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A conductor's theoretical and performance analysis of Nicholas Maw's "American Games" for symphonic wind ensemble

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A CONDUCTOR'S THEORETICAL AND PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS OF NICHOLAS
MAW'S *AMERICAN GAMES* FOR SYMPHONIC WIND ENSEMBLE

A Monograph

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

in

The School of Music

by

Adam Corey Spurlin
B.S.E., University of Alabama, 1999
M.A., University of Alabama, 2003
May 2007

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this document is to provide information pertaining to the instrumental music of the living British composer Nicholas Maw and a detailed analysis of *American Games*, his only work for symphonic wind ensemble. The document is divided into four chapters, the first of which contains introductory, biographical, and repertoire information. Chapter Two explores Maw's primary influences and provides a description of his late instrumental style, including references to three orchestral works completed in the last twenty years (*Odyssey*, *Violin Concerto*, and *Dance Scenes*). The third chapter includes pertinent historical information on *American Games* paired with a detailed theoretical analysis. The fourth chapter consists of a conductor's rehearsal and performance analysis of the work. Information is based on my experience preparing and performing the work with the Louisiana State University Wind Ensemble and a review of other literature pertaining to the analysis and performance of the piece. My hope is that this document will aid conductors in future preparations of the piece, enhance their understanding of the elements of its construction, and improve their overall presentation to the ensemble, thus resulting in artistically gratifying performances of the work.

CHAPTER 1

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH: NICHOLAS MAW'S LIFE AND CAREER

Early Life and Education

Nicholas Maw was born on 5 November 1935 in Grantham, Lincolnshire, England to Clarence Frederick Maw, an assistant manager of a music store, and Hilda Ellen Chambers Maw, a manager of a dress shop.¹ His father, in addition to working at the music store, was also an amateur pianist and organist at a local church and was the first to expose him to music. As a young boy, Maw stood beside his father and turned pages for him as he practiced the works of Bach, Beethoven, and Chopin; thus, his early musical impressions were restricted, unintentionally, to core repertoire of the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic eras and did not include progressive works of the early twentieth century.² He began piano lessons with his father at age eight and at age eleven began attending Wennington School,³ a boarding school in Yorkshire.

The philosophy and mission of the Wennington School were such that individuality and creativity were encouraged. One of the first co-educational boarding schools in England, Wennington opened during World War II to house youth that were evacuated from their homes. Even after the war ended and the school no longer relied on government funds, it maintained a low tuition rate, continued to house a diverse population of students that represented a cross-section of society, and maintained its focus on personal growth over strict academics. The school was restricted to students ranging from age eight to eighteen and never housed more than

¹ Patricia Corron, "Nicholas Maw for Mezzo-Soprano: A Survey of Six Solo Vocal Works for Mezzo-Soprano" (D.M.A. thesis, University of Cincinnati, 1994), 38.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

130 students.⁴ This atmosphere of free choice and individuality allowed Maw the freedom to make important decisions at a young age that would have both a positive and negative effect on his music career. Despite his father's wishes for him to pursue a career as a concert pianist or teacher, Maw found little enjoyment in playing the piano, mainly because he could not practice without interference from his father.⁵ Thus, his study at Wennington gave him the freedom, at age fourteen, to give up piano study and pursue the clarinet.⁶ Maw also received much encouragement at the Wennington School from his music teacher, Sybil Pentith, to develop his musical skills and to explore creative urges, which led to his initial attempts to compose and eventually his goal of becoming a professional composer. Maw writes:

I have always thought of Sybil as one of the most important people in my early life. She was the person who initially encouraged my musical and composing activity. She greatly helped me by giving me my initial composition lessons and arranging performances by the school students of the few small-scale works I wrote at the time. I shall never forget how encouraging she was at that early stage in my life, how she made me feel I had the possibility of composing music, and how she greatly increased my knowledge and appreciation of music that in those early teenage years I had not heard before. I have always regarded Sybil as the person who started my subsequent musical 'life', and I will be forever grateful to her for doing so.⁷

In a 1985 interview with Paul Griffiths, Maw recalled lying in bed at night hearing original musical ideas in his head and then attempting to recreate them on paper without any knowledge of how to expand these ideas into a piece. Eventually he gained some success by simply imitating short pieces that he heard his friends performing at school.⁸ By age fifteen, Maw produced his first musical compositions which consisted of small pieces for piano, pieces for

⁴ Pat Mitchell, "Wennington School: 1940-1975," Wennington School, Planned Environment Therapy Trust Archive and Study Centre, <http://www.wenningtonschool.org.uk/>, (accessed 8 January 2007).

⁵ Paul Griffiths, *New Sounds, New Personalities: British Composers of the 1980s in Conversation with Paul Griffiths* (London: Faber Music LTD, 1985), 166.

⁶ Corron, 39.

⁷ Nicholas Maw, "Tribute to Sybil Pentith," Wennington School, Planned Environment Therapy Trust Archive and Study Centre, <http://www.wenningtonschool.org.uk/>, (accessed 8 January 2007).

⁸ Griffiths, 166.

solo instruments, songs, and a serenade for string orchestra.⁹ While the Wennington vision of self discovery and individualism may have served to spark Maw's compositional career, he believes the choice to reject his father's push for him to become a skilled pianist has hindered him as a composer. After he began to compose, he discovered that the clarinet was not useful to him in the creative process, thus he spent little time perfecting his skills and never really achieved performance level on any instrument.¹⁰ Although he uses the piano in the compositional process, he doesn't feel he plays at a high level and considers it a disadvantage not to be able to perform his own music.¹¹

London and Paris: A New Musical Conception in Response to Post-War Serialism

After graduation from Wennington School, Nicholas Maw supported himself for a year by working in a bicycle factory, but continued to compose.¹² A set of piano pieces led to his admission into the Royal Academy of Music in 1955, where he studied harmony and counterpoint with Paul Steinitz, composition with Lennox Berkeley, piano with Michael Head, and clarinet with John Davies.¹³ Upon entering the Academy, Maw quickly discovered gaps in his previous education. Although he was familiar with the British music of Vaughan Williams, Walton, and Britten as well as the works of Ravel, Debussy, Bartok, and Stravinsky, his lessons with his father and Sybil Pentith yielded no exposure to the progressive works of Schoenberg, Berg, Webern, Boulez, or Stockhausen, which were common points of reference at the Academy.¹⁴ Maw felt depressed and embarrassed by his lack of familiarity with avant-garde figures and ideas and struggled to merge contemporary concepts with his traditional ideas of

⁹ Susan Bradshaw, "Nicholas Maw," *Musical Times* 103 (September 1962): 608.

¹⁰ Griffiths, 167

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Bradshaw, 608.

¹³ Stephen Michael May, "The Instrumental Style of Nicholas Maw" (D.M.A. thesis, Cornell University, 1982), 3.

¹⁴ Griffiths, 167-8.

music. As a result, his early student works at the Royal Academy of Music were eclectic in nature, mixing conservatism with novice attempts at serial techniques and other post-war concepts.¹⁵

Despite much success with instrumental compositions later in his career, most of Maw's early works emphasized voices; only three of his first nine pieces were purely instrumental. Maw considers his first composition to be *Eight Chinese Lyrics*, a set of songs for solo mezzo soprano composed in 1956. The piece was premiered at a Society for the Promotion of New Music (SPNM) concert in 1958, but was withdrawn for revisions and remains unpublished.¹⁶ Maw followed *Eight Chinese Lyrics* with two pieces in 1957: *Requiem* for soprano and alto soloists, female chorus, string trio, and string orchestra and *Sonatina* for flute and piano. *Requiem* is over one hour in length and was premiered by the London Bach Society in 1958; it represents Maw's first attempt with extended forms and multiple performing forces.¹⁷ *Requiem* and *Sonatina* have opposing harmonic constructs and, with their completion in the same year, demonstrate Maw's struggle with the direction of his compositional voice. With *Requiem*, Maw returned to his tonal roots while *Sonatina* represents another attempt at serial techniques.¹⁸ Maw followed these works with his most successful student composition, *Nocturne* for mezzo soprano and chamber orchestra (1958). The piece, which is mostly tonal with some serial elements, was premiered in June of 1960 in Cheltenham by the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Rudolf Schwartz, with Josephine Veasey as soloist.¹⁹ Unfortunately for Maw, an almost identical setting by Benjamin Britten, *Nocturne* for voice and chamber orchestra, was premiered by the

¹⁵ Corron, 41.

¹⁶ Bradshaw, 608.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Corron, 41.

same orchestra and conductor in October 1958.²⁰ Although the close proximity of the two performances resulted in some unfavorable reviews for Maw,²¹ the artistic merit of Maw's setting was such that it was awarded the Lili Boulanger Prize.²²

Nicholas Maw completed his degree at the Royal Academy of Music in 1958, and the Lili Boulanger Prize gained him the opportunity to continue his study in Paris with Nadia Boulanger. Maw's relationship with Boulanger was somewhat strained, thus he benefited more from sessions with Max Deutsch, a pupil of Schoenberg.²³ His attraction to Deutsch's teaching served to further delay an inevitable rejection of serial techniques for a compositional approach more befitting Maw's background and artistic purpose. Maw described to Griffiths his initial thoughts about studying with Boulanger as well as the circumstances of their relationship:

I was rather ambivalent about the idea because I realized she was a figure of the past. When I got there, these doubts were soon borne out, because she enquired whether I had made a study of *solfege*: when I said no she said we would begin immediately. I'm amazed now at my own *chutzpah*, but I jibbed at that: I said I'd only got five or six months to study at this kind of level with anyone abroad, and I didn't want to spend the time studying *solfege*. At first she was outraged, but she asked me to leave the compositions I'd brought with me on the piano. I then heard nothing for about a month, which plunged me into a state of intense depression, but she asked me to come to see her again and was quite changed in her attitude, and thereafter we had a very amicable relationship which was based largely on our not talking about music.²⁴

Maw produced no new compositions while in Paris, but his approach to composing was greatly affected by his surroundings and by the lectures of Deutsch.²⁵ His greater affinity for Deutsch over Boulanger is evidenced by the return of serial techniques in his works following his study in Paris.

²⁰ Corron, 66.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Bradshaw, 609.

²³ May, 3.

²⁴ Griffiths, 168-9.

²⁵ Corron, 42.

Solving the Style Dilemma and Increasing Productivity

Maw returned to England in 1959 and worked as a copyist, editor, freelance journalist, lecturer, and teacher.²⁶ His first work after his studies in Paris was *Six Chinese Songs* for contralto and piano (1959). The piece, first performed with *Nocturne* at the 1960 Cheltenham Festival, utilizes serial techniques to a greater degree than any of his previous works and is more rhythmically and harmonically advanced than his earlier student compositions.²⁷ This style of composition, which included “complex exploitations of row correspondences and extremely angular and disjunct part writing,” didn’t particularly suit Maw.²⁸ Thus, the piece remains unpublished and Maw’s discontent with the work propelled him into another stretch of limited productivity and internal strife over the development of his compositional voice.²⁹

Maw didn’t produce another significant work until *Essay* for organ (1961), which represents his first step towards a unique style. *Essay*, composed for organist James Dalton, utilizes serial techniques, but also represents Maw’s first attempt to incorporate characteristics that will be discussed later as definitive traits of his mature compositional style, including a lyrical melodic introduction, technically demanding scalar passages, tonal centricity, and a form based on continuous but distinct sections, ideas more typical of tonal music than of the post-war avant garde.³⁰ Maw followed *Essay* with two works in 1962: *Chamber Music* for wind quintet and *Scenes and Arias* for three solo female voices and orchestra. The former is a light, seven movement work, commissioned for the centenary celebrations of the University of South Hampton, utilizing the instrumentation of the Mozart wind and piano quintet but with “atonal

²⁶ May, 3.

²⁷ Bradshaw, 609.

²⁸ May, 5.

²⁹ Corron, 43.

³⁰ James Dalton, “Maw’s *Essay* for Organ,” *Musical Times* 106 (May 1965): 374-5.

harmony comparable to that of middle period Schoenberg.³¹ *Scenes and Arias* is considered by Maw and others to be one of his most important works, and the piece that was the catalyst for future success.³² It was first performed at a London Promenade concert and represents Maw's first work to be presented at the Proms, a concert festival that would be important to future Maw premieres. According to Patricia Corron, the structure of the piece, a setting of anonymous medieval poetry, is important to consider in that some stanzas are set for solo voice as arias while others are presented in the form of duets or trios, all embellished with orchestral interludes throughout. With its non-serial use of all twelve tones, "many-faceted tonality," and "ecstatic melodic writing, rooted in song," Corron considers *Scenes and Arias* to be the first successful synthesis of Maw's late-Romantic and post-Expressionistic tendencies.³³

The success of *Scenes and Arias* sparked a period of high productivity relative to the previous four years of Maw's career. In addition to *Reflection on a Theme of Britten*, an unpublished work written for the Melos Ensemble, Maw completed two pieces for amateur chorus in 1963, *Round* and *The Angel Gabriel*, and another in 1964, *Balulalow*. Also in 1964 he composed a more demanding work for soprano, recorder, and piano titled *Corpus Christi Carol* and completed his first opera, *One Man Show*.³⁴ Based on an idea from a short story by Saki, the libretto for *One Man Show* was written by Arthur Jacobs and is a humorous and sarcastic portrayal of realistic human experience. The opera reflects characteristics of both *Chamber Music* and *Scenes and Arias*, with the challenge of situation and characterization forcing Maw to

³¹ Anthony Payne, "Nicholas Maw's *One Man Show*," *Tempo* 74 (Winter 1965): 2.

³² Bayan Northcott, "Nicholas Maw," *Music and Musicians* 19 (May 1970): 35.

³³ Corron, 45.

³⁴ May, 6-7.

utilize his full stylistic range.³⁵ Following the opera, Maw turned again to chamber music with his first *String Quartet*, commissioned for the Harlow Arts Festival in 1965.³⁶

Maw returned to the Royal Academy of Music in 1965 to teach composition, before accepting a position in 1966 as Fellow Commoner in Creative Arts, composer-in-residence, at Trinity College in Cambridge, a post he held until 1970.³⁷ During his tenure at both institutions, he continued to be productive as a composer. He enhanced his oeuvre of instrumental compositions with *Sinfonia* for chamber orchestra in 1966, and three works in 1967: *Sonata* for two horns and strings, *Seven Bridge Variation* for orchestra, and *Double Canon for Igor Stravinsky on his 85th Birthday*. *Sinfonia*, the most significant of these works, was commissioned by the Northern Sinfonia Orchestra with support from the Britten Aspen Fund. *Sinfonia* represents the first commission paid for by this fund established by Britten.³⁸ Though the work incorporates aspects of dodecaphonic music, the piece is inherently romantic in nature and is more accessible to audiences than most comparable contemporary works.³⁹ In addition to the aforementioned instrumental pieces, Maw composed two works for voice in 1966: *The Voice of Love*, a song cycle, and *Five Interiors* for voice and guitar. In 1970, Maw completed his second opera, *The Rising of the Moon*. A romantic comedy with a libretto from Beverly Cross, the opera is described by Anthony Payne as “a work of completely assured theatrical technique.” “The work can be seen as a key work in Maw’s output, a summary of his achievement so far, and perhaps the end of a stylistic period.”⁴⁰

³⁵ Payne, 2.

³⁶ Corron, 46.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Stephen Walsh, “Nicholas Maw’s *Sinfonia*,” *Tempo* 76 (Summer 1966): 16.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Anthony Payne, “Nicholas Maw’s *The Rising of the Moon*,” *Tempo* 94 (Fall 1970): 26, 29.

Shifting Focus to Instrumental Composition

Throughout the 1970's and early 1980's, recognition of Maw's talent grew to encompass the international music community. Based on a need for tranquility to work and for more space to enjoy being outdoors, he moved to a new home in Maperton, Wincanton, Somerset and, despite being able to support himself with commissions, began teaching part-time at the University of Exeter.⁴¹ Maw's move to the country marked a shift in focus to instrumental compositions. In 1972 and 1973 respectively, he completed *Concert Music* and *Serenade* for orchestra in addition to *Life Studies* for fifteen strings (1973-76). In the first half of the 1980's, he completed three additional works for orchestra: *Summer Dances* (1981), *Spring Music* (1982-83), and *Sonata Notturna* (1985). With the orchestral pieces of this period, especially *Spring Music*, Maw began to reconnect with his British roots of tonal lyricism mixed with extreme technical demands.⁴²

In addition to the works for large instrumental ensembles, Maw also contributed a number of works for chamber and solo instruments: *Epitaph-Canon in Memory of Igor Stravinsky* (1971), *Personae I* for solo piano (1973), *Trinitas* for organ (1976), *Flute Quartet* (1981), *Night Thoughts* for flute (1982), *String Quartet no. 2* (1982), *Little Suite* for guitar (1984), and *Personae II* for solo piano (1985-86).⁴³ Despite Maw's early exposure to the piano and private study with his father, *Personae I* and *II* represent his only works for solo piano to date. During the 1970's and the first half of the 1980's, Maw completed only six works for voice, including five works for chorus: *Five Irish Songs* (1972), *Reverdie* (1975), *Te Deum*

⁴¹ Corron, 46.

⁴² Corron, 49.

⁴³ Andrew Burn, "Nicholas Maw," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy, <http://www.grovemusic.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu> (accessed 9 January 2007).

(1975), *Nonsense Rhymes* (1976), and *The Ruin* (1980), and *La Vita Nuova* for high voice, wind quintet, string quartet, and harp (1979).⁴⁴

Even with the composition of the aforementioned works of the 1970's and early 1980's, Maw dedicated much of his time to the completion of his landmark orchestral piece *Odyssey*, which he began in 1972 and did not complete until 1987. At approximately ninety-six minutes, *Odyssey* is one of the longest pieces ever composed for orchestra and is intended to represent a summation of Maw's stylistic and expressive progress up to the point of the work's completion.⁴⁵ The piece, minus the introduction and second movement, was premiered by the BBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Mark Elder, at a BBC Promenade Concert on 10 August 1987, and the full work was performed two years later on 8 April 1989 during 'Nicholas Maw Day' at Royal Festival Hall with the same orchestra, conducted by Richard Bernas.⁴⁶ After a few slight revisions, the piece was performed and recorded in 1990 in Birmingham Town Hall by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Simon Rattle, a recording that was nominated for a Grammy Award in 1992.⁴⁷ In 1994, the St. Louis Symphony, conducted by Leonard Slatkin, gave the American premiere of *Odyssey* in New York's Carnegie Hall.⁴⁸ After the Birmingham performance, *Odyssey* was described by Nicholas Soames as "one of the great masterpieces of English music from the last fifty years, in line with Elgar, Walton, and Tippett."⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Andrew Clements, Liner notes for *Odyssey*, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Sir Simon Rattle, director, EMI Classics: 5851452.

⁴⁶ Christopher Koch, "Nicholas Maw," in *A Composer's Insight*, vol. 2, ed. Timothy Salzman (Galesville, MD: Meredith Music Publications, 2003), 127.

⁴⁷ Clements, 3-4.

⁴⁸ "Faber House Composers: Nicholas Maw Biography," *Faber Music Website*, <http://www.fabermusic.com/serverside/composers/Details.asp?ID=Maw,%20Nicholas&View=biog&Section=composers>, (accessed 9 January 2007).

⁴⁹ Nicolas Soames, "Maw—Not Less," *Gramophone* (September 1991): 9.

New Opportunities in the United States

After first visiting the United States in 1974 to witness five performances of *Scenes and Arias* given by the Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Eugene Ormandy, Maw began to invest much time in appearances overseas. At the US premiere of *Life Studies* in Chicago, the conductor, André Previn, introduced Maw to Jacob Druckman, a composer and faculty member at Yale University. This encounter led to Maw's first teaching opportunity in the United States.⁵⁰ From 1984 to 1986 and again in 1989, commuting by air from his home in Washington D.C., Maw served as visiting professor of composition at Yale University where he taught courses on English music and twentieth-century compositional techniques and gave individual composition lessons.⁵¹ Between the Yale appointments, Maw served as visiting professor at Boston University and, in 1989, became Professor of Music and head of composition at Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts at Bard College in New York. Since 1998, Maw has served as Professor of Composition at the Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore, Maryland.

Following the success of *Odyssey*, many of Maw's most important works since moving to the United States have been for large instrumental ensemble. He composed an orchestral tone poem in 1988 titled *The World in the Evening* and followed it with his first work for symphonic wind band, *American Games* (1991) and a work for chamber orchestra, *Shahnama* (1992), commissioned by the London Sinfonietta. One of Maw's most important contributions in the 1990's is a four-movement *Violin Concerto* composed for Joshua Bell (1993) and funded by a joint commission from the Orchestra of St. Luke's in New York and the Philharmonia Orchestra in London.⁵² Bell premiered the piece in New York with Roger Norrington conducting, and the

⁵⁰ Corron, 47.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Bruce Adolphe, Liner notes to *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Roger Norrington, director, Sony Music Entertainment: SK 62856.

