Selected Original Piano Solo Works of Robert Boury:
Emphasis on Performance and Practice Suggestions

D.M.A. Document

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Musical Arts in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By
Rina Shimizu-Grow, B.A., M.M.
Graduate Program in Music

The Ohio State University
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Document Committee:
Dr. Caroline J. Hong, Advisor
Dr. Kenneth Williams
Professor Timothy Leasure
Abstract

This document focuses on the composer Robert Boury (b. 1946) and his solo piano works, *HONK* (1970), *Beautiful Ohio* (1980) and *12 Secret Designs for Piano*, (2006). Robert Boury is one of the most creative living composers of our time, and continues to explore original and innovative musical writing. Furthermore, he incorporates an old compositional technique into a new style of contemporary writing.

Boury has composed many types of vocal and instrumental works in a variety of media and genres. The majority of his solo piano works are shorter in length, yet consist of unique features and approaches on the piano. To examine his distinctive compositional approaches, I selected these three solo piano works from each of Boury’s eras: *HONK*, from his early ragtime era; *Beautiful Ohio*, from a traditional style in the middle era; and *12 Secret Designs for Piano*, from an atonal approach in the late era of Boury.

This document contains seven chapters. Chapter 1 is an introduction, Chapter 2 is a brief biography of Robert Boury, and Chapter 3 is a discussion overview of Boury’s complete piano works. Chapter 4 discusses *HONK WoO 8* (1970), including performance and practice suggestions based on a performer’s experience, the composition’s terms, and issues with the missing original tape. Chapter 5 examines *Beautiful Ohio, Op. 15* (1980) with background information on its pieces from the
poem that influenced Boury, a brief analysis and suggestions on performance and practice. Chapter 6 provides performance/practice suggestions for *12 Secret Designs for Piano, Op. 60* (2006), along with information about other insect pieces composed by others, a brief history of compositional technique, the *soggetto cavato*, and an example of Boury’s *soggetto cavato* approach. Chapter 7 summarizes Boury’s compositional approaches and musical style. The list of instructional terms with definitions used by Boury, scales used for the *soggetto cavato* technique, the discography, and the e-mail interviews are provided in the Appendix material.
Dedicated to

My husband, Philip Clinton Grow
My daughter, Mizuho Naomi Grow
My parents, Midori and Matuko Shimizu
My sister, Wakana Shimizu
My grandparents, Mizuho and Michi Kuramitu
My in-law family
Acknowledgement

I wish to express my appreciation to the people who have contributed their time and effort to this document. First, I would like to thank Dr. Robert Boury for his generosity in sharing his piano works, his time for my interview with him, and endless support to make this document possible. Secondly, thank you to the members of my committee, especially my dear professor and advisor, Dr. Caroline Hong, for her excellent advice, caring and encouragement throughout my doctoral studies and in the writing of this document. Additionally, many thanks to both Dr. Kenneth Williams and Professor Timothy Leasure for their professionalism, guidance, and help to me to complete my degree. My doctoral studies would not have been completed without either of them.

Special thanks go to Benjamin Glass for sharing his knowledge, Pete Tender and Mark Rubinstein for recording editing, Paul Schoenfield for his support, and Jeanne Huba for her generosity in spending time to review and assist in the editing of this document.

I am very fortunate to have wonderful friends who have given me their support and encouragement: a special thank you to Dr. HyeKyung Yoon for her emotional support and friendship; and to Dr. Ryan Behan for his encouragement and honest comments on my document. I am very grateful to have them in my life.

v
Nothing that I do would be possible without my loving parents. Thank you for supporting my passion for music, your unconditional love, and understanding during the long years of my education. I would also like to thank my husband’s family, especially my mother-in-law, for her caring and encouragement. I owe everlasting gratefulness to my husband, Philip, for his support, understanding, and his endless love over the years of being together. It would have been next to impossible to complete my studies and this document without all of their support and encouragement.
Vita

2003  ..................................................  B.A., Piano Performance
       University of Arkansas at
       Little Rock

2003-2006  ..........................................  Graduate Teaching Associate,
       School of Music, Ohio University

2006  ..................................................  M.M., Piano Performance
       Piano Pedagogy
       School of Music, Ohio University

