *THE HABITABLE EARTH* will be used in the main body of the paper, Chapter III, Analysis and Chapter IV, Additional Stylistic observations and Rehearsal Strategies.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Stella Bonilla". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Stella Bonilla





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March 27, 2003

To Whom It May Concern:

Hereby the American Composers Alliance grants the permission to Stella Bonilla to use the excerpts of the works by Miriam Gideon indicated in the attachment to this letter, in her dissertation "Miriam Gideon's The Habitable Earth: Conductor's analysis."

Sincerely,

Jasna Radonjic  
Executive Director

**THREE SONNETS FROM FATAL INTERVIEW**

**"NIGHT IS MY SISTER"**

Measures 1-16

**ADON OLAM**

Measures 1-8 and 43-47

**HOW GOODLY ARE THY TENTS**

Measures 1-9

**THE HABITABLE EARTH**

**PART I**

**Measures**

4-6  
7-9  
10-13  
14-19  
20-23  
24-30  
31-37  
38-40  
41-44  
44-48  
49-52  
53-56  
58-71

**PART II**

**Measures**

1-5  
6-16  
17-18  
19-22  
22-26  
27-28  
29-38  
39-41  
42-43  
44-45  
46-49  
50-53  
58-63  
65-68  
69-71  
72-75  
76-79  
80-86  
87-92  
93-99  
102-105  
106-108  
108-113  
114-117  
118-122  
123-127

**PART III**

**Measures**

1-4  
4-7  
8-9  
14-19  
20-22  
23-24  
25-28  
29-31  
32-34  
34-38  
38-41

## **VITA**

Stella Panayotova Bonilla was born in Bulgaria, where she began playing violin at the age of seven. In 1986, after graduating from Sofia Music High School she attended the State Academy of Music, where she studied conducting. In 1990 Ms. Bonilla received an award for the best choral conductor of the year. After completion of the Bachelor of Music degree, she attended Louisiana State University as a student of Dr. Kenneth Fulton, where in 1994 she earned the Master of Music degree in choral conducting. In 1995 she began her doctoral studies at Louisiana State University and will receive the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in the summer of 2003.