British premiere in London by the Philharmonia Orchestra, Leonard Slatkin conducting, followed soon after. Joshua Bell's recording of the work with the London Philharmonic Orchestra won the 2000 Grammy Award for instrumental soloist with orchestra, and the piece was nominated for the 2000 Mercury Prize. Bruce Adolphe writes about the work,

Maw's *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra* clearly belongs in the company of the great lyrical concertos of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Berg, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Walton, and Barber. It seems that Nicholas Maw may indeed be the greatest living master of the romantic aesthetic, a Brahms for our time.⁵³

Soon after the violin concerto, Maw composed *Dance Scenes* for orchestra (1995), which was commissioned by the international law firm Rowe and Maw, with support from the Arts Council of England, to celebrate their centenary. *Dance Scenes* opened the Philharmonia Orchestra's fiftieth anniversary season on 27 September, 1995.⁵⁴ Also in 1995, Maw composed *Voices of Memory*, which was originally titled *Romantic Variations*⁵⁵ and is referred to by Malcolm Miller in a 1996 *Tempo* article as *Variations for Orchestra*. The work was premiered by the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Andrew Davies conducting, as part of their annual Royal Concert.⁵⁶

In addition to influential orchestral pieces, Maw has continued to contribute to other genres since his relocation to the United States. For instrumental chamber ensemble, he completed *Ghost Dances* in 1988, *Piano Trio* in 1991, and two string quartets, one in 1995 and the other, titled *Intrada*, in 2002. *Ghost Dances*, written for the Nash Ensemble⁵⁷ and Da Capo

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Nicholas Maw, Liner notes to *Dance Scenes*, Philharmonia Orchestra, Daniel Harding, director, EMI Classics: 5851452.

⁵⁵ Burn, *Grove Music Online*, (Accessed 9 January 2007).

⁵⁶ Malcolm Miller, "First Performances: Nicholas Maw's *Variations for Orchestra*," *Tempo* 196 (April 1996): 46.

⁵⁷ The Nash Ensemble of London, started in 1964, is a chamber ensemble consisting of fl, ob, cl, bsn, hn, 2 vn, va, vc, bass, and piano. The group performs works from Mozart to Avant Garde and has performed over 255 new works, including 118 commissions written for them. http://website.lineone.net/~nash_ensemble/

Chamber Players,⁵⁸ is subtitled “Imaginary Ballet for Five Players” and requires the same instrumentation as Schoenberg’s *Pierrot Lunaire*, minus the singer, but also includes a variety of different folk instruments, including Pakistani manjeeras, American strumstick, kazoo, flexatone, and kalimba.⁵⁹ According to Maw, “the ghosts of the title are largely those of memory, and the work may be thought of as a sequence of memory-related and dream-distorted images of many different forms of the dance.”⁶⁰ Maw’s *Piano Trio* was commissioned by the Koussevitsky Foundation and was premiered by the Monticello Trio at the 1991 Bath Festival (24 May – 9 June) for which Nicholas Maw was a featured composer.⁶¹ Maw’s solo instrumental works since moving to the US are *Music for Memory* for guitar (1989), *Sonata* for violin (1996-97), and *Narration* for cello (2001). He has also composed four works for vocal ensemble: *Three Hymns* (1989), *One Foot in Eden Still, I Stand* (1990), *Sweté Jesu* (1992), and *Hymnus* (1995-96), and three works for solo vocalist: *Five American Folksongs* (1989), *Roman Canticle* (1989), and *The Head of Orpheus* (1992).⁶²

Maw’s most recent achievements include the completion of his third opera in 2002, *Sophie’s Choice*, which he began in 1990 and contributed both the libretto and music. The opera opened at London’s Royal Opera House in 2002, was performed in Berlin and Vienna in 2005, and had its US premiere by the Washington National Opera on 21 September 2006.⁶³ The success of the first performance compelled Maw to add a twenty-two minute suite from the opera, *Concert Suite from Sophie’s Choice*, which premiered on 24 April 2004 by the Peabody

⁵⁸ The Da Capo Chamber Players (fl, cl, vn, vc, pno) formed in 1970 and have maintained an annual concert series in New York since their inception. The group also tours internationally and has had over 90 chamber works commissioned for them. <http://www.k-c-p.com/dacapo/index.htm>

⁵⁹ Malcolm MacDonald, Liner notes to *Ghost Dances*, Twentieth Century Consort, Christopher Kendall, director, ASV Digital: CDDCA 999.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Kenneth Loveland, “Maw at Bath,” *The Musical Times* 132 (August 1991): 411.

⁶² Burn, *Grove Music Online*, (Accessed 9 January 2007)

⁶³ Tim Smith, “Sophie’s Choice Suite Premiered in Baltimore,” *Faber Music Website*, <http://www.fabermusic.com/serverside/news/Details.asp?ID=86>, (accessed 9 January 2007).

Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Hajime Teri Murai, as part of the Gala Concert celebrating the reopening of the Peabody Institute and Conservatory of Music in Baltimore.⁶⁴ Maw also completed his *String Quartet No. 4* in 2005. Commissioned by the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, the piece is a single-movement twenty-two minute work that was premiered by the Emerson String Quartet on 10 February 2006 in Philadelphia at the Perelman Theater within the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts.⁶⁵

At age seventy-one, Maw continues to compose, teach, and contribute to the international music community. He has received many distinguished awards for his compositions, including the 1959 Lili Boulanger Prize, 1980 Midsummer Prize of the City of London, the 1993 Stoeger Prize from the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and he was honored in the United Kingdom (1989) with Nicholas Maw Day at the South Bank Centre, a promotion by the BBC. He has been the featured composer at the South Bank Summer Music Festival (1973), the Kings Lynn Festival (1985), the Bath Festival (1991), the Royal Academy of Music's British Music Festival (1992), the Sixtieth Birthday Malvern Weekend (1995), and the Chester Festival (1999). In the United States, Maw's works have been performed by the orchestras of Philadelphia, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Indianapolis, Minneapolis, San Francisco, and the National Symphony of Washington D.C., as well as the Lincoln Center Chamber Players.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ "Emerson String Quartet Premiere Maw's New Commission," *Faber Music Website*, <http://www.fabermusic.com/serverside/news/Details.asp?ID=230>, (accessed 9 January 2007).

⁶⁶ "Faber House Composers," *Faber Music Website*, (accessed 9 January 2007).

CHAPTER 2

THE COMPOSITIONAL STYLE OF NICHOLAS MAW

In the fifty-one years since his first composition, Nicholas Maw's compositional voice has evolved gradually into a more accessible style congruent with his artistic purpose. Maw is part of an important group of British composers, including Thea Musgrave, Alexander Goehr, Peter Maxwell Davies, Harrison Birtwistle, Richard Rodney Bennett, and Cornelius Cardew, who were faced, in the second half of the twentieth century, with the task of merging English conservatism with the progressive styles prevalent throughout the rest of Europe.⁶⁷ Although their specific compositional styles vary, they were all, in some way, influenced by Stravinsky or Schoenberg, and all but Birtwistle traveled to continental Europe to study. In addition, they all made an early attempt to follow current trends before establishing their own voices, and rebelled, to some degree, against the preceding English symphonic school of Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Holst, Bliss, Walton, and Britten.⁶⁸

Maw's early compositional style was substantially influenced by his experiences at the Royal Academy of Music. His thoughts about music and approach to composition were affected not only by his first exposure to the works of the Second Viennese School, but also by the high standards of his contemporaries: Cardew, Davies, and Richard Rodney Bennett.⁶⁹ Maw found himself faced with a dilemma of embracing avant-garde philosophy and compositional techniques or remaining faithful to British conservatism.⁷⁰ This dilemma is evident in his early works. *Eight Chinese Lyrics* and *Sonatina* represent a serious attempt to manage serial technique with short, pointed rhythmic figuration, while *Nocturne* includes an eclectic mix of free tonality

⁶⁷ Corron, 20.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Griffiths, 168.

⁷⁰ Northcott, 35.

with some serial techniques.⁷¹ Though he strayed from serial techniques after his graduation from the Academy, his study with Deutsch marked a return to this approach. Of his works, *Six Chinese Songs* is most similar to the style of the post-Webern serialists.

While elements of his works composed after study at the Academy and with Deutsch still reflect early pressure to conform to the standards of post-war avant garde, Maw ultimately formulated a diverse style that merges traditional elements with contemporary practice. Maw states:

Because of my background, I didn't plunge into the ferment of post-Viennese school activity. I've subsequently come to regard this as a very great advantage, that I was able to stand apart and not get swallowed up, although at the time it caused me extreme anguish, because I felt that I ought to be keeping up, even though I didn't feel at one with what was happening. I realized as a very young man, I suppose, that if I was going to do anything I would just have to find my own way. I simply did not hear music in the way it was organized at that time.⁷²

Maw's works from the mid-1960's to present are, for the most part, consistent in their approach and reflect the style characteristics that are most often associated with him. New developments appear in his works as he matured and social expectations changed, but most of his output incorporates the same balance of conventional elements with progressive ones. Maw's mature style is often described as neoromantic. According to Whittall, "The romanticism that has given Maw the greatest stimulus is that of light rather than darkness, of integration rather than disruption; and it has been his special achievement to devise a musical style ideally appropriate in its richness and subtlety to this most positive kind of emotional expression."⁷³

Maw's mature style is somewhat eclectic in nature, combining various approaches to melodic construction, harmonic progression, rhythmic figuration, formal design, and

⁷¹ Arnold Whittall, "Nicholas Maw," in *British Music Now*, ed. Lewis Foreman (London: Elek Books Limited, 1975), 98-99.

⁷² Griffiths, 168.

⁷³ Whittall, in *British Music Now*, 100.

orchestration, but remains loyal to his basic tenets of composition. These tenets, in large part, were formed from his early struggles with and eventual rejection of serial practices. Maw states:

I am absolutely against what seems to be a central feature of the school, which was the suppression of memory in music. That is to say, with the rejection of so many formal procedures and musical memory there was no equivalent of thematic, melodic, or motivic material, and in fact the music only existed in the particular second being articulated in performance. There was no material to recall from earlier in the piece that was being metamorphosed or developed in any way. Memory is at the root of human imagination, and its rejection is a destructive feature of this school.⁷⁴

Various elements in Maw's music are unified by what he terms a "fixed point," which refers to a concept of musical vocabulary (melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, or textural) or architecture held in the memory of the listener.⁷⁵ The "fixed point" can be represented by a repeated motive or theme, a prominent interval or intervallic pattern, repeated rhythmic figures or metrical scheme, a common harmonic construct or primary area of centrality, or a recurring textural fabric or textural contrast. A piece is not necessarily limited to a single "fixed point" but can have a reference point for a variety of different elements. According to Maw,

You need the idea of a "fixed point" in order to articulate temporal and formal considerations. All of my work has been in some form or another based upon the idea of a fixed point, allied in my mind with memory. Rather like being in a town with a square in the middle, so long as you know where the square is, you can find your way about.⁷⁶

In addition to stimulating the memory of the listener, Maw also believes strongly in the integration of the varied tools and techniques available to composers to achieve their artistic purpose. According to Maw, much of the twentieth century has been about rejection, but there is a trend towards acceptance of the past. He states,

In the twentieth century, the whole of the musical language is available to us; we can hear it all in extraordinary profusion. We can plug in anywhere we like in order to nourish our own music.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Koch, 121.

⁷⁵ Koch, 122.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

Though Maw's music often portrays spontaneity, he has an overriding concern for craftsmanship and is deliberate with the assembly of the various compositional elements. His sketches are thorough and incorporate everything that will be included on the score, usually taking two or three drafts, and Maw often edits and revises material after it is completed.⁷⁸ Though his music has been described as "calculated elaboration,"⁷⁹ Maw demonstrates a concern for creating a coherent syntax through delineable melodic, phrasal, and formal structure.⁸⁰ The following is a brief characterization of Maw's late instrumental style,⁸¹ organized by elements, and is based on the study of three orchestral compositions (*Odyssey*, *Violin Concerto*, and *Dance Scenes*) completed within five years of *American Games*. Though the pieces vary in length, instrumentation, and character, they each reflect certain tendencies that are also present in *American Games*.

Form

Maw exhibits a fondness for expansive, rhapsodic forms that contrast playfulness and passion between the various sections.⁸² He is concerned with unified forms,⁸³ which often take the shape of multi-sectioned, single-movement works. With Maw's formal approach, according to Whittall, "a finely shaped succession of episodes gradually returns to a place similar to that from which it started... Beautifully proportioned tensions and relaxations transcend any considerations of strict symmetry."⁸⁴ Maw is prone to compose a series of connecting movements, or "movement sections" of varying length and character that are framed by an

⁷⁸ Corron, 47.

⁷⁹ Northcott, 34.

⁸⁰ Koch, 122.

⁸¹ All references to Maw's late instrumental style reflect characteristics of pieces completed after the publication of Stephen Michael May's 1982 thesis, "The Instrumental Style of Nicholas Maw."

⁸² Alan Hall, "Maw Day," *Musical Times* 130 (September 1989): 361.

⁸³ Bayan Northcott, "Nicholas Maw: Second Phase" *Musical Times* 128 (August 1987): 434.

⁸⁴ Whittall, "The Instrumental Music of Nicholas Maw," 30.

introductory section and coda that contain similar melodic and harmonic material. This formal approach appears in Maw's works as early as *Nocturne*, which is continuous with nine sections and framed by an introduction and epilogue that contain similar material.⁸⁵ Maw uses the same approach with smaller-scale single-movement works, which are usually divided into a large number of brief, self-contained, yet firmly related sections.⁸⁶

Though some of his music has a spontaneous nature with little or no melodic connection between the various sections, Maw also demonstrates a concern for cyclic forms where introductory material recurs in subsequent movements or sections. In many instances, the restatement of materials occurs at the end of a section or movement and is exact enough to constitute a miniature or large-scale arch form. Individual movements or movement-sections of Maw's works often employ arch designs.

Though they vary in length, *Odyssey*, *Violin Concerto*, and *Dance Scenes* all exhibit large forms consistent with Maw's tendencies. *Odyssey*, which is approximately ninety-five minutes in duration, is set in four continuous movement sections, bookmarked by an introduction and epilogue. Three of the four movements of the *Violin Concerto* (forty-two minutes) are set in an arch form and the second and third are continuous (see figure 1). *Dance Scenes* is set in four continuous movements, each of which begins and ends with similar material (see figure 2).

Melody

Maw's melodic approach is based on the construction and development of expansive thematic ideas. According to Corron, he has "an instinctive love of decorative melodic writing rooted in song," which lends a vocal quality and smoothness to his themes.⁸⁷ Maw's lyrical thematic approach is exemplified throughout *Odyssey*, particularly in the introduction.

⁸⁵ Corron, 67.

⁸⁶ Robert Henderson, "Maw's Sonata for Two Horns and Strings," *Tempo* 82 (Autumn 1967): 27.

⁸⁷ Corron, 43.

<u>Movement</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>Measure</u>	<u>Tempo</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Time</u>
I. Prelude	Introduction	1-13	♩ = 104	13 mm.	10:36
	A	14-114	♩ = 72	101 mm.	
	B	115-149	♩ = 80-112	35 mm.	
	A'	150-193	♩ = 72-92	44 mm.	
II. Scherzo	A	1-128	♩ = 96	128 mm.	13:22
	Cadenza	129-166		38 mm.	
	B	167-258		92 mm.	
	A	259-452		194 mm.	
	Cadenza	453-470		18 mm.	
III. Romanza	Introduction	1-6	♩ = 54-63	6 mm.	8:16
	A	7-34		28 mm.	
	B	35-42		8 mm.	
	C	43-52		10 mm.	
	B	53-67		15 mm.	
IV. Finale	A	1-48	♩ = 108	48 mm.	9:37
	B	49-78		30 mm.	
	C	79-94		16 mm.	
	D	95-124	♩ = 80	30 mm.	
	A	125-168	♩ = 88	44 mm.	
	D	169-199	♩ = 80	31 mm.	
	B	200-227	♩ = 108-116	9 mm.	
	C	228-251		24 mm.	
	A	252-338		87 mm.	
	Coda	339-394	♩ = 138	56 mm.	

Figure 1: Large Form of *Violin Concerto*

<u>Movement</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>Measure</u>	<u>Tempo</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Time</u>
I.	A	1-52	♩ = 126	13 mm.	3:13
	B	53-75	♩ = 112	23 mm.	
	A	76-104	♩ = 126	29 mm.	
	C	105-132		28 mm.	
	A	133-156		24 mm.	
II.	A	1-66	♩ = 63, ♩ = 138	66 mm.	5:43
	B	67-118	♩ = 52	52 mm.	
	A	119-185	♩ = 63, ♩ = 138	67 mm.	
III.	A	1-19	♩ = 138	19 mm.	5:06
	B	20-54	♩ = 116	35 mm.	
	C	55-64	♩ = 126	9 mm.	
	D	65-82	♩ = 100	18 mm.	
	A	83-94	♩ = 126	11 mm.	
	B	95-130	♩ = 116	36 mm.	
	A	131-148	♩ = 138	18 mm.	
IV	Introduction	1-14	♩ = 144	14 mm.	4:52
	A	15-24		10 mm.	
	B	25-55		31 mm.	
	C	56-104		49 mm.	
	A	105-129	♩ = 126	25 mm.	

Figure 2: Large Form of *Dance Scenes*

In measures 50 through 64, the horn presents a relatively conjunct theme that meanders through sixteen measures, confined to a comfortable range until the last two bars. The theme avoids repose and lacks clear phrasal divisions and, thus, is perceived as one elaborate statement.



Example 1. Expanding Lyrical Melody, *Odyssey*, mm. 49-64, horn

Perhaps influenced by his early serial writing, Maw’s late instrumental style also incorporates disjunct themes that are often still connected in style. In measures 1394 through 1401 of *Odyssey*, the tenuto trumpet theme features minor seventh, octave, and minor ninth leaps and extends from G#-4 to F-6.



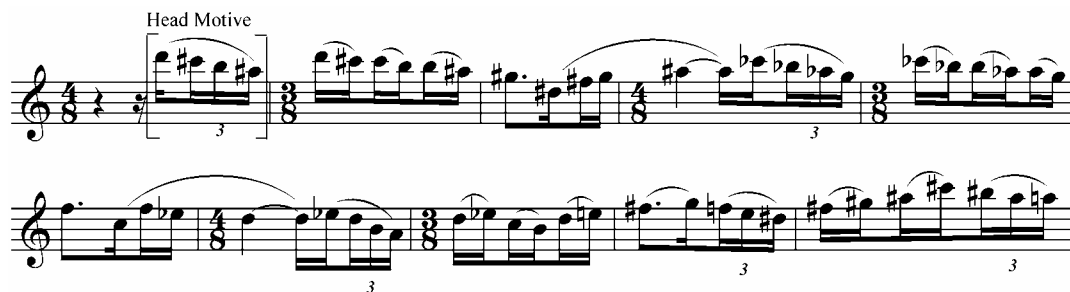
Example 2. Lyrical, Disjunct Theme, *Odyssey*, mm. 1394-1401, trumpet

Though Maw is most often associated with lyrical melodic writing, his late instrumental style is not devoid of angular gestures that purvey a lighter, more jovial character. In his *Violin Concerto*, the initial “Scherzo” theme (Mov. II, mm. 3-15) consists of disjunct, staccato eighth notes that span two octaves and a fifth from C#-4 to G#-6.



Example 3. Angular Theme, *Violin Concerto*, Mov. II, mm. 3-13, solo violin

Even as far back in his compositional development as *Scenes and Arias* and *Life Studies*, Maw has shown a preference for expansive melodies that are assembled through additive techniques and repetition and development of fragments, a procedure consistent with the idea of a “fixed point” in his music. Maw has the ability to draw out, sustain, and relax, and he uses it to compose long lines that are self-generating and extended through *Fortspinnung*⁸⁸ or imitation.⁸⁹ At measure 66 in the first movement of the *Violin Concerto*, the solo line is constructed from the repetition and modification of the head motive. Because it is restated later in the movement (mm. 161-169), this motive also represents a melodic “fixed point” for the first movement.



Example 4. Repetition of Fragments, *Violin Concerto*, Mov. I, mm. 66-75, solo violin

In *Odyssey*, Maw uses a small melodic cell as one of the recurring thematic elements throughout the work. The cell is first presented in the horn passage in measure 65 as an extension to preceding material, but is quickly taken over and modified by the flute in measure 67 and the

⁸⁸ *Fortspinnung* is a term devised by Wilhelm Fischer (1915) referring to the process of continuation or development of musical material, usually with reference to a melodic line, by which a short idea or motif is “spun out” into an entire phrase or period by such techniques as sequential treatment, intervallic transformation, and repetition. (William Drakeman, Grove Music Online, Accessed 7 January 2007)

⁸⁹ Northcott, “Nicholas Maw,” *Music and Musicians*: 35.

clarinet in measure 72 to create a new theme. The motive reappears at several points late in movement four of the work (mm. 1383, 1168, and 1409), functioning as a unifying melodic element for the piece.



Example 5. Recurring Thematic Motive, *Odyssey*, m. 67, flute

The additive nature of the previous examples leads to irregular phrases and ambiguous phrasal divisions, but when appropriate to his expressive intent, Maw also uses repetition of motives to create phrases more closely akin to period structure. Such is the case with the opening theme of the third movement of *Dance Scenes*, which consists of four short two-bar phrases that repeat the same basic motive (see example 6). As with the previous examples, this theme functions as a thematic “fixed point,” recurring in an augmented presentation at measure 105 in the last movement.