2006 – 2009  ........................................  Graduate Teaching Associate,
       School of Music,
       The Ohio State University

2006 – 2011  ........................................  Doctoral Program,
       The Ohio State University

Fields of Study

Major Field: Music

Studies in Piano Performance  Professor Caroline J. Hong
                              Professor Kenneth Williams
                              Professor Steven Glaser

Studies in Piano Literature  Professor Caroline J. Hong
                           Professor Steven Glaser

Studies in Piano Accompanying  Professor Caroline J. Hong
                                Professor Mark Rudoff
# Table of Contents

Abstract .................................................................................................................. ii
Dedication ................................................................................................................ iv
Acknowledgment ................................................................................................... v
Vita .............................................................................................................................. vi
List of Tables .......................................................................................................... xi
List of Figures ......................................................................................................... xii

Chapter 1. Introduction ......................................................................................... 1

Chapter 2. Biography of Robert Boury ................................................................. 4

Chapter 3. Overview of Boury’s Piano Works ...................................................... 7

Chapter 4. *HONK, WoO 8 (1970)* ..................................................................... 11

4.1 Background Information .................................................................................. 11
4.2 Atonal Section .................................................................................................. 13
4.3 Ragtime Section ............................................................................................... 16
4.4 Clusters ............................................................................................................ 17
4.5 Pedals .............................................................................................................. 19
4.6 Tempo ............................................................................................................. 21
4.7 Performance Terms Used in *HONK* ............................................................... 23
4.8 Performance Issues ......................................................................................... 25

4.8.1 Performing with the Tape ...................................................................... 26
4.8.2 Performance Issues Without the Tape ..................................................... 27

4.9 Issue of the Missing Original Tape ................................................................. 28

5.1 Poem .................................................................................................................. 30
5.2 Interpretation of the Poem ................................................................................. 31
5.3 Background Information ................................................................................... 34
5.4 The Poem and the Piano Piece ........................................................................ 35
5.5 Performance and Practice Suggestions ............................................................. 38


6.1 Background Information .................................................................................... 40
6.2 Similar Works by Other Composers ................................................................. 41
   6.2.1 *Noctuelles (Night Moths)* by Maurice Ravel ........................................... 43
   6.2.2 *Insects* by Seymour Bernstein ................................................................. 43
6.3 *Soggetto Cavato* ............................................................................................ 44
   6.3.1 Origin and History of *Soggetto Cavato* .................................................. 44
   6.3.2 *Soggetto Cavato* Used by Other Composers ......................................... 45
   6.3.3 Boury’s Approach to *Soggetto Cavato* in *12 Secret Designs for Piano, “12 Moth Toccatas”* ................................................................. 46
6.4 Brief Information on Each Moth with Suggestions for Practicing/Performing .... 49
   6.4.1 *Luna Moth* ............................................................................................. 49
   6.4.2 *Sphinx Moths* ......................................................................................... 50
   6.4.3 *Owlet Moths* ......................................................................................... 52
   6.4.4 *Hook-Tip Moths* .................................................................................. 53
   6.4.5 *Tiger Moths* ......................................................................................... 55
   6.4.6 *Geometer Moths* .................................................................................. 57
   6.4.7 *Grass Moths* ......................................................................................... 59
   6.4.8 *Lappet Moths* ...................................................................................... 60
# List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Relationship of Boury and His Primary Teachers/Compositional Influence</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Complete Piano Works by Boury</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Boury, <em>HONK, WoO</em> 8, Line 4, Page 1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2. Boury, *HONK, WoO* 8, Line 1, Page 1  
  Boury, *HONK, WoO* 8, Line 1, Page 7 | 15 |
| 4. Boury, *HONK, WoO* 8, Line 1, measure 8, Page 6 | 17 |
| 5. Boury, *HONK, WoO* 8, Line 4, Page 7 | 17 |
| 10. Boury, *HONK, WoO* 8, Line 1, Page 1 | 21 |
| 11. Boury, *HONK, WoO* 8, Line 6, Page 1  
  Boury, *HONK, WoO* 8, Line 1, Page 2 | 22 |
  Boury, *HONK, WoO* 8, Line 1, Page 3  
  Boury, *HONK, WoO* 8, Line 6, Page 2 | 23 |
  Boury, *HONK, WoO* 8, Line 4, Page 1 | 24 |
| 15. Boury, *HONK, WoO* 8, Line 6, Page 4  
  Boury, *HONK, WoO* 8, Line 1, Page 5 | 25 |
21. Traditional Soggetto Cavato Technique ............................................................... 45
22. Example of Soggetto Cavato, Letters to Pitches .................................................. 46
23. Byzantine Scale with Chromatic Scale .................................................................. 47
24. Hidden Names in *Luna Moth* ............................................................................ 48
25. *Luna Moth* ........................................................................................................... 49
26. *Sphinx Moth* ........................................................................................................ 51
27. Boury, *Secret Designs for Piano (12 Moth Toccatas), Op. 60*  
   “*Sphinx Moth*,” mm. 37–38 ................................................................................ 52
28. *Owlet Moth* ........................................................................................................ 52
29. *Hook-Tip Moth* ................................................................................................... 54
   “*Hook-Tip Moth*,” mm. 22–24 ............................................................................ 55
31. *Tiger Moth* ........................................................................................................... 56
32. *Geometer Moth* ................................................................................................. 58
33. *Grass Moth* ......................................................................................................... 59
34. *Lappet Moth* ....................................................................................................... 61
35. Bell Moth............................................................................................................... 62
36. Case-bearer Moth.................................................................................................. 64
37. Leopard Moth........................................................................................................ 65
Chapter 1