Example 6. Regular Phrase Structure, *Dance Scenes*, Mov. III, mm. 1-9, oboe 1

In Maw’s late instrumental works, themes are built on pitch collections that strictly or loosely conform to major, minor, or modal scales, often including chromatic interjections. The order of pitches rarely conforms to traditional voice leading practices and does not remain faithful to a particular key for an extended period of time. Diatonic collections simply function as a referential source from which motives are drawn. Melodic lines, though, usually retain centrality to a certain tone. Maw creates referential tonality by using the same pitch for the

beginning and end of phrase segments or by emphasizing certain tones agogically.⁹⁰ In movement two of *Dance Scenes* (m. 68), the oboe theme is drawn from diatonic pitch collections outlined by the vertical chord structures in the violins and the linear scale patterns from the viola. Tones with longer note values and tones accented by placement on a strong pulse reinforce centrality, often supplying the tonic, mediant, or dominant of the underlying harmonic structure.

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Oboe, Violin, and Viola. The Oboe part is in the treble clef, Violin in the treble clef, and Viola in the bass clef. The time signature is 3/8. The Oboe part features a melodic line with a slur over the first four measures. The Violin part features vertical chord structures with a slur over the first four measures. The Viola part features a linear scale pattern with a slur over the first four measures. Below the Viola staff, there are four groups of triplets, each labeled with a chord: A♭ minor, E melodic minor, A♭ major, and A major.

Example 7. Melodic Pitch Materials, *Dance Scenes*, Mov. II, mm. 67-71

Harmony

Harmonic structures in Maw’s late instrumental music vary according to the character of the piece or particular section, but most often conform to the organizing principles of tonality. Regarding his mature style, Maw states, “I finally found my feet when I simply tried to put down what I heard, and this turned out to be related to tonality in some way.”⁹¹ Maw often keeps all twelve pitch classes in play, leading some to describe his harmonic approach as pantonal. Whitall writes, “What has always distinguished Maw’s music is his ability to adumbrate and exploit vertical aggregates of richly ambiguous pantonal implications specifically launched to explore such possibilities without let or hindrance.”⁹² Maw’s free use of chromaticism in his late instrumental works, though, doesn’t purport to give each pitch class equal billing. The

⁹⁰ May, 18.

⁹¹ Koch, 26.

⁹² Arnold Whitall, “A Voyage Beyond Romance,” *Musical Times* 136 (November 1995): 433-34.

chromaticism functions as a spice or embellishment to an underlying structure that, by highlighting and repeating certain pitches and pitch collections, implies tonality. The result is usually a loose, meandering centricity rather than atonality. Maw states:

My version of tonality is of course not tonality in the old sense at all: it's much more loosely defined. Sometimes, for example, my music could be said to be not *in* a key but *on* a key, or at least on a triadic area. Systems of relationship are set up, usually having some kind of harmonic sequence as the basis, and in that respect it follows traditional practice. But such sequences are not defined by the old root systems with the primary duality of tonic and dominant: that doesn't exist.⁹³

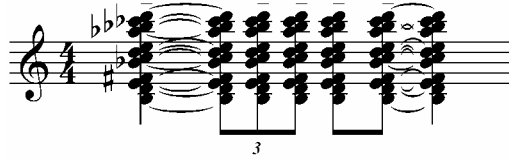
Maw's vertical structures include tertian and extended tertian harmonies that may or may not follow functional progressions. This is evident with lyrical segments of the *Violin Concerto*. The initial entrance of the solo violin in the third movement is accompanied by extended tertian interjections.

The image shows a musical score for five instruments: Violin Solo, Violin, Viola, Cello, and Bass. The score is in 8/8 time and features extended tertian harmony. The Violin Solo part is in the treble clef and consists of a melodic line with various intervals and accidentals. The Violin, Viola, Cello, and Bass parts are in the bass clef and consist of vertical structures of chords, primarily tertian and extended tertian, with some chromaticism. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat).

Example 8. Extended Tertian Harmony, *Violin Concerto*, Mov. III, mm. 8-12

Other structures consist of various non-tertian combinations of more than three or four pitch classes. Some of these are polychordal structures, where two distinct chord structures are separated by register and/or timbre, while others are cluster chords, where tones are stacked in major or minor seconds. For example, the collection of tones making up the vertical structure in measure 343 of *Odyssey* consists of eight different pitch classes, which, when reordered, are a major or minor second apart.

⁹³ Griffiths, 170-71.



Example 9. Cluster Chord, *Odyssey*, m. 343

Maw manipulates these vertical structures so that certain properties are highlighted to imply centricity. These properties include: pitches that are doubled or repeated, pitch placement, dominant intervals, or the duration of a collection.⁹⁴ In example 9, the highest pitch is also the only one doubled twice and presented in three octaves.

Progression of harmonic structures in Maw’s late instrumental works is more often linked to the direction and character of thematic or accompanying lines than to strict adherence to functional progression and other characteristics of conventional tonal music. Maw often weaves unrelated chord structures using parallelism and/or mirror harmony, with specific stresses at appropriate points to establish tonal centricity. Melodic harmony, especially in technical passages, often incorporates both parallel and mirror techniques within a single phrasal unit. Such is the case in the fourth movement of *Dance Scenes* (m. 43), where the violins’ flowing parallel sixteenth notes yield to mirror figures with varying contours.



Example 10. Parallel and Mirror Harmony, *Dance Scenes*, Mov. IV, mm. 43-46, violins

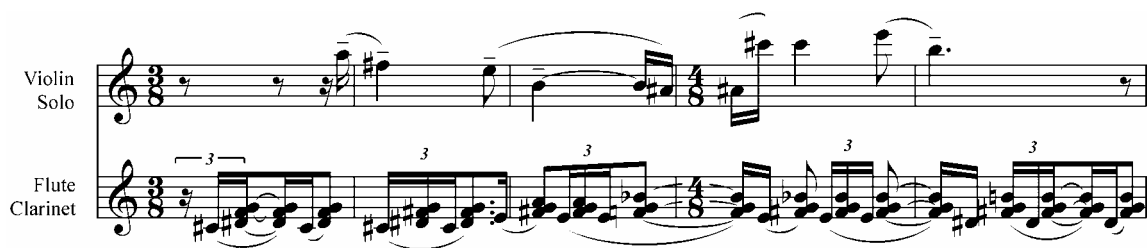
Triads are often used to reinforce centricity by retaining a traditional relationship of dissonance to consonance or repose. Resolutions are set up by strong aural analogies to frequently reiterated

⁹⁴ Arnold Whitall, “Maw’s *Personae*: Chromaticism and Tonal Allusion,” *Tempo* 125 (June 1978): 2.

pitches or chords.⁹⁵ Maw often utilizes pedal points to maintain a centric pull through shifting harmonic passages. In *Dance Scenes*, Maw uses a pedal point to solidify A as the centric tonal area at the end of the first movement and as a link to the beginning of the second movement.

Rhythm

Maw's rhythmic approach incorporates complex structures with changing meters and varying tempos. He includes repeated rhythmic figures that are varied by displacement, changing articulation, shifting accents, and/or changing timbre. Often, repeated rhythmic motives form a motoric ostinato that provides continuous propulsion for Maw's faster tempos. Such is the case with the repeated sixteenth-note figures in the opening section of the final movement of *Odyssey* (mm. 1004-1103) and the first movement of *Dance Scenes*, where each statement of the initial thematic material is accompanied by a fabric of repeated sixteenth notes presented by the strings. Maw's use of ostinato, though, is not limited to fast rhythmic displays, but is also an essential ingredient in many of his slower lyrical pieces or movements. At measure 14 in the first movement of the *Violin Concerto*, the lyrical, "dolce e cantabile" solo violin theme is propelled by a rhythmic ostinato presented by the flute and clarinet.



Example 11. Ostinato, *Violin Concerto*, Mov. I, mm. 14-18

In addition to repeated rhythmic figures and ostinatos, Maw's late instrumental rhythmic writing is also characterized by the avoidance of a consistent strong-to-weak beat pattern. One of the techniques used to achieve this rhythmic volatility is the juxtaposition or alternation of

⁹⁵ Corron, 103.

duple and triple meters. Changing meters may also shift from simple to compound and from symmetrical to asymmetrical constructs. Maw often organizes metrical structure using additive rhythm, where the eighth note pulse remains constant.⁹⁶ Throughout the first movement of the *Violin Concerto*, Maw shifts freely between $\frac{3}{8}$, $\frac{4}{8}$, $\frac{5}{8}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, and $\frac{6}{8}$, which not only yields varying groupings of the eighth note but also contrasts duple and triple feel. Maw uses a similar approach in the first movement of *Dance Scenes*, only with more variety of meter and a better balance of simple and compound divisions of the beat. The movement begins in $\frac{6}{8}$ and later includes $\frac{5}{8}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{9}{8}$, $\frac{7}{8}$, $\frac{5}{4}$, $\frac{7}{4}$, $\frac{2}{4}$, and $\frac{3}{8}$ meters. Measures 5 through 18 of the second movement of *Dance Scenes* represent Maw's use of additive rhythm, with the sixteenth note as the consistent pulse.



Example 12. Additive Rhythm, *Dance Scenes*, Mov. II, mm. 5-13, flute

Maw also incorporates various techniques within consistent meters to contrast duple and triple rhythmic ideas and blur consistent strong-to-weak beat patterns. He often creates strife between thematic material and accompaniment through the juxtaposition of duple and triple based rhythmic gestures. In measures 1241 through 1243 of *Odyssey*, the accented half-note triplets weaken the strong pulses of the flowing sixteenth-note figures and tenuto half notes (see example 13). Maw writes ties across barlines and displaces accented notes to weak beats in order to avoid consistent patterns. In example 13, the trombones have tied quarter notes across the barline while the strings have slurs across the barline, and both rearticulate on a weak beat.

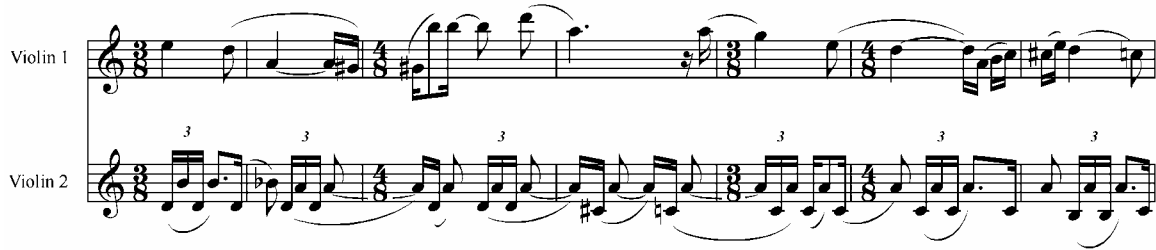
⁹⁶ *Additive Rhythm* is a rhythmic concept where some short value remains constant but is used in groups of unpredictably varying lengths. (Kostka, 117)

Example 13. Duple and Triple Rhythms, *Odyssey*, mm. 1241-1243

In movement three of *Dance Scenes* (m. 37), ties and slurs in the viola theme weaken the barline and establish a triple subdivision in a duple meter. The strong-to-weak beat relationship is further clouded in the passage by syncopated interjections from the winds.

Example 14. Clouded Strong-to-Weak Beat Pattern, *Dance Scenes*, Mov. III, mm. 37-54

Maw uses a similar approach in the first movement of the *Violin Concerto* (mm. 23-30). While the melody line, presented by violin one, conforms to the metrical structure established by the time signatures, the accompaniment creates an alternative strong-to-weak beat pattern by regrouping subdivisions using ties and slurs and by emphasizing tones on weak beats.



Example 15. Clouded Strong-to-Weak Beat Pattern, *Violin Concerto*, Mov. I, mm. 23-59

Texture

Maw incorporates a varied textural approach that includes homophony, polyphony, and hybrid textures. Maw's homophonic textures are structured so that thematic material is clearly delineated. Melodies, which are sometimes doubled in unison or at the octave for more impact, are often accompanied by ostinato patterns, rhythmic harmony, or sustained chords. For example, the primary theme of movement two (mm. 5-18) of *Dance Scenes* is presented in unison by the piccolo, flutes, oboe one, and E \flat clarinet and is accompanied only by a sustained pedal in the horns and bassoons. Even when accompaniment is more active, it is typically unobtrusive to the primary thematic material. Maw often distinguishes melodic lines with accompanying gestures in a contrasting style. For example, at measure 37 of movement three of *Dance Scenes*, the lyrical viola melody is accompanied by pointed, staccato sixteenth-note gestures from the brass and timpani.

Maw's use of polyphonic and hybrid textures serves to increase tension by weaving a more intricate fabric and clouding the clarity of primary thematic material. Sections with more intricate hierarchy of lines are not necessarily denser, but simply have independent voices. Maw uses a hybrid texture through much of the first section of movement four of the *Violin Concerto*. At measure 11, the solo violin competes with a counter theme, presented by the cello and highlighted by the alto flute, resulting in a polyphonic quality. Yet, both themes progress at the

same pace with similar shape and rhythmic stresses, and both are accompanied by rhythmic accompaniment supplied by the second violins. Thus, labeling the passage as hybrid texture seems more appropriate.

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Violin Solo, Violin 2, and Cello. The music is in 2/4 time. The Violin Solo part features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, some beamed together. The Violin 2 part provides a rhythmic accompaniment with a steady eighth-note pattern. The Cello part has a more melodic line with some rests and longer note values. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#).

Example 16. Hybrid Texture, *Violin Concerto*, Mov. IV, mm. 11-17

In the final movement of *Odyssey* (mm. 1134-1142), Maw creates a polyphonic texture by contrasting the lyrical theme presented by the viola with a pointed, angular theme in the bass. Though rhythmic accompaniment is present, the opposing character of the themes yields a polyphonic result.

Orchestration

Though scoring and instrumentation differ in Maw's late instrumental works, certain tendencies characterize his approach to orchestration. Maw demonstrates a propensity in all of his works to delineate choirs of like instruments or families by assigning them separate roles within the texture or by alternating statements between choirs. He often separates and contrasts the woodwind, brass, and string choirs but also, at times, creates distinctions between individual instrumental colors within each choir. The typical function of each choir varies according to the specific medium and character of the setting. The percussion choir is used primarily for color contrast and rhythmic support and rarely assumes a melodic role.

Maw's varied use of the instrumental choirs is evident in *Odyssey*, *Violin Concerto*, and *Dance Scenes*. With *Odyssey*, Maw, for the most part, divides primary melodic material between

the woodwind and string choirs. Though the large brass choir achieves a more prominent role in the final movement, Maw uses the brass mostly for harmonic support, imitative gestures, embellishment, or dynamic enhancement. Other than the opening timpani solo, the percussion has no extended melodic passages, but is a key ingredient in the palette of colors from which Maw draws. In order to leave adequate sonic space for the solo instrument, the orchestra for the *Violin Concerto* is much smaller and, because of the nature of the work, features less timbral contrast. The primary melodic role is given to the strings with much support from the woodwind choir. With regard to brass, only horn, trumpet, and tuba are used in the piece and only the horn has a prominent role. The minimal percussion requirements in the piece can be covered by one player and only serve as brief rhythmic punctuation or embellishment. Maw demonstrates a different approach to orchestration with *Dance Scenes*, which, of the three pieces, represents the greatest distinction between choirs. With this work, Maw balances melodic prominence between the brass and woodwinds and uses the strings, for the most part, in an accompanying role. Even though a greater variety of instruments is used, compared to the *Violin Concerto*, percussion timbres remain a minimal part of the texture and play a limited role in *Dance Scenes*.

The three aforementioned works also reveal certain preferences or tendencies regarding color and the use of individual instruments or choirs to create timbral effects. With the woodwind choir, Maw often creates cascading or pyramid figures where the top or bottom voice attacks and sustains, and then yields to the next higher or lower voice which follows the same procedure. This process continues through the choir creating an extended vertical structure. This is evident in measures 172 through 174 of the first movement of the *Violin Concerto* and measures 1162 through 1166 of *Odyssey* (see example 17). Maw also uses the flute, sometimes combined with alto flute, to create technical flourishes or sweeps of color. Such is the case in the

third movement of the *Violin Concerto* (mm. 192-194) and the third movement of *Dance Scenes* (m. 89) (see example 18).

Flute 1

Flute 2

Flute 3

Oboe 1

Oboe 2

Oboe 3

Example 17. Cascading Figure, *Odyssey*, mm. 1162-1163

Flute 1

Flute 2

Example 18. Flute Flourish, *Dance Scenes*, Mov. III, m. 89

Maw demonstrates a propensity for muted brass, both for dynamic contrast and change of color. He also uses the brass choir to create angular, percussive effects, created by heavily accented staccato attacks. These interjections are usually set against a lyrical backdrop, as with measures 1096 through 1098 of *Odyssey*. With percussion, Maw often combines metal mallet instruments and accessory instruments with various drums, but seldom incorporates wood mallet instruments.

This is evident in the similarities of the percussion requirements for each the three pieces discussed in this chapter.

<u><i>Odyssey</i></u>	<u><i>Violin Concerto</i></u>	<u><i>Dance Scenes</i></u>
Vibraphone	Vibraphone	
Tubular Bells		Tubular Bells
2 Glockenspiels	Glockenspiel	Glockenspiel
3 Bongos		3 Bongos
3 Tom-toms		
Side Drum	Side Drum	Side Drum
Tenor Drum	Tenor Drum	Tenor Drum
Bass Drum		Bass Drum
3 Suspended Cymbals	Suspended Cymbal	Suspended Cymbal
Crash Cymbals	Crash Cymbals	Crash Cymbals
3 Tam-tams		Large Tam-tam
Gong		
Triangle		Triangle
Tambourine	Tambourine	Tambourine
Maracas		
Claves		
Whip		Whip

Figure 3: Percussion Scoring for *Odyssey*, *Violin Concerto*, and *Dance Scenes*

Maw has retained an interest in challenging performers, both with obstacles that relate to traditional requirements of ensemble and execution and issues created by attempts to explore the technical limitations of the individual instruments. Maw often demands sudden extreme dynamic contrasts, usually executed by a sudden change to a soft dynamic from loud, followed by a quick swell back to the louder dynamic.



Example 19. Sudden Dynamic Contrasts, *Dance Scenes*, Mov. I, mm. 70-75, horns

He also explores extreme ranges of instruments, especially the upper registers of brass. For example, in measures 1556 through 1567 in the final movement of *Odyssey*, the tessitura of the trumpet remains above A_♭-5 and extends to F-6. In addition to the aforementioned flute flourishes, Maw also shows a proclivity for technical, improvisatory bassoon passages, which

often involve more than one player, either in unison or in counterpoint with each other, set in an unobtrusive, transparent texture. They tend to meander through different registers of the instrument with varying articulation, requiring considerable technical facility from the performers. This characteristic is exemplified in measures 55 through 64 of the third movement of *Dance Scenes*.

The image shows a musical score for two bassoons, Bassoon 1 and Bassoon 2, in 6/8 time. Bassoon 1 is in the treble clef and Bassoon 2 is in the bass clef. The music is highly technical, featuring rapid sixteenth-note passages and frequent triplets. The notation includes slurs, accents, and dynamic markings such as > and p. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

Example 20. Technically Challenging Bassoon Passage, *Dance Scenes*, Mov. III, mm. 55-57

CHAPTER 3

A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF *AMERICAN GAMES*

Background Information

American Games was commissioned by the British Broadcasting Company for the 1991 Promenade Concerts and was premiered by the Royal Northern College of Music Wind Orchestra (Manchester, England), conducted by Timothy Reynish, on 23 July 1991 at Royal Albert Hall. The performance at the Proms places the piece in a category with the two most highly acclaimed works of Maw's career, *Scenes and Arias* and *Odyssey*, the only other two works to be premiered at a Promenade Concert.⁹⁷ *American Games* is one of a number of works commissioned each season by the BBC with the intent of offering Proms audiences an opportunity to experience the latest musical trends.⁹⁸

The idea of composing a work for wind band was not immediately accepted by Nicholas Maw. According to Maw, Tim Reynish was the primary influence towards writing a work for wind band and was responsible for presenting the idea to the BBC.⁹⁹ After conducting several of Maw's instrumental chamber works, Reynish was impressed with his lyricism and felt his tendencies were well suited to a work for wind ensemble.¹⁰⁰ Reynish first contacted Maw about composing for winds in or around 1985, but Maw showed little interest. When the opportunity for a commission came available, Reynish communicated his idea to the BBC, and with the subsequent offer of a major commission and performance at the Proms, Maw committed to the new work. Despite Reynish's efforts leading to the commission, his Royal Northern College of

⁹⁷ The Proms, began in 1895, is an annual festival administered by the BBC running from mid-July to mid-September and comprising over seventy concerts. It received its name from its most discernible tradition, part of the audience, usually over a thousand patrons, standing in the Promenade area of the hall during the concert. The festival has held to its original intent which was to present the widest possible range of music, performed at the highest standards, to a large audience, the latter aided by traditionally low ticket prices.

⁹⁸ BBC Proms, British Broadcasting Company, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/proms/>, (5 January 2007).

⁹⁹ Koch, 122.

¹⁰⁰ Timothy Reynish, interview by the author, compact disc recording, Chicago, Illinois, 20 December 2006.

Music Wind Orchestra was not intended to give the premiere. The Northwestern University Wind Ensemble, conducted by John Paynter, was originally slated to travel to London and present the piece to the Proms audience. When the United States announced the commencement of “Operation Desert Storm” in Iraq, international unrest made it unsafe for the Northwestern ensemble to travel to England for the premiere. Thus, the opportunity was passed to Reynish. The 10:00 p.m. “Proms” concert that featured the premiere of *American Games* also included Gustav Holst’s *Hammersmith*, Nikos Skalkottas’s *Nine Greek Dances*, and David Bedford’s *Sun Paints Rainbows on the Vast Waves*. *American Games* received an enthusiastic response from the “Proms” audience and favorable reviews from the London press.¹⁰¹

Performance of *American Games* has not been limited to the United Kingdom. The American premiere was given by the Florida State University Wind Orchestra, conducted by James Croft, in November 1991. In the last fifteen years, *American Games* has been performed by numerous professional and university wind ensembles and has been professionally recorded by the United States Marine Band, conducted by Timothy Foley, and the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music Wind Ensemble, conducted by Eugene Corporon. In addition, it has been featured on programs at several wind band conventions, including two performances by the Louisiana State University Wind Ensemble, conducted by Frank Wickes, first at the 1996 College Band Directors National Association Southern Division Convention in Biloxi, Mississippi, and later at the 1999 Biennial Conference of the College Band Directors National Association in Austin, Texas. In addition, the piece was performed by the International Youth Wind Orchestra, conducted by Ray Cramer, at the 1995 World Association of Symphonic Bands and Ensembles Conference in Hammamatsu, Japan. *American Games* is the winner of the 1991

¹⁰¹ All information about the commission and premiere of *American Games* was collected in an interview with Timothy Reynish, by the author with tape recording, in Chicago, Illinois, 20 December 2006.

Louis and Virginia Sudler International Wind Band Composition Competition presented by the John Philip Sousa Foundation. For the presentation of the Sudler prize, the United States Marine Band, conducted by Colonel John Bourgeois, performed *American Games* at Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall in Baltimore, Maryland.

Overview

American Games is approximately twenty-three minutes in length and set in seven continuous movements that are framed by an introduction and coda. Despite being linked, the movement-sections each have an individual structure and reflect contrasting mood and character. *American Games* is scored for three flutes (the second doubling alto flute and third doubling piccolo), three oboes, E \flat clarinet, three clarinets in B \flat and A, two bassoons, contrabassoon, alto saxophone, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, euphonium, and two tubas. The piece requires four percussionists, one for timpani and three to cover parts for side drum, tenor drum, bass drum, tam-tam, crash cymbals, medium and large suspended cymbals, tambourine, bells, whip, rattle, claves, triangle, wood block, and glockenspiel.

American Games is an abstract reflection of American life, with the following dedication in the score: “affectionately inscribed to our friends in Washington D.C.” When considering the idea of a wind band piece, Maw’s initial thoughts, perhaps because of the prominence of bands in US educational institutions and the military, were those of American associations and ideals. The piece reflects, indirectly, sporting events and other outdoor occasions, youthful vigor, the calm of small town life, and the perpetual motion of American cities, as well as the American idea of unlimited space.¹⁰² Daniel Gordon, in his 1998 article for *Notes*, suggests that the title refers to a light-hearted British view of American political events.¹⁰³ The piece is more

¹⁰² Frank L. Battisti, *The Winds of Change* (Galesville, MD: Meredith Music Publications, 2002), 134.

¹⁰³ Daniel Gordon, “*American Games* for Symphonic Wind Ensemble,” *Notes* 55 (September 1998): 200.

reflective of Maw's appreciation for his acceptance in the United States, his enjoyment in composing the work, and the joy he hopes wind players will feel rehearsing and performing the piece. Maw offers the following description of the seven sections:

Some of them are games, but some are not games in the normal sense of the word. For example, one of them is almost like a chorale, but they could all be related to games or dances. They are not definite, they're abstract and I don't want to over-relate them. Rather, it is the idea of games, of playing games, of enjoying oneself which is related in my mind to certain aspects of living in this country. In a sense, it is an homage to this country, a thank you for what America has given me. I see the piece as a whole as being a kind of reflection of the culture and psychology of a lot of this country: the outgoingness, the warmth, the sense of movement.¹⁰⁴

Large Formal Design

Though the introduction and seven movements of *American Games* are linked to form a continuous work, the contrasting character and personality of each movement is the definitive trait. Maw describes the work as “essentially a through-composed suite”¹⁰⁵ and relates the transition from one movement-section to the next as “walking through a door into another room.”¹⁰⁶ He creates contrast between movement-sections by using a metric scheme that alternates duple and triple meters. Contrast is also created with varying tempos, shifting tonal centrality, contrasting thematic material, and texture and orchestration changes.

Though Maw's description of the work as “through-composed” is valid considering the individual nature of each movement, there are certain elements that hint at a more cohesive overall structure. Maw's ideas related to a “fixed point” in his music are certainly pervasive throughout *American Games*. The seven movements of *American Games* are framed by an introduction and coda that contain identical material (melodically, harmonically, and proportionately), a strategy intended by Maw to be a musical metaphor representing the opening

¹⁰⁴ Koch, 122-23.

¹⁰⁵ Koch, 123

¹⁰⁶ Koch, 125.

and closing of a book.¹⁰⁷ The opening theme (theme 1), presented by the trumpet and horn in the first eight measures and again, by the same instruments, in the coda serves as a thematic “fixed point” and one of several important unifying elements.



Example 21. Theme 1 of *American Games*, mm. 2-6, trumpet

Theme 1 not only recurs in the coda but is also referenced by the flute and clarinet at the conclusion of the first movement, which provides a thematic link from the first movement to the seventh. The restatement at the end of the first movement also gives dual function to the introduction. It not only serves to introduce the complete work by making initial references to the character and presenting primary thematic material, but also functions within the structure of the first movement as the opening and concluding sections of an arch form. In addition to its presence in the first movement, the introductory theme serves as the basis for primary melodic material in movement three, and rhythmic and intervallic content in the middle section of movement six. Specifics on the structure and permutations of the primary theme will be presented in a more detailed analysis of the internal structure of each movement and in a section dedicated to the melodic characteristics of *American Games*.

Though specific techniques (discussed later in this chapter) vary from one movement to the next, the harmonic structure of *American Games* also aids in unifying the composition. Both the introduction and coda are clearly loyal to D major, the prevalent tonal area throughout and, thus, a harmonic “fixed point” for the piece. Only movements three and six can be defined as functioning within a specific key (D and F respectively), while other movements demonstrate

¹⁰⁷ Koch, 123

varying degrees of allegiance to a specific tonal area or pitch centricity. All movements, though, except movement six, are centric at some point, if only briefly, to D.

With the introduction, seven movements, and coda, Maw creates a sequence of alternating periods of harmonic tension and release. After D major is firmly established in the introduction, a period of increased harmonic motion follows with movements one and two. Movement two is somewhat ambiguous with regard to tonal centricity, at times keeping ten of twelve chromatic tones in play, yet always returning emphasis to pitch-class C. Movements one and two are countered by the more stable movement three, which, along with movement six, demonstrates the least deviation from its established tonal center and represents the first lengthy restatement of D major. Tension again builds with movements four and five, which exhibit frequent tonal shifts. This tension is resolved by the stable chorale, movement six, which mirrors movement three as the other book-end for the tonal ambiguity in the middle of the piece. This precedes a return to shifting centricity in movement seven, resolved by the eventual return of D in the coda.

Similarities in meter and tempo between the movements also enhance the unity of the overall work. The metrical scheme of alternating duple and triple time signatures and the duality of duple and triple rhythmic figures (specifics to be discussed later) function as a rhythmic “fixed point” and serve to link disconnected sections of the piece. The two movements linked to the identical bookends, one and seven, in addition to their identical conclusions, are quite similar with regard to meter and tempo. Until their decelerating codas, both remain steady at $\downarrow = 144/152$ and freely incorporate $\frac{18}{8}$, $\frac{15}{8}$, $\frac{12}{8}$, and $\frac{9}{8}$ meters. The middle movements of the work, four and five, represent a climax of tension and intensity with regards to tempo and meter. Movement four features the fastest tempo marking at $\downarrow = 152$, while movement five continues to build

rhythmic intensity with an uncommon meter, $\frac{5}{16} + \frac{2}{8}$, executed at $\text{♩} = 126$. These movements are sandwiched between the sections (movements two and three and movement six) with the lowest metronome markings and with the least to consider in terms of meter. Movement two, though not devoid of potential for virtuosic display, is only marked at $\text{♩} = 58$ and incorporates simple $\frac{4}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ meters, while movement three, entirely in $\frac{12}{8}$, begins at $\text{♩} = 44$ and accelerates only to $\text{♩} = 54$. Though movement six is marked at $\text{♩} = 100$, the simple nature of the $\frac{3}{4}$ chorale yields much more contrast from the previous two movements than the tempo indicates. Considering these factors, the tempo and metrical structure of the individual movements suggest an arch form, structured with the greatest tension and intensity in the middle, supported by equally serene presentations on each side and by identical tempo and meter in the outer movement-sections.

Proportion, or the relationship of both the timing and number of measures of each movement, is another important factor in the overall structure. The disparity in the distribution of time and length of each movement of *American Games* lends credence to viewing the work as freely sectional, with only the fulfillment of individual musical goals as the determinant of length and not preset confines set for each section. At approximately six minutes and twenty-four seconds and 154 measures (without the coda), movement seven considerably outweighs the other movements, including its counterpart in the aforementioned arch structure, and especially movement two, which extends only one minute and thirty-nine seconds. Movement two has the fewest number of measures, 23, a major difference from movement seven considering the total length of the work (see figure 4).

Interior Structure of Movements

Though there is much contrast between the movements of *American Games*, there is significant repetition of materials within them and, in most cases, a clearly discernable internal

<u>Movement</u>	<u>Centricity</u>	<u>Meter</u>	<u>Tempo</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Time</u>
Intro.	D Major	$\frac{2}{2}$	$\text{♩} = 60$	15 mm.	:40
I	E \flat (shifting)	$\frac{18}{8}, \frac{15}{8}, \frac{12}{8}, \frac{9}{8}, \frac{6}{8} + \frac{2}{8}$	$\text{♩} = 144/152$	78 mm.	2:55
II	C (ambiguous)	$\frac{4}{4}, \frac{2}{4}$	$\text{♩} = 58$	23 mm.	1:39
III	D Major	$\frac{12}{8}$	$\text{♩} = 44-54$	41 mm.	3:25
IV	D (shifting)	$\frac{4}{4}, \frac{3}{4}$	$\text{♩} = 152$	77 mm.	1:47
V	D, B \flat (shifting)	$\frac{5}{16} + \frac{2}{8}$	$\text{♩} = 126$	69 mm.	1:40
VI	F Major	$\frac{3}{4}$	$\text{♩} = 100$	69 mm.	2:52
VII	D (shifting)	$\frac{18}{8}, \frac{15}{8}, \frac{12}{8}, \frac{9}{8}$	$\text{♩} = 144/152$	154 mm.	6:24
Coda	D Major	$\frac{2}{2}$	$\text{♩} = 60$	13 mm.	:40

Figure 4: Movement-Sections of *American Games*

structure. Maw's expansive tendencies and subtle variation techniques make it difficult to assign conventional form labels to all of the movements, but, for a successful performance, it is paramount to pinpoint obvious and blurred divisions and subdivisions of the work.

Introduction / Movement I

The first movement is set in an arch form (ABCBA), with each section dedicated to the presentation and/or development of one of three themes. The arch form is created by the mirroring of themes 1 and 2 on each side of theme 3 and by shifting tonal centers as the movement progresses to and from the center. As stated above, the introduction not only presents the primary motive, the principal tonal area, and other characterizations essential to the aesthetic of the overall work, it also functions as an important precursor to the first movement and an integral part of its formal structure. Following one measure of drums, the introduction (A in the arch form) consists of five short phrases, each no more than four measures, which begin in D major and shift to C and B \flat in measures 12 through 15. The A section introduces not only theme 1, but also the trumpet and horn as key melodic voices in the upcoming sections. With each new phrase, the introduction ascends, building intensity and tension so that by the *ritard* in measure 15, there is an anticipation of the next section, heightened by the dominant to tonic relationship between the last note of section A and the first note of section B.

The interior sections (BCB), which constitute movement one according to the score, serve as “a metaphor for outdoor games, sports as it were, with a bit of the marching band thrown in.”¹⁰⁸ Section B begins with three measures of ostinato that, with major chord structures, establish E \flat centrality. The horn statement that follows is the first presentation of theme 2, which resembles a bugle call and signals the start of the “games.”



Example 22. Theme 2 of *American Games*, Mov. I, mm. 10-15, horn

Theme 2 is repeated by the horns in measure 25 with only slight modifications of contour in the middle of the statement. This is followed by a varied statement of theme 2 (trombone and tuba, m. 30) which reorders motivic fragments and includes shifting tonal centers. Section C begins at measure 38, distinguished by the first statement of theme 3.



Example 23. Theme 3 of *American Games*, Mov. I, mm. 38-41, oboe 1

With the theme presented by the oboe and accompaniment by other woodwinds, the beginning of section C represents a stark contrast in color from the brass-dominated B section. The remainder of section C consists of varied restatements of theme 3 by the trumpet and horns, separated by quasi-developmental passages and shifting tonal centrality. A transition utilizing a motivic

¹⁰⁸ Koch, 123.

fragment of theme 1 sets up a return of the B section, again in E \flat , in measure 69. After a four-measure restatement of the ostinato, theme 2 is restated in unison by the piccolo, flute, oboe, and clarinet, a combination which offers a contrast in color from the earlier horn presentation. This is followed by a second statement by the trumpet, again centered on C but extended by a motivic gesture that sweeps through the brass and woodwinds from low instruments to high. This sets up the final A section, a return of theme 1, presented, this time in F, by the flute and clarinet.

<u>Section</u>	<u>Structural Unit</u>	<u>Measure</u>	<u>Orchestration</u>	<u>Centricity</u>
A "Introduction"	introduction	mm. 1-2	tenor and snare drum	
	a (theme 1)	mm. 3-5	trumpet	D
	a'	mm. 6-8	horn	
	a'	mm. 9-11	trumpet	
	a'	mm. 11-14	horn	C
	transition	mm. 14-15	trumpet	B \flat
B	introduction	mm. 16-18	upper ww, hn, tpt	E \flat
	b (theme 2)	mm. 19-24	horn	
	b'	mm. 25-31	horn	C
	c	mm. 30-37	brass	G-C
C	d (theme 3)	mm. 38-40	oboe	A
	d'	mm. 41-44	flute	G-E
	development	m. 45-49	mixed instr.	shifting
	d	mm. 50-53	trumpet	D
	development	m. 54-58	mixed instr.	shifting
	d	mm. 59-63	horns	C
	development	m. 64-68	mixed instr.	shifting
	transition	mm. 67-68	upper ww, tpt	D
B	introduction	mm. 69-72	tutti	E \flat
	b (theme 2)	mm. 73-77	upper ww	
	b'	mm. 78-83	trumpets	C
	extension	mm. 84-88	mixed instr.	transition
		mm. 89-90	piccolo	
A	a (theme 1)	mm 91-93	flute, clarinet	F

Figure 5. Form of Movement I of *American Games*

Movement II

Movement two starkly contrasts with the first movement in mood and character. It consists of five short, three-to-five-measure statements by the alto flute and flute, each followed by a one-bar response from the horn and trombone. Movement two does not portray competitive

games, outdoor space, or physical movement, but is more a reflection of “personal or affectionate games between two people in a social context,” much like dialogue.¹⁰⁹ Of primary interest in determining structure is the contrast between the woodwind melodic statements and the brass response. Based on the fluid outer-voice movement and shifting vertical structures, the woodwind statements appear more linear in nature to the listener, with the second half of each creating a polyphonic effect of six juxtaposed melody lines. The brass responses, with disjunct bass lines and repeated, dense chord structures, are more vertical and stagnant in nature and appear homophonic to the listener. This textural difference is enhanced by the change in timbre.

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff is labeled 'Woodwind Statement' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Brass Response'. The woodwind staff features a complex, multi-measure rest followed by a series of chords and melodic fragments. The brass staff features a series of chords and a melodic line that is more linear and fluid than the woodwind statement.

Example 24. Movement II Melodic Material, *American Games*, mm. 2-4

In addition to the aforementioned contrasts between statement and response, the second movement is also characterized by rapidly shifting tonal centers. Although the opening flute passage utilizes ten of twelve pitch classes, it begins on C and resolves the leading-tone B to C in measure 2 (flute one, beats one and two); thus, it appears centric to C. As the clarinets and bassoon join and eventually yield to the horn and trombone, tonal centricity becomes more ambiguous. The collection of tones in measure 4 emphasizes A \flat and, though the second flute flourish ascends from D to D, the first flute and bassoon both resolve again to A \flat on beat four of measure 7. Pitch class C is again emphasized in measures 9 and 12 where the alto flute flourish, despite incorporating all twelve pitch classes, begins and ends on C and is followed by woodwind and low brass passages that are centric to C. The alto flute flourish again begins and

¹⁰⁹ Koch, 124.

ends with pitch-class C in measure 13, but the response and phrasal extension that follow leads to D and then G centricity. A descending pattern in the bassoon and contrabassoon in measures 20 and 21 leads back to C and then continues chromatically down to A, which functions as the dominant of the more traditionally tonal third movement in D major.

<u>Structural Unit</u>	<u>Measure</u>	<u>Orchestration</u>	<u>Centricity</u>
a	mm. 1-3	alto flute, flute	C
b	m. 4	horn, trombone	A _b
a	mm. 5-7	alto flute, flute	
b	m. 8	horn, trombone	G _b
a	mm. 9-11	alto flute, flute	C
b	m. 12	horn, trombone	
a	mm. 13-17	alto flute, flute	C
b	m. 18	clarinet, bassoon	D
a	mm. 19-21	flute	G
a (codetta)	mm. 22-23	alto flute, flute	C-A

Figure 6. Form of Movement II of *American Games*

Movement III

The third movement is divided into two main sections, the second of which is distinguished not by new thematic material or change in tonality, but by changes in tempo and tone color, along with increased motion in the accompaniment. According to Maw, this movement is “more interior” and may not have any association to games, but is more a portrayal of color and of quiet reflection.¹¹⁰ The primary thematic material of both sections (theme 4) is derived from theme 1, the specifics of which will be discussed later. After a one-measure introduction establishing D major, theme 4 is revealed in a *cantabile* presentation by the solo alto saxophone, a tone color heard for the first time in the piece. The theme is constructed with five short, two-to-three-measure phrases that also form a larger grouping of four plus six measures.

¹¹⁰ Koch, 124.



Example 25. Theme 4 of *American Games*, Mov. III, mm. 1-5, alto saxophone

The second section of movement three outlines a small ternary design, the start of which is marked by an increase in tempo to $\downarrow = 54$ with the instruction “with a little more movement,” and by the start of a new ostinato pattern in the clarinet and horn, which extends throughout the second section and lends more motion to the movement. The “a” section of this design extends from measure 13 to measure 22 and consists of two varied statements of theme 4, the first by the oboe and the second by the flute. Centricity shifts to emphasize F during the flute melody, but returns to D via a dominant to tonic movement at the start of the “b” subsection (mm. 23-31). Though it begins in the tonic and continues to be driven by the same ostinato pattern, the “b” subsection, or digression, features varied thematic material and shifting centricity. The clarinet passage starting in measure 25 consists of reconfigurations of the second motive of theme 4, instead of the often referenced head motive, and is accompanied by unrelated vertical major chords. Primary thematic material in D major returns in measure 32, signifying the third section of the ternary design. The feeling of resolution following the digressive section is emphasized by the *ritard* into measure 32. In a movement dominated by woodwind colors as the primary melodic voice, Maw shifts emphasis to the brass in the final subsection with horn and trumpet melody lines and trombone ostinato. The heroic entrance of the brass solidifies 32 as the peak of the movement, a feeling of heightened spirit that continues into movement four (see figure 7).

Movement IV

Movement four is set in a ternary design with each section clearly delineated by a double bar, new tempo, and an obvious change in character, centricity, texture, and orchestration. Maw

<u>Section</u>	<u>Subsection</u>	<u>Measure</u>	<u>Orchestration</u>	<u>Centricity</u>
I		mm. 1-3	alto saxophone	D
		mm. 4-5		
		mm. 6-7		
		mm. 8-10		
		mm. 11-12		
II	a	mm. 13-14	oboe	
		mm. 15-16		
		mm. 17-18	flute	
		mm. 19-22		
	b	mm. 23-24	horn	
		mm. 25-27	clarinet	shifting
		mm. 28-29		
	a	mm. 30-31		
		mm. 32-33	horn	D
	transition	mm. 34-35		
		mm. 36-37	trumpet	F
		mm. 38-41		A _b - A

Figure 7. Form of Movement III of *American Games*

relates this movement to athletic games or other ideas associated with spontaneous physical movement. He likens the movement to “someone putting on a costume and running around in it” or simply “young people enjoying themselves.”¹¹¹ A fanfare by the trumpets and a response in the upper woodwinds announce the playful character of the movement to the listener. Melodic material in the first section (mm. 1-21) is based on various permutations of a single motive (see example 26) that is traded between and embellished by the horn and trombone, accompanied by repeated sixteenth-note passages from the woodwinds and whimsical, pointed attacks from membrane percussion, whip, and rattle.



Example 26. Movement IV Motive A, *American Games*, mm. 8-9, trombone

The B section in movement four (mm. 28-62) differs greatly from the outer sections. Maw includes the instructions, “a little steadier” at measure 28 which seems to indicate a

¹¹¹ Koch, 124.

decrease in tempo. The B section is also distinguished by a change in meter from $\frac{4}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ and a striking shift to sparse monophonic texture from dense homophony (melody and accompaniment), with the greatest change to the listener being the sudden absence of the previously incessant sixteenth-note fabric. A shift in tone color also occurs in the B section, moving from melodic emphasis on low brass instruments to upper woodwinds and trumpets. With its detached eighth notes, integration of silent space, sudden dynamic changes, wide slurred intervals, and quasi-pointillistic alternation of motives, the B section is a humorous development of two simple motives presented in the first two measures, executed by the manipulation of the aforementioned characteristics.



Example 27. Movement IV Motive B and C, *American Games*, mm. 28-30, oboe

Phrasal breaks are created by the combination of two or more of the variation techniques, such as the phrase break between measures 33 and 34, which is highlighted by three beats of silence, a dynamic change from *piano* to *forte*, and a minor seventh between the two motives. Based on the collection of pitches used and not necessarily the frequency of any one pitch class, the centricity in the first ten bars of the section is E, but with all twelve pitch classes in play from measure 41 to 46, centricity quickly becomes ambiguous.

With an abrupt return to the original tempo and meter ($\frac{4}{4}$), and the reappearance of the repeated sixteenth-note backdrop, measure 63 marks the return of A section material. Beginning in measure 65, the angular, eighth-note motive, making use of all twelve pitch classes, is traded amongst the horn, trombone, and trumpet with increasing frequency, culminating in a tutti brass exclamation in measures 72 through 74 that ends together on C. This resolution signifies the

beginning of a four-measure transition that continues to expand and embellish the repeating sixteenth-note idea, building intensity to transfer to movement five.

<u>Section</u>	<u>Subsection</u>	<u>Measure</u>	<u>Orchestration</u>	<u>Centricity</u>
A	introduction	mm. 1-6	upper ww, tpt	G#-C-D
	a	mm. 7-11	horn, trombone	D
	a'	mm. 12-18		A
	a''	mm. 19-25		shifting
	transition	mm. 26-27	upper woodwinds	G
B		mm. 28-30	upper ww, tpt	E
		mm. 31-33	cl, sx, tr	shifting
		mm. 34-37	oboe, clarinet	
		mm. 38-40	clarinet	
		mm. 41-46	upper ww, tpt	
		mm. 47-50	saxophone, clarinet	
		mm. 51-54	upper ww, tpt	
		mm. 55-57	flute	
		mm. 58-60	cl, sx, tr	
	mm. 61-62	upper ww		
A	introduction	mm. 63-64	trumpet	C
	a	mm. 65-68	horn, trombone	shifting
	a''	mm. 68-71	brass	
		mm. 72-73	tutti	
	transition	mm. 74-77	woodwinds	F

Figure 8. Form of Movement IV of *American Games*

Movement V

Movement five, with a shift to an unusual “complex meter”¹¹² ($\frac{5}{16} + \frac{2}{8}$) and an unyielding ostinato pattern, continues the rhythmic intensity of movement four. Maw once again portrays “outdoor athletic activity” and other “feats of movement” with this portion of the piece.¹¹³ The movement consists of five varied statements of the same melodic idea (theme 5), with each statement presenting an identical first phrase, considering rhythm and contour, and then altering the second phrase or simply embellishing or expanding motives from the first (see example 28). With each successive statement, Maw contrasts brass and woodwind timbre and major and minor

¹¹² Stephan Kostka, *Materials and Techniques of Twentieth-Century Music*, 2d ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999), 117.

¹¹³ Koch, 124.



Example 28. Theme 5 of *American Games*, Mov. V, mm. 2-13, trombone harmonic structure, harmonizing brass melodic statements with mostly major triads and woodwind statements with minor. After a tutti D major chord and one measure of D major ostinato, referencing the “fixed-point” centricity, the trombones present the first melodic statement, accompanied first by D major and then by B minor triads. Following a two-measure extension/harmonic transition, the oboes and clarinets present the theme, accompanied by mostly G minor triads. The trombones again have the theme in measure 30 with major triads in the ostinato pattern, played by the trumpets and horns. This is followed by another oboe statement, this time with B \flat minor accompaniment in the clarinet and horn. The final statement by solo flute, with major triads accompanying, defies the established alternation of color and chord quality. A long extension of the first phrase ends with a sustained F major chord fermata, which functions as a link to movement six (see figure 9).

Movement VI

Like movement four, the sixth movement is set in a clear ternary design. For the two outer sections, Maw composed an F major chorale, complete with conventional voice leading and traditional harmonic progression. The chorale (mm. 1-16) consists of four four-bar phrases which, based on harmonic direction, can be labeled (abaa). The first phrase is closed, ending on the tonic, while the second is open, ending on a dominant C major chord, and both the third and fourth phrases are closed (see example 29). Following the first statement by the clarinet choir and bassoons, the chorale is presented again by the euphonium with an added flute obbligato.

<u>Section</u>	<u>Structural Unit</u>	<u>Measure</u>	<u>Orchestration</u>	<u>Centricity</u>
Statement 1	ostinato	mm. 1-2	trumpet	D
	a	mm. 3-8	trombone	
	b (extended)	mm. 9-16	low brass	D-g
Statement 2	ostinato	m. 17	horn	g
	a	mm. 18-23	oboe, clarinet	
	b (extended)	mm. 24-30		g-B,
Statement 3	ostinato	mm. 29-30	trumpet	B,
	a	mm. 31-41	trombone	shifting
	extension	mm. 42-44	brass	D
Statement 4	ostinato	m. 45	clarinet	b,
	a	mm. 46-51	oboe	
	extension	mm. 52-63		shifting
Statement 5	ostinato	m. 63	clarinet	D,
	a	mm. 64-68	flute, oboe	
	extension	mm. 69-81		D, - F

Figure 9. Form of Movement V of *American Games*

Phrase 1 (closed) Phrase 2 (open)

Phrase 3 (closed) Phrase 4 (closed)

16 I V/IV I

Example 29. Theme 6 of *American Games*, Mov. VI, mm. 1-16, clarinet 1

The B section extends from measure 34 to 47 and starkly contrasts with the outer sections. Maw offers the following insight about movement six and the transition into the B section:

“This movement portrays what seems to me a very American phenomenon—I imagined someone in a church or a religious service. At 37, I imagined someone suddenly moving inside themselves, interior thoughts crossing their mind—perhaps they are looking at a window of stained glass. Then at 38, it becomes a communal experience—in a sense, it’s a metaphor for communal experience that becomes a personal experience at 37 and back to, perhaps, worship.”¹¹⁴

The reflective nature of the B section is aided by a slightly slower tempo than that of the chorale.

The conjunct lines of the chorale become disjunct instrumental interjections in the B section, and

¹¹⁴ Koch, 124.

the regular four-bar phrasing is reduced to two-bar modifications of a melodic fragment that, in some ways, appears derived from theme 1 (as discussed below). With eleven of twelve pitch classes used, the tonal centricity is ambiguous, bordering on atonality, but, because of the frequency with which F is used, coupled with the stepwise dissension to F by the flute in measures 43 through 45, it is prudent to contend that F centricity remains intact.

Measure 48 marks the return of the chorale and of lucid F major tonality. Although it adheres to the phrasal structure of the original chorale theme, the third section statement differs in contour and harmonic direction. With each additional phrase, Maw adds instruments to the texture until the peak of the movement at measure 60. Instead of an arching contour within each phrase, the third section statement creates an arch over the course of four phrases. The first three phrases are open, with the first two ending on the dominant and the third on the subdominant. The final phrase ends with a deceptive cadence in measure 64, setting up a phrasal extension leading to movement seven.

<u>Section</u>	<u>Subsection</u>	<u>Measure</u>	<u>Orchestration</u>	<u>Tonality</u>	
A	a	mm. 1-4	clarinet, bassoon	F Major	
		mm. 5-8			
		mm. 9-12			
		mm. 13-16			
	a'	mm. 17-20	euphonium, flute obbligato		
		mm. 21-24			
		mm. 25-28			
		mm. 29-33			
		<hr/>			
		B			
	mm. 36-37				
	mm. 38-40				
	mm. 41-44				
	mm. 45-47				
	transition				
A	a''	mm. 48-51	woodwinds	F Major	
		mm. 52-55	ww, horn		
		mm. 56-59	ww, hn, tr, euph, tu		
		mm. 60-63	tutti		
	extension	mm. 64-69	clarinet, bassoon		

Figure 10. Form of Movement VI of *American Games*

Movement VII

Movement seven, like the first, fourth, and fifth movements, is associated with dance and physical movement as well as “open air and people enjoying themselves.”¹¹⁵ It consists of ten sections, including the coda, which are distinguished by contrasting thematic material, tonal centricity, and orchestration, but maintain a consistent tempo and metrical scheme. The movement incorporates four different themes, three new plus theme 1 from the introduction.

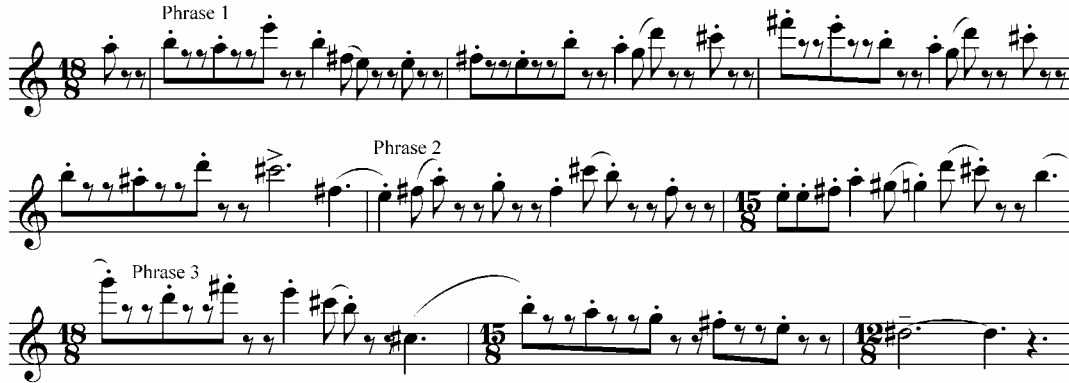
The first section (mm. 1-14) is a meandering bassoon solo (theme 7), improvisatory in nature, constructed from two primary motives and consisting of six three-measure phrases, some of which are elided with the previous phrase.



Example 30. Theme 7 (1st phrase), *American Games*, Mov. VII, mm. 1-2, bassoon
Accompanying chords in the first two measures suggest D major, and the recurrence of D major scale tones throughout solidifies D centricity. Though the final landing on A in measure 14 seems to be preparing a dominant to tonic resolution, the A instead serves as the centric tone for the next section.

The second section (mm. 15-35) features a more angular but still playful theme (theme 8) presented first by the flute and piccolo with A centricity, followed by a slightly extended version, with B centricity, presented by the clarinets. The theme consists of three phrases of varying length and is assembled using various permutations of the head motive (see ex. 31). The second statement of the theme, starting in measure 24, is enhanced by flowing eighth-note triplets in the flute and a descending bass line directed towards G in the last measure of the section.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.



Example 31. Theme 8 of *American Games*, Mov. VII, mm. 13-23, flute

The third section (mm. 36-52), though equally sparse in texture, represents a change in melodic material used and, in the first subsection, a shift in color from woodwind to brass timbres as the primary melodic voice. The first subsection (mm. 36-43) presents a new theme (theme 9) that, like theme 8, is constructed from variation of the head motive.



Example 32. Theme 9 of *American Games*, Mov. VII, mm. 36-43, trumpet 1

The theme is presented by the trumpets and horns with embellishment from the flutes and oboes. The second subsection (mm. 44-52) juxtaposes theme 9 with a truncated variation of the opening bassoon solo (theme 7). Though ambiguous at times, both subsections of section three maintain D centricity.

Section four (mm. 53-71) represents the return and development of theme 8, presented this time by brass instruments with added driving rhythmic exclamations from the woodwinds. The horns offer a truncated version of the theme before relinquishing to the trumpets, which present an altered version with a different contour and added sequential repetition of primary

motives. The trumpets give way to a more connected and lyrical variation of the theme, which consists of primary motives passed between various colors in the upper woodwinds, with the brass assuming the accompanying role from the woodwinds and providing the driving rhythmic exclamations. This section includes the first dynamic markings above *mezzo forte* in the seventh movement, with the added dynamic intensity enhancing color contrast. The alto saxophone, with rhythmic punctuations from other woodwind voices, is the last to develop motives from theme 6, taking the melodic fragment from the middle phrase of the original statement (m. 20) and altering its function to serve as a transition to the next section.

Section five (mm. 72-88) is a variation of theme 9, presented by the trombones and set against delicate, cascading, pyramid-like passages from the woodwind choir, which outline the centric tonal area, E \flat . While the accompaniment is flowing, the theme is altered from its original presentation in section three to be more marked and detached, though soft. The previous anacrusis, a dotted quarter note, is replaced by three staccato eighth notes. Likewise, the dotted half notes that resolved the first phrase in the original statement are replaced by staccato eighth notes. Though the intervallic content and contour in the first two phrases resemble the original, significant alterations are made in the remaining three phrases to create a unique and expanded variation of the theme.

Shifting the melodic voice from the trombone to the flutes and later the oboe and clarinet, section six (mm. 89-103) is marked by another stark contrast in tone color. The section is a variation of theme 7, the opening bassoon solo, which maintains many of its original characteristics but is set contrapuntally in the upper woodwind choir and varied with contour changes and different phrase lengths, alterations which enhance the improvisatory nature of the passage. The theme is accompanied by a descending dotted-half-note sequence in the horns and

low brass which establishes A major as the centric tonal area. The pattern changes to an undulating hemiola sequence that culminates at a false peak, the *forte* on the final beat of measure 97. A crescendo from *piano* to *forte*, executed by ascending dotted quarter notes in the trumpets and melodic flourishes in the woodwinds, leads to the true peak of the section, the *forte* B \flat ¹¹ chord on the downbeat of measure 101, which represents the first example of full tutti scoring in the seventh movement.

Though section seven (mm. 104-117) continues to develop theme 7 in the upper woodwinds, it is distinguished by the juxtaposition of theme 9, presented by the horns and trumpets. With the layering of the two themes plus accompaniment, section seven presents one of the most densely scored segments of the work. The section is also distinguished by the *fortissimo* dynamic with which it begins, a level that has not previously been used in the seventh movement. With the dominant pedal that extends from measure 104 to measure 111 and the pitch content of both themes, D major is clearly the centric tonal area. Considering the combination of two primary themes from the movement, dense scoring, the *fortissimo* dynamic marking, and the return of the “fixed point” centricity (D major), the start of section seven must be considered the peak of the movement. After a complete statement of theme 9, with its original phrase structure, a two-bar extension leads to a unified, hammering punctuation by the upper winds. The woodwinds then give way to a percussive rhythmic unison by the brass, which serves as a bridge to the next section.

Section eight (mm. 118-140) consists of a restatement of theme 8, but with harmonic rhythm in the form of a motoric ostinato pattern established in measure 118. The theme is varied in measure 123 where the piccolo, flutes, oboes, and clarinets all present the theme in octaves, driven by an intensifying variation of the ostinato in the horns and embellishment from the

trumpets. An extension (descending dotted quarter notes) of the last phrase connects to a codetta (mm. 132-138) where fragments of theme 8 are traded among the upper woodwinds until only the clarinet is left to conclude the theme. Considering the dominant to tonic movement in the bass (beat four of measure 117 to the downbeat of measure 118), the G major chords in the horn ostinato, and the pitch content of the theme, it is easy to conclude that section eight at least begins with G major centrality, but starts shifting in measure 120 and eventually settles on C in measure 124. This centrality is supported more by the dominant to tonic relationships in the euphonium and tuba than by pitch content in the theme or ostinato; thus, the centrality shifts again as the bass begins a stepwise descent that eventually settles on D in measure 133. The codetta is also unsettled until the A major chord in measure 144, which sets up the return of D major in the next section.

Section nine (mm. 145-154) consists of a truncated restatement of the opening bassoon solo, theme 7, in D major with an added contrabassoon solo that serves as the transition to the coda. The solo is transposed up one octave but, otherwise, is identical to its original statement. The only exceptions are the second half of the fourth measure, where a different collection of notes is used, and the second beat of the seventh measure, where, instead of ascending into the upper tessitura, the contour turns downward to give way to the contrabassoon.

With the return of unifying melodic (theme 1) and harmonic (D major) elements, section ten (mm. 155-167) functions as a coda not just for movement seven but for the complete work. With regard to pitch content and rhythm of the theme, the first ten measures of the section (three phrases) are identical to the introduction of the piece. Yet, there are contrasting elements. While the opening trumpet statement in the introduction is marked *forte*, the same statement in the coda is marked *pianissimo*. Maw also contrasts color between the two sections by muting both the

trumpet and horn, making it seem as though the calls are heard from a distance. In the introduction, the theme is accompanied by a sustained fifth between the D in the bassoon and the A in the trombone, solidifying D major, but in the coda the contrabassoon sustains an E_b throughout the first two phrases, making the listener wait in anticipation for the resolution to D in measure 162. The last three measures serve as a fitting conclusion to the work. The “fixed-point” centricity is confirmed with the octave D in measure 146, and the *fortissimo* D major outburst not only serves the same purpose but also makes one final gesture of frivolity that characterizes the piece (see figure 11).

Melody

Melodic ideas in *American Games* are varied and can be viewed as encompassing the whole of Maw’s diverse compositional background. Maw contrasts lyrical, conjunct lines, reminiscent of his vocal works, with angular, disjunct passages, which are more instrumental in style. He also combines expanding, meandering themes with motivic fragments, sweeping flourishes, and even a simple chorale tune in the hymn-like sixth movement. Much of the melodic material in the piece is tuneful, but other passages, such as the flute flourishes in movement two and the bassoon solo in movement seven, might be better described as improvisatory virtuosic displays, intended to showcase the technical capabilities of the instruments.

The construction of melody lines in *American Games* is influenced by Maw’s “fixed point” concept and his concern with memory and association in music. The formation of thematic material through the repetition and development of pitches, rhythmic patterns, and motives (*Fortspinnung*) is an important factor affecting the melodic concept for the piece. Theme 3, for example, is constructed from the repetition of a single motive which is developed over eight bars (see example 33).

<u>Section</u>	<u>Theme</u>	<u>Measure</u>	<u>Orchestration</u>	<u>Centricity</u>	
I	theme 7	mm. 1-3 mm. 3-5 mm. 5-7 mm. 8-10 mm. 10-12 mm. 13-14	bassoon	D	
II	theme 8	mm. 15-18 mm. 19-20 mm. 21-23	flute, piccolo	A	
	theme 8 (varied)	mm. 24-27 mm. 28-29 mm. 30-32	clarinet	B	
	extension	mm. 33-35			
III	theme 9	mm. 36-39 mm. 40-43	horn, trumpet	D	
	themes 7 and 9	mm. 44-47 mm. 48-52	upper ww, bsn		
IV	theme 8	mm. 53-54	horn	shifting	
	theme 8 (varied)	mm. 55-57 mm. 58-59	trumpet		
	theme 8 (varied)	m. 60 mm. 61-71	clarinet woodwinds		
V	theme 9 (varied)	mm. 72-75 mm. 76-79 mm. 79-80 mm. 81-84 mm. 85-88	trombone	E _b	
VI	theme 7 (varied)	mm. 89-91	flute, oboe	A	
		mm. 92-94 mm. 95-97	upper ww, bsn		
		mm. 98-100		E	
		mm. 101-103		B _b	
VII	themes 7 and 9	mm. 104-107 mm. 108-113	ww, brass	D	
		mm. 114-117	brass		
VIII	theme 8	m. 118-122 mm. 123-124	hn, fl, cl woodwind	G	
	extension	mm. 125-131	ww, trumpet	C	
	codetta	mm. 132-138	mixed instr.	shifting	
		mm. 139-144	clarinet	B _b	
IX	theme 7	mm. 145-147 mm. 147-149 mm. 149-152	bassoon	D	
		codetta	mm. 152-154		contrabassoon
		Coda	theme 1		mm. 155-158
mm. 158-161	horn				
mm. 161-164	trumpet				
extension	mm. 165-167			horn, ww	

Figure 11. Form of Movement VII of *American Games*



Example 33. Theme 3 Construction, *American Games*, Mov. I, mm. 38-41, oboe 1

After two varied statements of the theme, the head motive recurs in a quasi-developmental statement-and-response passage.



Example 34. Repetition of Motives, *American Games*, Mov. I, mm. 45-47

The horn and trombone thematic material in the outer sections of movement four is another example of Maw's expansion of a single melodic fragment. In this instance, a rhythmic motive (♩♩♩♩♩) is repeated and varied to generate a complete linear melodic statement.



Example 35. Repetition of Motives, *American Games*, Mov. IV, mm. 7-17

Maw also reflects the idea of the “fixed point” by repeating complete thematic ideas or by using fragments or characteristic intervals of previous themes to construct new melodic lines.

Repetitions of themes or motives are often varied using altered pitch and/or intervallic content, expansion of the line, different timbre, contrasting style and tempo, or new accompanying

material. Theme 1, because it is the only theme to recur outside the section that it is initially introduced, serves as the principal melodic “fixed point.” Particularly important is the theme’s head motive, which begins with a tritone, a unifying element in the piece. The first restatement of theme 1, though the notation is changed to accommodate $\frac{12}{8}$ meter, is similar rhythmically to the original but is presented with different timbre (flute and clarinet instead of trumpet and horn) and altered pitch content. The intervallic structure of the restatement is slightly altered, but the distinguishing tritone interval is still present.

Original Statement

Horn

First Restatement (Movement 1)

Flute

Example 36. Repetition of Themes, *American Games*, Mov. I, mm. 91-93

As previously discussed, the third and sixth movements also make use of theme 1 but not as a complete restatement. The alto saxophone solo (theme 4) is constructed from various permutations of the head motive of theme 1, another example of *Fortspinnung*. The first phrase begins with the same four pitches as the original, and both of the first two phrases begin with the same intervallic pattern before modifying and expanding the original to create a new theme. This section is also representative of Maw’s tendency to vary and disguise repetition with a new stylistic presentation of the same basic melodic idea. The bold, heroic nature of the introductory theme is replaced with a more lyrical, reflective mood. The theme is presented at a slower tempo

with meandering extensions and sustained chords in the accompaniment. As opposed to the introduction, where the theme builds anticipation and momentum towards the lively first movement, this presentation is serene with very little forward motion.

The image shows a musical score for two instruments: Alto Saxophone and Bassoon/Horn. The Alto Saxophone part is in the treble clef, 12/8 time signature, and contains two melodic phrases, each marked with the interval pattern '+6 +1-5'. The Bassoon and Horn part is in the bass clef, 12/8 time signature, and consists of sustained chords with long horizontal lines indicating that the notes are held across multiple measures.

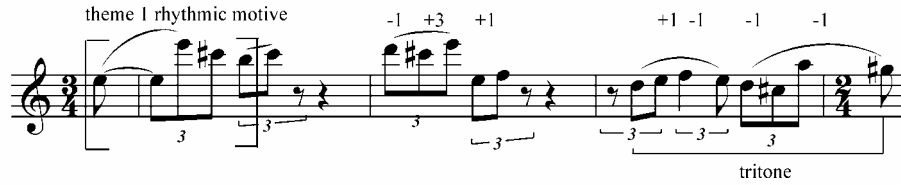
Example 37. Theme 1 Altered, *American Games*, Mov. III, mm. 1-5

The second section of movement three continues use of rhythmic motives of theme 1 but varies pitch content, contour, and interval patterns. The tempo increase and the addition of the ostinato give the theme more motion. At measure 25, the clarinet line represents an expansion and development of the second motive (♯ ♮ ♮ ♮) of theme 4. This motive was first introduced in theme 4 as an expansion and development of theme 1 and is reused in this passage as the sole basis of a new melodic idea, another example of the evolution of thematic material in the piece.

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff is in treble clef, 12/8 time signature, and contains a melodic line with various intervals and accidentals. The bottom staff is in bass clef, 12/8 time signature, and contains a rhythmic accompaniment with sustained notes and some accidentals.

Example 38. Theme 4 Altered, *American Games*, Mov. III, mm. 25-31, clarinet 1

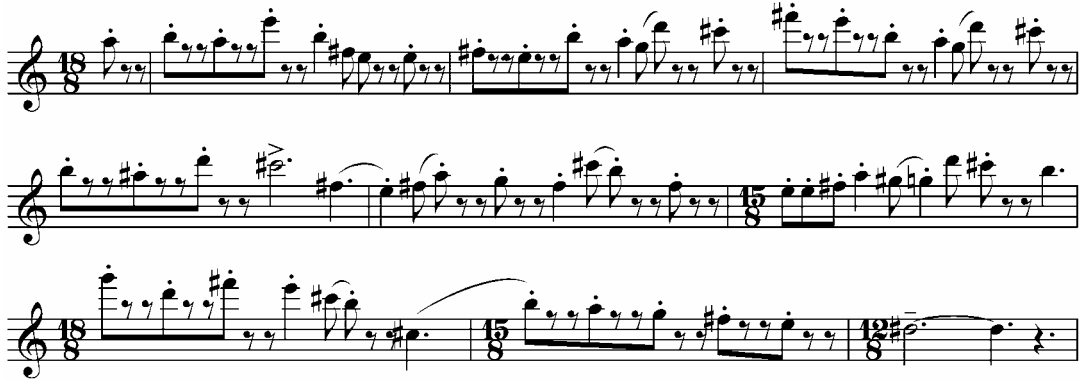
The middle section of movement six is based on rhythmic ideas from theme 1 and references defining intervals from the theme, such as the tritone, minor second, and minor third. Though the tritone interval is not present between adjoining notes, the interval is referenced by the starting and ending tones of certain gestures.



Example 39. Theme 1 Development, *American Games*, Mov. VI, mm. 34-37, flute 1

Whether they are primary melodic material, embellishment, or accompaniment, linear passages in *American Games* draw specific pitch material from a variety of different sources, including major and minor scales, synthetic scales, and the chromatic scale. Most melodic lines, with repetition and emphasis of certain pitch classes, suggest reliance on a particular key but also incorporate color tones and freely shift tonal centrality as the line expands and develops. For instance, the clarinet theme at measure 25 (see ex. 38) in movement three contains only tones from B_♭ major in the first three bars, but the E_♭, F_♯, B_♭, and C_♯ in measure 28 momentarily avert the tonal focus. In other passages, the tones being used reflect a specific key but are assembled in such a way that dominant to tonic relationships and leading tones are disguised, thus clouding the centrality. This is the case with the initial presentation of theme 8 in the seventh movement (mm. 15-23). Here, with the exception of G_♯ in the sixth bar and the final note D_♯, the pitch content of the passage is faithful to D major, but dominant to tonic relationships and scalar passages are disconnected. Considering the accompanying pedal (pitch-class A) and the repetition of pitch-class A in the theme, a case could be made for A centrality with this passage, as indicated previously in the form section of this document. With A centrality, a theme unitizing D major pitch content might better be described as Mixolydian (see example 40).

At times, often in more technically demanding passages, Maw outlines two or more different pitch collections within a short one or two-measure passage. Such is the case with the clarinet passage in measures 72 and 73 of movement four. The ascending tones outline two



Example 40. Pitch Organization, *American Games*, Mov. VII, mm. 15-23, flute 1

pentatonic scales in different modes, while the descending tones outline a B \flat major scale and an A \flat major scale (see ex. 41). Maw also combines usage of the major and parallel minor scales in



Example 41. Scale materials, *American Games*, Mov. IV, mm. 72-73, clarinet 1

certain passages. In measures 17 through 28 in movement five, the unison thematic statement shared by the oboe and clarinet is clearly centered on G, based on the underlying g minor chords in the ostinato, but the inclusion of B \natural and B \flat suggests modal mixture.



Example 42. Modal Mixture, *American Games*, Mov. V, mm. 17-28



Example 44. Melodic Contour, *American Games*, Mov. I, mm. 31-38, trombone

melodic lines are not only heard, but also have the sonic space to be expressive with broad dynamic contrasts. In numerous instances throughout the piece, melodic lines are set in sparse homophonic texture, melody with light accompaniment, as demonstrated with the oboe presentation of theme 3 in movement one (m. 38). Even with a *forte* dynamic level, the oboe passage is accompanied only by staccato, octave eighth notes from the bassoon. This is also evident in the seventh movement where, in measure 15, the piccolo and flute, with their presentation of theme 8, are accompanied only by staccato interjections from the bassoon and percussion and repeating octave A's from the trumpets. In addition to sparse textures, Maw assures melodic prominence by adding, in unison or an octave apart, additional melodic instruments from the same choir. Such is the case in the first movement (mm. 73-77), where the flutes, piccolo, oboe, and clarinets combine to present a restatement of theme 2. Maw also creates textures where melody lines are set against accompaniment with contrasting style, such as angular, detached themes against flowing accompaniment. In instances where the texture is denser, this approach creates a fabric where the melody is still easily distinguished, even if presented with fewer voices in a lower tessitura. This is the case in movement four (mm. 8-26), where the pointed eighth-note fragments from the horn and trombone are easily discernable against the dense, slurred sixteenth-note fabric provided by the woodwinds. Also contributing to the success of this passage are the disparate timbres that represent the two parts of the texture, gritty low brass against gracious, flowing upper woodwinds.

Although sparse homophonic textures are the prevalent sonority, there are instances where a more intricate fabric exists. At times, Maw incorporates countermelody or quasi-canonic imitative material to embellish themes. Often these countermelodies are not completely independent, but maintain a similar rhythmic flow as the primary melodic line; thus, homophonic texture is not completely abandoned for polyphony. Instead, Maw creates a hybrid texture that reflects two quasi-independent lines over the same ostinato. In movement one (mm. 30-36) the trumpet and low brass present separate developments of theme 2 that sound like independent voices competing for prominence, but are linked by a consistent rhythmic flow, aided by the ostinato, and similar contour. Maw uses a similar texture in movement three (mm. 32-41) where a restatement of the A section theme, presented by the horns, is combined with a continuation of the clarinet melody from the B section. Both are executed over an ostinato that is present throughout all three sections.

In both of the previous examples, the two separate lines in the texture are based on motives from the same theme, but there are other instances in the piece where Maw juxtaposes two separate themes to create a true polyphonic texture. In measures 44 through 52 of movement seven, the vertical oriented theme 9, with its extended melodic harmony, is layered with a restatement of the linear, fluid bassoon solo (theme 7). A more complex example of layering, and perhaps the most involved texture of the work, is the fabric created in measures 104 through 112 of movement seven with the juxtaposition of, again, themes 7 and 9. In this case, theme 7 is presented by all of the upper woodwinds in imitation, with the clarinet answering the flute and oboe, while theme 9 is returned to its original timbre, trumpet and horn. Both themes are layered over an A pedal supplied by the bassoon, contrabassoon, euphonium, and tuba.

Although the piece lacks certain typical color instruments of the wind band, such as bass clarinet, English horn, and wood mallet instruments, Maw's orchestration is successful in presenting sufficient contrasts of timbre and interesting color combinations. Each of the included wind instruments is showcased at some point in the work with an important solo or soli passage. Maw states, "I am very interested in the individual timbres of instruments and groups of instruments, sometimes in chamber conceptions and sometimes as a full-on tutti, but always within the concept of the orchestral wind band."¹¹⁶ Maw's aforementioned textural approach often divides woodwind and brass choirs, with one presenting primary melodic material and the other offering accompanying gestures or ostinati. The most vivid example of this is the outer sections of movement four, where an obvious distinction is made between the woodwind accompanying sixteenth notes and the melodic staccato eighth notes in the brass. At other times the two choirs are isolated, executing melody and accompaniment from within, and trading individual presentations, as is the case throughout movement five. Although the contrabassoon and bassoon sometimes double the tuba, there are otherwise no passages where soprano, alto, or tenor voices of the woodwind or brass sections are doubled by commensurate voices in the other choir; Maw maintains a clear distinction between brass and woodwind activity.

Although the piece begins with a vigorous roll from the tenor and snare drums, percussion has a limited role and mostly serves as color embellishment and rhythmic support. While snare drum, bass drum, timpani, cymbals, and glockenspiel are the prevalent percussion timbres, Maw's incorporation of tambourine, whip, rattle, and triangle in the playful fourth movement and his use of tenor drum and claves to enhance the ostinato in the fifth movement make the percussion an important contributor to color and character in those sections.

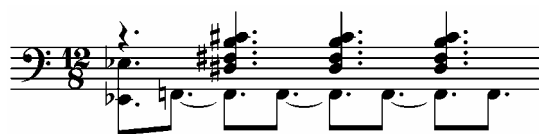
¹¹⁶ Koch, 125.

Harmony

Harmonic materials and techniques in *American Games* are consistent with Maw's late instrumental compositional style. Vertical structures include functional and nonfunctional tertian and extended tertian chords, polychords, and clusters. These structures, though sometimes tinged with chromaticism, have a tonal basis ranging from ambiguous to traditionally functional, depending on the character of the movement. The third and fifth movements and the outer sections of the sixth movement are the most traditional with regard to vertical chord structure, using major and minor chords, usually in root position, with few extensions. The only exception is a recurring chord in the third movement (mm. 4, 11, and 15) with E as both the bass and soprano note flanking A, G, and D. Reorganized, the chord forms a quintal structure, but Maw's placement of tones yields a dominant sonority. Thus, it is more likely that the chord will be perceived, despite the absence of the third, as an A dominant seventh in second inversion.



Example 45. Recurring Dominant Chord, *American Games*, Mov. III, m. 4, bassoon, horn
The movement one sections that are driven by an ostinato pattern are also confined to major and minor chords, usually in root position. The B section of the movement, though, especially with statement-and-response and transitional passages, utilizes more complex structures. In measure 65, Maw includes a B major nine chord, omitting the seventh, in first inversion, with a tritone added as the bass note (see example 46). In measures 67 and 68, cluster chords are created by the gradual stacking of new tones around D natural.



Example 46. Movement I Chord Structure, *American Games*, m. 65, low brass

The most complex and least accessible harmonic structures are presented in the second, fourth, and seventh movements. In the second movement, the statement-and-response passages between the woodwinds and low brass include vertical structures that include seven separate tones, in the case of the woodwinds, and five separate tones from the brass. Depending on the arrangement of tones, various chord structures can be perceived differently by the listener. In certain woodwind structures, register separation of pitch groupings and contrast of color between the low reeds and flutes yields a polychordal effect. With other structures, the tones are densely constructed and their assembly more random; thus, they are perceived as extended tertian chords. Much of movement four is affected more by linear ideas and musical goals than by the construction of vertical sonorities. One exception is the vertical structure in measure 72, which serves as the culmination of the rapid motivic exchanges by the brass in the previous four measures. The structure includes eight different pitch-classes and, considering the assembly of tones and the resolution of tension to a unison C in measure 74, is likely to be perceived as an extended B \flat minor chord with both a major and minor seven included.



Example 47. Movement IV Chord Structure, *American Games*, m. 72-73, brass

The linear nature of movement seven also yields vertical structures that do not conform neatly to traditional labels. With each statement of theme 9, the melodic harmony creates vertical sonorities that resemble polychordal structures but, because of density and the lack of clear distinction between chordal units, they are more likely perceived as extended tertian chords with omitted tones. For example, the dotted half-note in measure 37 features a B half-diminished

seven chord in the horn and a C major chord in the trumpet, but the tones appear in the same octave and, without register displacement, the chord might better be regarded as an extended A minor sonority.

Example 48. Ambiguous Chord Structure, *American Games*, Mov. VII, m. 37

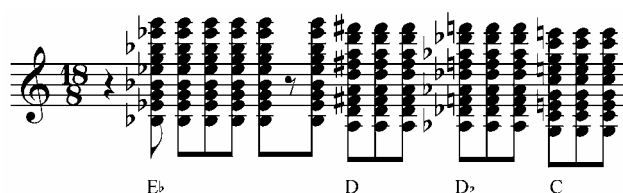
With the trombone variation of theme 9 (mm. 72-88), Maw constructs melodic harmony with simple major or minor chords in first inversion, but includes a more complex accompanying harmonic structure with the cascading woodwind figures. The accompaniment begins with a sustained E \flat and F from the flutes; additional tones of the E \flat major scale are then added and sustained using a pyramid effect and building a pandiatonic structure. This is evident in measure 83 where each tone of the E \flat major scale is stacked in succession starting with the dominant as the lowest tone in the third clarinet.

Example 49. Pandiatonic Chord, *American Games*, Mov. VII, mm. 82-83

Harmonic progression in *American Games* varies according to the nature of the movement. The lyrical movements, three and six, utilize a more conventional and predictable approach. Though the chordal structures of movement three do not conform to a single key with

functional progressions and traditional cadences, as found in the chorale sections of the sixth movement, there is consistency in the root movement of chords, which, for the most part, is limited to movement to notes a second, a major or minor third, or a fifth above or below. Maw structures the harmonic motion in the third movement so that the listener always perceives either movement away or towards the tonic key. In place of conventional progression, Maw sets up resolutions with strong “aural analogies”¹¹⁷ to frequently used pitch and chord structures.

In the movements of the piece that are faster and feature a stronger rhythmic basis, harmonic motion is dictated by the linear movement of the outer voices. Maw’s use of parallelism and mirror harmony (contrary motion) is an important factor affecting the shifting harmonic motion that characterizes the more energetic portions of the work. The ostinato patterns of both the first and fifth movements consist of major or minor triads in root position that progress through parallelism, creating sequences of tertian chords.



Example 50. Parallelism, *American Games*, Mov. I, m. 16

In the woodwind gestures of the second movement, the outer voices each move fluidly towards independent tonal objectives, with their contour controlling harmonic motion. When the outer voices share a similar contour, a parallel or quasi-parallel motion between all of the voices is usually established. When the outer voices reveal contrary motion, mirror harmony is the result. In measures 14 and 15, for example, the clarinets and bassoons execute a downward arching contour, consistent with the bass, while the flutes have an upward arching contour that parallels the melody line in the first flute, forming an overall, non-exact, mirror structure.

¹¹⁷ Corron, 103.

Example 51. Contrary Motion, *American Games*, Mov. II, mm. 14-15

Mirror writing and parallel motion are incorporated in the fourth movement as the primary means of harmonic motion within the sixteenth-note woodwind accompaniment. Maw pairs the instruments in the choir such that each four-note grouping is shared by another instrument, but with the pitches reordered to create an overlapping contour. These small one-beat mirror figures are then repeated to form the sixteenth-note fabric. On beat two of measure 8, flute one repeats a four note pattern (D-A-G-A) while the second flute has G-A-D-A. Here, A is used as a hinge for the mirror structure. This same technique is used with oboe two mirroring oboe three and clarinets one and two mirroring clarinet three. With oboe one and the E_b clarinet, Maw creates a larger extended mirror structure that is executed over four beats instead of one. The downward arching contour of oboe one is mirrored by the upward arching contour of the E_b clarinet, again around A.

Example 52. Mirror Writing, *American Games*, Mov. IV, m. 8

In movement seven, Maw uses mirror harmony and parallelism to construct flowing accompanying material for the staccato theme 8. In measure 24, flute two repeats an ascending, stepwise three-note grouping that mirrors a similar repeating descending figure presented by

rhythmic motive. The lyrical movements, two and six, are the only two sections lacking ostinato; movement five is the only section to maintain a repeating pattern throughout. The ostinato in the first movement creates the perception of a continuous flow of triplets. Even when the ostinato ceases at measure 38, it gives way to theme 3, which is constructed from the repetition of a triplet-based rhythmic motive.



Example 55. Movement I Ostinato, *American Games*, mm. 19-20, upper woodwinds

The third movement ostinato, beginning in measure 13, generates more motion and movement, per Maw's instruction on the score, following the sustained, stagnant block-chord accompaniment of the preceding alto saxophone solo.



Example 56. Movement III Ostinato, *American Games*, mm. 13-14, clarinet

The flurry of woodwind sixteenth notes in the fourth movement also function as an ostinato. Though they are more virtuosic and a more prominent component of the texture than other rhythmic patterns in the piece, the sixteenth notes perform much the same function as other ostinatos, establishing the dominant metrical scheme for the movement and maintaining an unyielding stream of rhythmic energy.



Example 57. Movement IV Ostinato, *American Games*, mm. 8-9, flute 1

The fifth movement ostinato, like the fourth, is essential to the overall character. Although it is subordinate to the various presentations of theme 5, it is prominent in the texture. It also supplies harmonic support to the melody and is an omnipresent chain solidifying the tenuous $\frac{5}{16} + \frac{2}{8}$ meter. With only two minor metric alterations tossed in by Maw, it is undoubtedly the most consistent pattern, but is presented in the most unstable circumstance.



Example 58. Movement V Ostinato, *American Games*, mm. 1-2, trumpet

Movement seven, despite its fast tempo and playful character, remains free of repeated rhythmic accompaniment until measure 118, where the main rhythmic motive of the preceding brass line evolves into a rhythmic ostinato that accompanies a restatement of theme 8. The pattern continues through various meter changes, with subtle alterations, until measure 135.



Example 59. Movement VII Ostinato, *American Games*, mm. 118-119, horn

Contrast between duple and triple, with both meter and specific rhythmic structures, is another important factor unifying the composition. As mentioned previously, the introduction, seven movements, and the coda alternate between triple and duple meters, but there are also instances where duple or triple rhythmic gestures appear in segments with opposing meters. This duple/triple rhythmic duality is established with the opening theme, which is presented in duple meter but is based on the repetition of quarter-note triplets. Later in the first movement, the development of theme 3 (mm. 45-48), while remaining in compound meter, features an alternation between duple and triple rhythmic structures. The duple, high to low alternation of

dotted quarter notes (horn and trombone one and two) and syncopated dotted eighth notes (trombone three and tuba) in measures 45 and 47 surrounds a restatement of the head motive of the triple-based theme 3.

The image shows a musical score for three measures (45, 46, and 47) in 12/8 time. The Oboe part is in the upper staff, starting with a whole rest in measure 45, followed by a melodic line in measures 46 and 47. The Horn, Trombone, and Tuba parts are in the lower staff, playing a rhythmic accompaniment of dotted quarter notes in measure 45, and a mix of dotted quarter and eighth notes in measures 46 and 47.

Example 60. Alternation of Duple and Triple, *American Games*, Mov. I, mm. 45-47

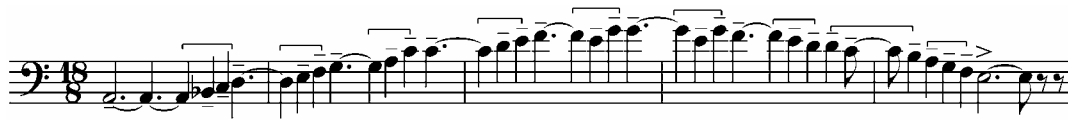
To extend the complexity of the duple/triple duality, Maw also incorporates cross-rhythms and hemiolas. In measures 17 through 22 of movement three, cross-rhythms are formed between the flute restatement of theme 3 and the oboe counter line. While the triple feel of the flute line conforms to the $\frac{12}{8}$ meter, the oboe line offers a duple feel and actually sounds as if it is in $\frac{4}{4}$ meter.

The image shows a musical score for three measures (16, 17, and 18) in 12/8 time. The Flute part is in the upper staff, playing a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The Oboe part is in the lower staff, playing a counter-melody with dotted quarter notes and eighth notes, creating a duple feel against the triple meter.

Example 61. Cross-rhythms, *American Games*, Mov. III, mm. 16-18

Later in movement three (mm. 38-41), the oboe and flute counter line to the trumpet presentation of theme 3 incorporates duple and triple motives in the same measure, with the duple figure functioning as a cross-rhythm to the triple ostinato and theme. In movement seven (mm. 93-97), an extended five-measure hemiola, executed by the tubas, trombones, and horns, is one of the most outstanding examples of the duple/triple duality in the work. The figure, which consists of three quarter notes executed over two beats in $\frac{18}{8}$, begins in the tuba and ascends through the

trombones to the horns. The line is countered by a heavy dose of eighth-note triplets from the clarinet restatement of theme 7.



Example 62. Hemiola, *American Games*, Mov. VII, mm. 93-97, tuba, trombone, horn

A common factor with each of the aforementioned examples of duple/triple duality is that the musical byproduct is the avoidance of metric regularity, or distortion of a consistent strong-to-weak beat pattern imposed by barlines. Though the piece is far from devoid of a consistent and natural rhythmic flow, Maw employs various strategies throughout the work to add contrast and to interrupt the chain of ostinatos and repetitive rhythmic structures. The first and seventh movements include a number of meter changes, the most obvious strategy to avoiding metric regularity. Because the eighth-note pulse remains constant throughout both of these movements, Maw's multimeter doesn't result in drastic rhythmic ebb, but simply amounts to an extension or reduction of the amount of metrical space between each strong downbeat. Changing meter is most disruptive to the strong-to-weak beat pattern in measures 64 through 66 in the first movement, where Maw incorporates two measures of "complex meter" ($\frac{6}{8} + \frac{2}{8}$) separated by a measure in $\frac{12}{8}$ and preceded and followed by measures in $\frac{15}{8}$ and $\frac{18}{8}$ respectively. The grouping of eighth notes (3+3+2) in the complex meter creates the aura of rushing or accelerating to the *sforzando* attacks that follow on the downbeat of the next bar. Contributing to the destruction of rhythmic regularity, the repetition of tied dotted eighth notes in the $\frac{12}{8}$ bar yields a duple measure to separate the two $\frac{6}{8} + \frac{2}{8}$ bars (see example 63). Also for the purpose of blurring rhythmic regularity, Maw displaces accents from strong to weak beats. The most obvious example of this

Example 63. Multimeter, *American Games*, Mov. I, mm. 64-66

technique is the unison “B” section of movement four. Set in $\frac{3}{4}$, accents occur on all three beats and are often preceded by rests and enhanced by extreme dynamic contrasts, which further emphasizes the weak beat accent. Maw also includes displaced accents in the first six measures of movement four, where successive statements of the fanfare motive are elided, so with each new entrance, the accented first note occurs on a different beat in the measure. Though the meter remains in $\frac{4}{4}$, the displaced accents weaken the barlines and create an altered perceived metrical structure, which is illustrated in example 64.

Example 64. Perceived Metrical Structure, *American Games*, Mov. IV, mm. 1-6

Also aiding in the avoidance of rhythmic regularity is Maw’s use of varied articulation to add contrast to established rhythmic patterns or place emphasis on weak beats in the measure. Ties, especially across the barline, are used affectively to refocus the listener’s attention away from established metrical patterns. In measures 104 through 110 in movement seven, the tied dotted quarter notes to dotted half notes across the barline place emphasis on beats three and five of the $\frac{15}{8}$ bars and create strife with the obedient theme 9. In measures 120 through 121 of the same

movement, Maw varies the ostinato pattern with ties, both within the measure and across the barline. This breaks the monotony of repeated triplets and blurs barline division.



Example 65. Varied Articulation, *American Games*, Mov.VII, mm. 119-122, horn 1

CHAPTER 4

A PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS OF *AMERICAN GAMES*

American Games, partly because of the diverse nature of the individual movement-sections, presents a variety of challenges to even accomplished collegiate wind bands and professional ensembles. With regard to interpretation, a successful performance hinges upon management of the large continuous form. The conductor must find an appropriate balance between maintaining logical musical flow and showcasing the contrasting character of each movement, section, and subsection. This balance is affected by decisions concerning tempo and tempo changes, dynamics, articulation style, and color. For this reason, the work is perhaps best rehearsed in sections, making references and comparing similar ideas and materials between the movements. The conductor may benefit from the use of imagery to portray the appropriate character of various sections. The sections may evoke different images and emotions, depending on the background of the conductor, but one must decide what portrayal will be most effective in garnering an appropriate musical response, consistent with Maw's artistic purpose.

Even with a well-founded, thoughtful interpretation and a rehearsal strategy for presenting it to the ensemble, *American Games* presents several technical issues that must be considered before beginning the rehearsal process. Disjunct and/or chromatic passages of short note values combined with unyielding tempos in faster movements often result in complicated fingerings for the woodwinds and difficult intervallic leaps for the brass. Frequent meter changes and use of unusual asymmetrical time signatures, coupled with strategies to blur the strong-to-weak beat pattern, result in complex rhythmic structures for performers. Ties across barlines, syncopations, hemiolas, and unusual groupings in compound meters are further complicated by fast tempos and varied articulation. The tonal nature of the work and shifting

centricity can present intonation issues for any ensemble, especially considering the preponderance of pedal points and solo passages that include, as a centric pitch, tendency tones on the featured instrument. Maw's varied use of the tone colors of the wind band, though it contributes to the high artistic merit of the work, challenges the listening skills of the ensemble. Performers must have a heightened awareness of their role in the overall texture, and conductors, verbally or nonverbally, must clarify foreground and background material.

The following are references and/or suggestions to particular passages in the score that should be considered before the rehearsal process begins, all of which resulted from the author's preparation of *American Games* with a collegiate wind ensemble.

Introduction

The most important musical event in the introduction is the presentation of the primary theme. Maw's tempo designation is $\text{♩} = 60$, but a more stately presentation results from a slightly slower pulse, $\text{♩} = 56$. Though the theme is not technically demanding, it is important that, between the initial *forte* statement and the muted *piano* answer, the trumpets and horns execute sufficient contrast so that a true echo effect is achieved. Also critical to this effect is that the performers match, between the two statements, both the length of tenuto quarter notes and the style of the half-note attacks. For the best result, quick changes of dynamic should be overstated, especially the trumpet crescendo in measure 4 and the *sforzando* that follows the *piano* to *forte* crescendo by the horn in measure 11. Proper tempo control is essential for a smooth transition into measure 16. An effective approach is to stretch the second beat of measure 14 and the first beat of 15, and then subdivide the second beat of measure 15 using a three pattern.

Movement I

The first movement requires the conductor to make a variety of interpretive and gestural decisions, as it presents numerous technical and ensemble challenges to the performers. The first major decision pertains to tempo. The character of the movement requires at least a tempo of $\downarrow = 144$, but the conductor must decide an appropriate pulse from Maw's notated range ($\downarrow =$ c.144/152). The staccato articulation of the rapid ostinato must be considered. The faster tempo may benefit the brass because it is a more comfortable pace for multiple tonguing, and the slower tempo forces a difficult decision between multiple and single tonguing. The slower tempo, though, eases the demands on the reeds and is more fitting of the character of the movement (playful exuberance); thus, it may be the prudent choice.

Conductors must also decide how to group beats in compound meters to best relay important rhythmic stresses to the listener. It is most important that the conductor considers Maw's placement of accents and long tones. For example, in measure 39 ($\frac{15}{8}$), more weight should be given to the dotted quarter note on the fourth beat than the ascending eighth-note grouping on beat three; thus, the bar should be conducted with a 3+2 pattern rather than 2+3. The majority of the $\frac{18}{8}$ measures should be conducted using a six-beat pattern, showing a grouping of 3+3 beats. The first two measures of theme 2, first presented in measures 19 and 20, can be conducted using a subdivided three pattern in order to emphasize the accented dotted quarter notes in the theme. Measure 29 may be better executed with a two pattern followed by a four pattern so that the four ascending dotted quarter notes are grouped together.

Regardless of the tempo selected, the repeated eighth notes, throughout the movement, must be detached and articulated lightly. Performers should consider the linear flow of the pattern and strive for an unforced, continuous rhythmic stream, as if the line is floating. As with

the introduction, the sudden and drastic dynamic inflections should be overstated to achieve the desired effect, but this execution must not impede the continuity of the ostinato.

Other than the rapid articulation of the ostinato, the horn presentation of theme 2 represents the first technical or ensemble challenge of the movement. Especially for less experienced players, it is important to note the intervallic difference between the initial statement (m. 19), which includes a repeated major sixth, and the second statement (m. 25), which includes a repeated perfect fifth.

With the shifting of color between brass and woodwind and the alternation of duple and triple rhythmic figures, the developmental section, beginning at measure 45, has great potential for character contrast. The conductor can aid ensemble precision and stylistic execution. Heavy, pointed gestures for measures 45 and 47 are needed to represent the marcato accents and the duple character. This approach should be contrasted by a lighter stroke for the oboe restatement of the theme 3 fragment.

In measure 54, the trumpets are challenged with large skips, which include a major seventh and a major sixth. The large intervals are accented, allowing performers to approach them with a fast air stream, but errors are also more noticeable to the audience. After accuracy is achieved, the next challenge is to strive for equal weight on each of the notes, regardless of the register.

The upper woodwinds, especially the E \flat clarinet, face a similar issue in measure 58. Skips of a major seventh and minor sixth are difficult to maneuver at the fast tempo, especially considering that the passage is in unison with the flutes. In this particular instance, it is effective to give emphasis to the upper tones over the lower.

Measures 64 and 66, because of the unusual $\frac{6}{8} + \frac{2}{8}$ meter, short note values, and fast tempo, constitute perhaps the greatest rhythmic challenge of the movement. Performers must focus on the eighth-note subdivision, and the conductor must provide a clear pattern with a slight rebound on the first 2 beats and a jab on the truncated third beat.

Measures 69 through 72 present a balance issue for the ensemble and conductor. The new and interesting line is presented by the low reeds, trombone, and tuba, which must compete with a densely scored presentation of the ostinato by the upper woodwinds, trumpets, and horns. The accompanying voices must exaggerate softer dynamic levels and should reduce the upper dynamic level to *forte* so that the low melodic voices can be heard.

In measures 83-89, it is important that the conductor gives clear cues for each entrance of the ascending eighth-note/quarter-note gesture, especially since the lines are rhythmically displaced. Players, especially tuba and trombone who first present the line within dense scoring, should treat the passage as a solo and assure its prominence within the texture.

Movement II

Movement two presents obvious challenges for the flute and alto flute. The chromatic nature of the thirty-second-note flourishes yields unidiomatic fingering, and the extended range of the alto flute part (to C-6) adds to the complexity. The unison setting and the challenge of precise execution of rhythmic sweeps compound technical issues for both instruments. A slower tempo may be beneficial in rehearsal, but the performance tempo should remain consistent with Maw's notation ($\downarrow = c. 58$), or the natural flow of the music and elegant character is compromised. Though the flourishes are fluid, a clearly defined beat pattern from the conductor aids precision. Of particular importance is a clear, pointed gesture on beat four of measure 13,

which ensures that the flutes arrive precisely in time to execute the staccato eighth notes with the clarinet and bassoon.

Proper contrast between the flute flourishes, woodwind extension, and brass response is an essential component in producing an expressive performance of movement two. Careful attention must be given to Maw's dynamic markings and inflections. In order to achieve sufficient contrast between the *mezzo forte* flute passage and the woodwind extensions, it may be necessary to begin the woodwind extension at *pianissimo* instead of *piano*, which also leaves room to shape the statement according to the contour of the line without violating the desired dynamic. Another element of contrast in the movement is Maw's approach to harmony. Unison flourishes lead to complex harmonic structures, which may require isolation of certain tones and/or repetition for performers to adjust to the sonority. If chord structures are interpreted as melodic harmony, performers should heighten their awareness of the melodic voice, in this case the highest voice, and remain subordinate.

Movement III

The tonal, lyrical nature of movement three yields different challenges to the conductor and players from the first two movements. In the first section, intonation between the solo alto saxophone and the sustained harmonic accompaniment is a factor. The nature of the accompaniment (drone-like) accentuates any intonation problem, which can be a great hindrance to the expressivity of the soloist. Compounding the problem, the exposed solo is the first passage played by the alto saxophone in the piece, so there is no previous opportunity for the saxophonist to make adjustments or adapt to the tendencies of the ensemble. The bassoons and horns must be aware that, for the solo alto saxophone, the tonic (D-2) is typically a flat note.

They must compromise, especially considering that D-2 tends to be sharp on the bassoon and D-4 is extremely sharp on the horn.

Though the primary concern from measure 13 to the end of the movement is musical direction and shaping of melodic lines, the section is not without minor technical issues to consider. The slight *accelerando* into measure 13 must be handled with care so that the natural flow and gentle nature of the music is not interrupted. In addition to assuming the key role in execution of the *accelerando*, the oboe must also manage exposed, *piano* octave skips after resting for over forty measures. Performers must maintain constant awareness of their role within the texture so that melody lines are always prominent within the indicated dynamic structure. With doublings in the clarinet choir at measure 13, it is difficult to achieve a true *pianissimo* dynamic and leave ample sonic space for the solo oboe. It is easier to adhere to Maw's notation if only one player per part is used.

The hemiola figure between flute one and oboe one (mm. 17-22) is perhaps the only challenging rhythmic element in the movement. The players must subdivide carefully and the conductor should avoid becoming too lyrical during this section and remain committed to providing a clear ictus.

Like the transition into the B section of the movement, the one measure transition (*accelerando*) into movement four must also be handled carefully to achieve the desired effect and prepare the proper tempo for the next section. Because it is cumbersome to attempt a drastic acceleration through the quarter-note triplet figures in the flute and oboe, most of the increase in tempo should occur on beats three and four of the measure. A sharp gesture of syncopation on beat three, for the trumpet, with no rebound, followed by a small, precise gesture on beat four should be sufficient in alerting the ensemble of the sudden change.

Movement IV

The jovial, spirited character of movement four is defined by the angular, detached brass theme, colorful interjections from the percussion, and a flurry of rapid sixteenth-note passages from the woodwind choir. The conductor must balance each of these elements. Brass players, because mutes are required to achieve the appropriate color, must be instructed to play a full *fortissimo* and articulate as detached as possible in order to project over the *fortissimo* woodwind fabric. The percussion attacks should be abrasive and startling, creating a chopping effect. Thus, the type of stick being used on the tenor drum, snare drum, and bass drum is worth investigation and experimentation.

Because of the nature of the woodwind sixteenth-note passages, the outer sections of movement four represent the most technically demanding segment of the work. The repetitive sixteenth-note passages, which yield unidiomatic fingering combinations, must be executed at least at $\text{♩} = 152$. With a slower tempo, the movement lacks the energy and spirit desired by Maw. Though measures 8 through 10 require difficult fingering combinations for the flutes, measures 17 and 18 represent the first instance where challenging technique extends to more than one instrument. Measure 17 challenges clarinetists with awkward throat tone fingerings and large intervals that are difficult to repeat continuously. The repetition of G-A-C-D, beginning on the third beat of measure 18, is difficult for the oboes because it requires them to slur down from a half-hole fingering. This passage can be simplified by lightly tonguing the first note of each sixteenth-note grouping. The oboe repetition of A-E-B-F# in measure 24 is also challenging at a fast tempo because it requires an octave key switch between each note. Perhaps the most difficult of these technical passages, though, is the clarinet pattern in measure 68, which involves

awkward left hand and index finger movement in the throat tone register and rapid movement across the break.

The middle section of the movement cannot be overlooked when considering technical and ensemble challenges. The conductor must manage the transition from measure 27 to 28 such that an immediate change in character is perceived, but also so that there is a natural flow from one section to the next. Choice of tempo at measure 28 is essential to an effective performance. If Maw's suggested $\text{♩} = 152$ is used for the first section, $\text{♩} = 144$ offers sufficient contrast without violating the natural flow of the music and is an appropriate pace for the execution of the wide slurred intervals. The monophonic transparent texture and sudden stark contrasts of dynamics are of greater concern than particular unidiomatic requirements for the instruments. Grouping the various interjections into phrases and devising a clear gestural plan for communicating it to the ensemble lends cohesion to the section. The resulting character should be that of a musical dialogue between various colors of the wind band.

Movement V

A successful performance of the rhythmic fifth movement is contingent upon precise subdivision and maintenance of the unusual $\frac{5}{16} + \frac{2}{8}$ meter. Because the truncated asymmetrical meter is unnatural to performers, there is a tendency to unintentionally extend the first beat to form a $\frac{6}{16}$ grouping rather than a $\frac{5}{16}$ grouping, creating a $\frac{5}{8}$ feel for the measure. To avoid this tendency, performers must constantly internalize the sixteenth-note subdivision. Conductors can aid in the process by maintaining a small, consistent beat pattern with a sharp ictus and minimal rebound. Rhythmic accuracy from the tenor drum is essential to a successful presentation.

In addition to the rhythmic demands, the fifth movement also presents technical challenges, especially for instruments with melodic material. At the indicated tempo, the

ascending sixteenth-note passages in the theme require advanced tonguing skills to achieve a true staccato. Execution of fingerings and slide positions and coordination of articulation with fingerings and slide positions also become a factor when the movement is performed at the correct tempo. Particularly challenging is the trombone passage beginning in measure 33, where sequential statements of the ascending sixteenth-note figure are set in octaves between the first and second parts and the third part. The oboe has a similar passage in measures 52 through 59 where successive ascending and descending presentations of the motive demand precise control of the articulation and flexible fingering.

Movement VI

The chorale of movement six offers very little in the way of complex interpretive issues for the conductor or technical demands on the ensemble. The scoring is such that balance of melody and accompaniment is not an issue, and the choice of an idiomatic key for winds (F major) results in few intonation problems. The conductor, again, must decide an appropriate tempo to achieve the desired character. Maw's designation ($\text{♩} = c.100$), though moderate in speed, is brisk for the setting and doesn't necessarily portray calmness and simplicity. The simple beauty of Maw's harmony and the subtle dissonances of the suspensions may be compromised by a tempo that is too fast. A tempo closer to $\text{♩} = 88$ may be more fitting of the character of the movement.

The middle section of movement six is much like the middle section of movement four in that an instant change in character must be perceived without a complete break in the continuity of ideas and musical thought. Though melodic material and harmonic structure are very different, the middle section should be perceived as a natural outgrowth of the first. Maw's idea of a communal experience becoming individual interior thoughts (discussed in Chapter 3) is very

important for the ensemble to grasp. The conductor must decide an appropriate tempo for the middle section that reflects Maw's instruction, "a little slower." If the suggested tempo ($\text{♩} = 88$) is used for the first section, $\text{♩} = 66$ might be the lowest marking one should attempt for the middle section. Though some would argue that twelve beats per minute constitutes moderately slower or possible even much slower, the abstract and mysterious nature of the section benefits from the slower pulse. It allows more expressive opportunity for the solo flute and offers more time for the quarter-note cluster interruptions to connect with the listener. Also, a tempo in the sixties is similar to the introduction of the piece and, thus, enhances the relationship of the movement six "B" section melody to the opening theme.

Movement VII

The seventh movement, in some ways, mirrors the first, and it includes many of the same considerations and challenges. Since the indicated tempo range is the same and the movements reflect similar character, conductors may wish to strive for the same pulse between the two movements. A tempo of $\text{♩} = 144$ best reflects the playful character of the seventh movement and eases some of the technical demands.

Conductors can also take a similar approach to executing compound meters. All of the $\frac{18}{8}$ bars can be conducted with a six-beat pattern (3+3). With the $\frac{15}{8}$ bars, though, decisions must be made regarding the grouping of beats. As with the first movement, the primary concern is Maw's placement of accents and long tones within the bar. In the seventh movement, though, some of the thematic and accompanying material is more arsic in nature, so greater consideration must be given to motion between the beats and how each measure leads to the next. For example, theme 9, because of the function of the dotted half note as a pick-up into the eighth notes in the next measure, should be conducted with a 3+2 grouping. This approach also

provides a clear ictus for the ascending and descending eighth notes that aid in driving the dotted half note towards the downbeat.



Example 66. Theme 9 Beat Grouping, *American Games*, Mov.VII, mm. 36-39, trumpet 1

With the seventh movement, rehearsal time is likely to be spent on issues associated with precision, style and character, and contrast, both dynamic and timbral. The dominant texture of the movement is sparse homophony, and melody lines are often doubled even with softer dynamics, so there is little concern for the foreground/background balance issue in this movement. Careful attention must be given to Maw's articulation markings, particularly slurred groupings and marcato accents. As with the first movement, staccato articulation, even during louder dynamics, must remain light and spirited. In addition, dynamic contrast is greatest in the final movement and should also be given special attention in rehearsal. Maw includes both subtle changes and sudden, drastic shifts.

Movement seven is certainly not devoid of challenging technical passages, the first of which is the opening bassoon soli. Though the scalar basis lends easier fingering patterns than might be expected from initial impressions, certain segments of the soli, specifically measures 7 and 11, require extra attention. The soli will be most effective when performers recognize the following hierarchy of note emphasis: accented dotted quarter notes receive the most weight, followed by quarter notes, and then eighth notes that begin slurred passages.

The segment from measure 53 to measure 68 presents a variety of different issues. It is the one section of the movement where, if dynamics are not executed properly, primary melodic material may be buried by accompaniment. In addition, the various ascending or descending

eighth-note gestures are passed between different timbres, displaced to weak beats (in some cases upbeats), and executed with sudden, bold dynamic inflections. Further contributing to the complexity, parallel and mirror harmonic structures yield extended, unrelated vertical sonorities. Careful eighth-note subdivision and detached, light staccatos are paramount for successful performance of this section of the piece, especially in measures 57 through 59, where as many as ten different voices join on the syncopated motive.

The section that follows, mm. 72-88, though it is not technically demanding, requires some attention to achieve the best result. Though accents are not notated, the cascading effect, beginning in measure 72, is better executed if each new attack is given a slight *mezzo piano* accent followed by an immediate dynamic drop to *pianissimo*. The end result is that of a reverse pyramid, with the character of the passage best described as sparkling or shimmering.

The hemiola in measures 93 through 97 represents the first major rhythmic challenge of the movement. With the figure shifting from tuba to trombone and then to horn, performers must focus on producing even quarter notes and strive for consistent articulation and volume. Though the line has an arching contour from measure 93 to 97, the dynamics should not reflect that contour and should continue to crescendo through the descent to beat four of measure 97.

The driving eighth notes beginning in measure 113 and the resulting harmonic rhythm from measure 118 to 131 represent another rhythmic and articulation challenge for the horns, trumpets, and trombones. In measures 113 through 117, the quest for precise execution of the rapid tonguing shared by the brass choir is further complicated by sudden and extreme dynamic swells. The virtuosic passage that showcases the brass in measures 113 through 117 becomes harmonic rhythmic accompaniment for the woodwind restatement of theme 8 in measure 118, so a quick adjustment to a subordinate role must be executed without losing rhythmic vitality or

forward motion. Though the pattern begins with a consistent repetition of a basic motive, Maw begins to vary it in measure 120 with unexpected ties and syncopation. In measures 126 through 131, the trumpet embellishment of the accompaniment becomes the prominent voice in the texture. The passage requires rapid tonguing and yields some awkward fingering because of the inclusion of various chromatic tones.

The final two formal sections of the piece are essentially restatements of earlier material and thus present similar issues to consider. The addition of the contrabassoon solo at the end of the bassoon passage (mm. 145-154) creates a new variable. Despite the disparity in timbre, the contrabassoon must strive to match the buoyancy and clarity of the bassoon presentation. Finally, the coda (mm. 155-167), like the introduction, depends on a cohesive concept of articulation and note length between the trumpet and horn with the successive statements of theme 1. Performers must strive for, perhaps, the softest *pianissimo* of the piece, so that the final *fortissimo* punctuation in measure 167 has maximum effect.

SUMMARY

Nicholas Maw is established as one of the most important British composers of the second half of the twentieth century. His life and career, divided in his later years between England and the United States, has included numerous successes in composition and education. He is respected for a diverse oeuvre that includes operas and important works for orchestra, instrumental chamber ensembles, solo instruments, vocal ensemble, and vocal solo. His teaching appointments have included the Royal Academy of Music, Trinity College in Cambridge, Yale University, Boston University, and the Peabody Conservatory of Music.

Like other British composers of the twentieth century, Maw's compositional style was influenced by philosophical decisions related to the acceptance or rejection of post-war serialism and other avant-garde practices. With Maw, early experimentation with serialism gave way to a more accessible style, inherently melodic and based on tonal ideas, but not devoid of contemporary concepts. Maw's late instrumental style, encompassing the last twenty years, maintains this philosophy with, perhaps, a greater concern for audience accessibility.

Upon considering three of Maw's late instrumental works [*Odyssey* (1987), *Violin Concerto* (1993), and *Dance Scenes* (1995)], it is clear that certain characteristics and techniques, especially his ideas related to "fixed points," are present in his work regardless of the length, medium, or intent. Maw demonstrates a concern for unified forms, often setting works in continuous multi-sectional or multi-movement designs and incorporating ternary and other arch forms for interior structures. His music also has an inherent melodic quality, which utilizes both lyrical and angular themes constructed with repeated motives and, though sometimes ambiguous, generally remains clearly linked to a tonal center. He builds harmonic structures that vary from functional or non-functional tertian and extended tertian chords to polychordal structures and

clusters, which often progress through parallel or contrary motion. His late instrumental music has rhythmic vitality generated from repeated rhythmic motives and motoric ostinatos, but varied with changing meters and techniques to disrupt the strong-to-weak beat pattern. Maw's orchestration and textural settings contrast timbres of individual instruments and choirs and assure that melodic material is always prominent.

Most of the aforementioned compositional elements, which are present in *Odyssey*, *Violin Concerto*, and *Dance Scenes*, also form the basis for the construction of *American Games*.

Though it consists of seven movement-sections with varying character, there are unifying threads that bind the piece into a cohesive whole. Maw's "fixed point" concept is pervasive throughout the work and is evident in formal, melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and textural elements.

Resulting from the complex design of the work, are a number of interpretive and technical issues that must be considered in order to present a successful, artistically convincing performance.

A cohesive yet sufficiently unpredictable structure, melodic and harmonic ingenuity, rhythmic vitality, craftsmanship in orchestration, and worthy musical challenges account for the high artistic merit of *American Games*. *American Games* premiered at a major concert series, has since benefited from successful recordings and performances by premiere ensembles in the United States and abroad, and is the winner of the Sudler International Wind Band Composition Competition. The piece's early success warrants this document, which is intended to benefit conductors of *American Games* in the score-study process, elevate their understanding of the elements of its construction, and enhance their rehearsal and performance experience. Maw's international reputation in various genres augments the importance of his decision to contribute to the wind band repertoire. The medium would certainly benefit from another work by this well-versed and genuine composer.

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APPENDIX I

NICHOLAS MAW – LIST OF PUBLISHED COMPOSITIONS

Opera

Sophie's Choice (1990-2002)

Libretto by Nicholas Maw, based on the book by William Styron

M, T, 2B, SATB chorus; 3 (A fl, pic)-3 (E hn)-3 (E \flat cl, b cl); 5 3 3 1; timp-3 perc; hp-str

Commissioned by BBC Radio 3 in association with the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; premiered by UK Royal Opera House, Sir Simon Rattle

(duration ca. 200 minutes)

The Rising of the Moon (1967-70)

Libretto by Beverly Cross

2S-2M-A-hT-2T, hBar, 2 Bar, BBar, B; men's chorus; 3 (pc)-3 (E hn)-3 (E \flat cl, b cl)-2; 4-3 (crt, bugle)-2-1; timp-2 perc-cel; hp-str

(duration ca. 145 minutes)

One Man Show (1964) (rev. 1966, 1970)

Libretto by Arthur Jacobs, based on a play by Saki

4S-M-2T-Bar-B-2 speakers; 1 (pc, A fl)-1 (E hn)-1 (b cl)-1; 2-0-0-0; perc-cel; hp-str

(duration ca. 80 minutes)

Orchestra

Concerto for Cor Anglais (2005)

2 (pc)-2-2-2; 4-2-1-1; str

Commissioned by the Philadelphia Orchestra, Christopher Eschenbach, Music Director, made possible in part by grants from the Koussevitzky Music Foundation and from the Philadelphia Music Project, funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, administered by Settlement Music School.

(duration ca. 20 minutes)

Concert Suite from Sophie's Choice (2004)

3 (pc)-3 (E hn)-3 (E \flat cl)-3 (cbn); 5-3-2-1; timp-perc; hp-str

(duration ca. 22 minutes)

Dance Scenes (1995)

2 pc-2-2 (E \flat cl)-2 cbn; 4-3-3-0; timp-3 perc; str

Commissioned by Rowe and Maw for their 100th anniversary with support from the Arts Council of England for the opening of the Philharmonia Orchestra's 50th anniversary season

(duration ca. 19 minutes)

Voices of Memory (1995)

2 (pc, A fl)-2 (E hn)-2-2(cbn); 4-3-3-1; timp- 2 perc; hp-str

Commissioned by the BBC for the Royal Concert

(duration ca. 25 minutes)

Violin Concerto (1993)

2 (pc, A fl)-2 (E hn)-2 (E \flat cl)-2 (cbn); 4-2-0-1; timp-1 perc; hp-str

Commissioned jointly by the Orchestra of St. Luke's and the Philharmonia Orchestra, London with support from the Commissioning Program of the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust and the Arts Council of Great Britain

(duration ca. 41 minutes)

Shahnama (1992)

1 (pc, A fl)-1-1(E \flat cl)-1; 1-1-1-0; pno; strings (6-6-4-4-1)

Commissioned by the London Sinfonietta with funds from the Arts Council of Great Britain

(duration ca. 28 minutes)

The World in the Evening (1988)

2 (pc)-2 (E hn)-2-2(cbn); 4-3-3-0; timp-1 perc; hp-str

Commissioned by the Royal Opera House with funds from the David S Cohen Foundation

(duration ca. 26 minutes)

Little Concert (1987)

ob, 2hn, strings

Commissioned by the Orchestra of St. John's Smith Square for their 21st Anniversary with funds from the Greater London Arts

(duration ca. 12 minutes)

Odyssey (1972-87)

3 (2A fl, pc)-3 (E \flat cl, b cl)-3 (cbn); 8-4-3-1; timp-4 perc-cel; hp-str

Commissioned by the BBC with funds provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain

(duration ca. 96 minutes)

Sonata Notturna (1985)

cello, strings (4-3-2-2-1)

Commissioned by the 1985 King's Lynn Festival with funds provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain

(duration ca. 25 minutes)

Spring Music (1982-83)

2 (pc)-2-2-2; 4-3-3-1; timp; hp-str

Commissioned by the Norfolk and Norwich Triennial Festival

(duration ca. 13.5 minutes)

Summer Dances (1981)

3 (pc)-3-3-3; 4-3-3-1; timp-3 perc-pno; str

Commissioned by the Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools
(duration ca. 24 minutes)

Life Studies (1973) (1976)

string orchestra (5-5-2-2-1)

(duration ca. 40 minutes)

Serenade (1973) (rev. 1977)

1-2-0-2; 2-0-0-0; strings (8-6-5-4-2)

duration ca. 36 minutes)

Concert Music (1972)

3 (pc)-3 (E hn)-3 (E \flat cl)-2; 4-3-2-1; timp-1 perc-cel; hp-str

(duration ca. 14 minutes)

Sonata (1967)

2 horns and strings (5-4-3-3-2)

(duration ca. 17 minutes)

Sinfonia (1966)

1 (pc)-2 (E hn)-2-2; 2-0-0-0; strings (5-4-3-3-1)

Commissioned by the Northern Sinfonia Orchestra with support from the Britten Aspen Fund
(duration ca. 30 minutes)

Wind Band

American Games (1991)

3 fl (pc, A fl)-3 ob-E \flat cl-3cl-asx-2bn-cbn; 4 hn-3 tp-3 tb-euph-2 tu; timp-3 perc

Commissioned by the BBC for the 1991 Promenade Concerts

(duration ca. 23 minutes)

Instrumental Chamber Ensemble

String Quartet No 4 (2005)

Commissioned by the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society

(duration ca. 22 minutes)

Intrada (2002)

string quartet

Commissioned by the Brentano String Quartet

(duration ca. 4 minutes)

String Quartet No 3 (1994)

Commissioned by Warwick University for the twenty-first anniversary of the Coull String Quartet

(duration ca. 22 minutes)

Piano Trio (1990-91)

Commissioned by the Koussevitsky Foundation in the Library of Congress and dedicated to the memory of Serge and Natalie Koussevitsky

(duration ca. 32 minutes)

Ghost Dances (1988)

fl (pc, A fl, mangeera), cl (E, cl, b cl, manjeera, kazoo), pno (manjeera, kalimba), vn (manjeera, strum stick), vc (manjeera, flexatone)

Commissioned by the Nash Ensemble with funds from the Art Council of Great Britain and IBM
(duration ca. 27 minutes)

String Quartet No 2 (1982)

Commissioned by the Barbican Centre

(duration ca. 30 minutes)

Flute Quartet (1981)

flute and string trio

Commissioned by the Nash Ensemble with funds provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain
(duration ca. 26 minutes)

Double Canon for Igor Stravinsky (1967)

fl, va (or A fl), hp

(duration ca. 1 minute)

String Quartet No 1 (1965)

Commissioned for the Harlow Arts Festival

(duration ca. 35 minutes)

Instrumental Solo

Narration (2001)

cello

Commissioned by the BBC for the RNCM Manchester International Cello Festival

(duration ca. 20 minutes)

Stanza (1997)

violin

(duration ca. 4 minutes)

Sonata (1996-97)

violin

Commissioned by Minnesota Public Radio International as part of their continuing commitment to present contemporary music to radio audiences internationally
(duration ca. 27 minutes)

Cadenzas to Mozart's Piano Concerto K491 (1991)

(duration ca. 6 minutes)

Music of Memory (1989) (rev. 1991)

guitar

Written for and dedicated to Eliot Fisk
(duration ca. 20 minutes)

Personae II (1985-86)

piano

Commissioned by the 1986 Bath International Festival with funds provided by South West Arts
(duration ca. 25 minutes)

Little Suite (1984)

guitar

(duration ca. 12 minutes)

Night Thoughts (1982)

flute

(duration ca. 10 minutes)

Personae I (1973)

piano

(duration ca. 13 minutes)

Vocal Ensemble

Hymnus (1995-96)

SATB chorus and orchestra 3 (pc)-3 (E hn)-3 (E, cl)-2 cbn; 4-4-3-0; timp-2 perc; hp-str
Commissioned by the Oxford Bach Choir in the occasion of their centenary year, with financial assistance from Southern Arts
(duration ca. 34 minutes)

Sweté Jesu (1992)

SATB chorus

Commissioned by the King's College, Cambridge for the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols
(duration ca. 3 minutes)

One Foot in Eden Still, I Stand (1990)

Text by Edwin Muir

SATB chorus, SSAATTBB chorus, optional organ

Commissioned by King's College, Cambridge, to mark the 550th anniversary of the founding of the college

(duration ca. 6 minutes)

Three Hymns (1989)

Text by Joseph Beaumont, John Hall, Sir Thomas Browne

SATB chorus, organ

Commissioned by the Lichfield Festival for the Choir of Lichfield Cathedral

(duration ca. 12 minutes)

The Ruin (1980)

double SSAATTBB choir, solo horn

(duration ca. 30 minutes)

Nonsense Rhymes (1976)

2 Books

children's chorus, piano

(duration ca. 15 minutes and 18 minutes)

Te Deum (1975)

soprano, tenor, SATB choir, congregation, organ

(duration ca. 12 minutes)

Reverdie (1975)

2 Tenors, Baritone, 2 Bass

(duration ca. 11 minutes)

Five Irish Songs (1972)

mixed chorus

(duration ca. 12 minutes)

Vocal Solo

The Head of Orpheus (1992)

Text by Robert Kelley

soprano, 2 clarinets

(duration ca. 6 minutes)

Roman Canticle (1989) (rev. 1991)

Text by Robert Browning

medium voice, flute, viola, harp

Commissioned by the Nash Ensemble with funds from IBM (UK) on the occasion of their 25th anniversary in 1989

(duration ca. 9 minutes)

Five American Folksongs (1989)

soprano, piano

(duration ca. 12 minutes)

La Vita Nuova (1979)

soprano, fl (pc), ob (E hn), cl, bn, hn, hp, 2 vn, va, vc

(duration ca. 26 minutes)

Six Interiors (1966)

Text by Thomas Hardy

high voice, guitar

(duration ca. 12 minutes)

The Voice of Love (1966)

Text by Peter Porter

mezzo-soprano, piano

(duration ca. 25 minutes)

Scenes and Arias (1962) (rev. 1966)

soprano, mezzo-soprano, contralto; 3 (pc, A fl)-3 (E hn)-2 (b cl)-2; 4-3-3-1; timp-2 perc-cel; hp-str

(duration ca. 29 minutes)

APPENDIX II

NICHOLAS MAW – DISCOGRAPHY

American Games

American Games: Twentieth Century Classics for Winds. “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band, LtCol Timothy W. Foley, director, (USMB CD-13), 1997.

Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music Wind Symphony, Eugene Corporon, director, (Klavier: KCD 11047), 1993.

Concerto for Violin

London Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Roger Norrington, conductor, (Sony Classical: SK 62856), 1999.

Dance Scenes

British Composers: Nicholas Maw. Philharmonia Orchestra, Daniel Harding, conductor, (EMI Classics: 5851452), 2003.

Philharmonia Orchestra, Daniel Harding, conductor, (EMI Classics: MDS 8 826482), 1995.

Flute Quartet

Aur, ole Trio, (Koch International Classics: KIC7355), 1998.

Monticello Trio, (ASV CD DCA 920), 1995.

Ghost Dances

Twentieth Century Consort, Christopher Kendall, director, (ASV: CD DCA 999), 1995.

Hymnus

Oxford Bach Choir/BBC Concert Orchestra, Nicholas Cleobury, conductor, (ASV: CD DCA 1070), 2000.

La Vita Nuova

Twentieth Century Consort, Christopher Kendall, director, (ASV: CD DCA 999), 1995.

Life Studies

The Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Sir Neville Marriner, conductor, (NMC Records: NMC DO85), 2006.

English String Orchestra, Raphael Wallfisch/William Boughton, (Nimbus: NI 5471), 1996.

Little Concert

Nicholas Daniel/Britten Sinfonia, Nicholas Cleobury, conductor, (ASV: CD DCA 1070), 2000.

Music of Memory

Philip, Langridge/Stephen Marchionda, (Chandos: CHAN 10305), 2005.

Night Thoughts

Aur, ole Trio, (Koch International Classics: KIC7355), 1998.

Emily Beynon, (Metier: MSVCD92006), 1994.

Odyssey

British Composers: Nicholas Maw. City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Sir Simon Rattle, conductor, (EMI Classics: 5851452), 2003.

City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Sir Simon Rattle, conductor, (EMI: CDS 7542772), 1991.

One Foot in Eden Still, I Stand

Schola Cantorum of Oxford, Mark Shepherd, conductor, (Hyperion: CDA67615), 2007.

King's College Choir, Nicholas Cleobury, conductor, (EMI: CDC 7544182), 2005.

Piano Trio

Monticello Trio, (ASV CD DCA 920), 1995.

Roman Canticle

Aur, ole Trio, (Koch International Classics: KIC7355), 1998.

Twentieth Century Consort, Christopher Kendall, conductor, (ASV: CD DCA 999), 1995.

Six Interiors

Philip, Langridge/Stephen Marchionda, (Chandos: CHAN 10305), 2005

Shahnama

Britten Sinfonia, Nicholas Cleobury, conductor, (ASV CD DCA 1070), 2000.

Sonata Notturna

English String Orchestra, Raphael Wallfisch/William Boughton, (Nimbus: NI 5471), 1996.

Sonata for Solo Violin

Curtis Macomber, (Composers Recordings, Inc: NWCR898), 2002.

Sweté Jesu

Schola Cantorum of Oxford, Mark Shepherd, conductor, (Hyperion: CDA67615), 2007.

Three Hymns

Schola Cantorum of Oxford, Mark Shepherd, conductor, (Hyperion: CDA67615), 2007.

APPENDIX III

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VITA

A native of Anniston, Alabama, Corey Spurlin received a Bachelor of Science degree in music education from the University of Alabama in 1999. After teaching middle school and high school in Alabama, he returned to the University of Alabama where he earned the Master of Arts degree in music education in 2003. While working on his degree, Spurlin served as Acting Assistant Director of Athletic Bands at the University of Alabama and Associate Conductor of the Alabama Wind Ensemble and Symphonic Band.

Spurlin is currently a candidate for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in wind conducting at Louisiana State University and serves as a Graduate Assistant with the Department of Bands. In addition to serving as a conducting associate with the Louisiana State University Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Winds, Symphonic Band, and Chamber Wind Ensemble, he assists with the instruction and administration of the Tiger Marching Band and conducts the Bengal Brass Basketball Band. Significant wind works conducted recently in performance include Maw's *American Games*, Schwantner's *And the Mountains Rising Nowhere*, Schmitt's *Lied et Scherzo*, and Beethoven's *Octet in E-flat Major*, Op. 103. With the LSU ensembles, he has also conducted works by Warren Benson, Giovanni Gabrieli, Gordon Jacob, Vincent Persichetti, and William Schuman. In 2005, Spurlin conducted the premier performance of Stephen David Beck's *Mousing Remix*, commissioned by the Southeastern Conference Band Directors Association, with the LSU Wind Ensemble.