Introduction

It has been decades since the advent of contemporary musical writing, yet there has been little attempt to relate notational expression of compositional intent to actualization through performance. Due to the amount of musical scores in traditional writing from the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic eras, the majority of pianists do not have the opportunity or time to explore pieces written in nontraditional writings that use the new techniques, commonly referred to as extended techniques.\(^1\) Therefore, scores written in nontraditional notations and techniques generally remain unfamiliar to many pianists. From the viewpoint of living composers, it is their self-expression and individuality that separate their pieces from other existing music. Possibly some composers developed their own musical terms and languages, and some may have begun to experiment with the abandonment of the tonal line and re-consideration of former compositional techniques. Whatever the reason, many great contemporary piano works exist, waiting for pianists to perform them. Piano works by a resident composer, Robert Boury (b. 1946) at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, are one example. His piano works like *HONK*, are remarkable pieces that should be heard more in public.

\(^1\) Extended techniques are techniques that are beyond the traditional or expected manner of performance, for example, using prepared instruments to having tone clusters. (Kelly 88-90)
yet, are not performed as much as they could. I feel the need to introduce some of
his piano works so that it may open the public’s eyes to both the uniqueness of the
pieces, as well as to Boury’s compositional approaches.

Robert Boury has composed for many types of instruments and in a variety of
media and genres.\(^2\) However, it appears that no written analyses of his piano works
exist. The variety of styles in Boury’s piano pieces reveal music history itself in that
they connect to the music of an earlier age, from Renaissance and Baroque eras to
Romantic and Contemporary eras. His compositional style can be divided into three
eras: an early ragtime era, a traditional style in the middle era, and an atonal
approach in the late era. From each era, I have selected a work that defines him as a
unique living composer.

In this study, the brief biography of Boury is provided in Chapter Two,
including his main teachers who influenced him. This is followed by an overview of
his complete piano works in Chapter Three. Chapters Four, Five and Six include
information about *HONK, Beautiful Ohio* and *12 Secret Designs for Piano*. For each
work, the origin and information for each title that may affect the performance
matter are stated. In order for the pianist to achieve an enjoyable learning experience
and an accurate performance, practice and performance suggestions are also
provided. In addition, a list of terms with their definitions used by Boury, as well as

\(^2\) Robert Boury, “Faculty: Robert Boury”, http://www.ualr.edu/music/index.php/home/faculty/robert-
boury. (Accessed June 11, 2009)
scales, scores of these selected works and transcripts of the email interviews are cited in the appendices. It is my desire that this document will convince other pianists to explore contemporary music and provide a practical guide to aid in playing Boury’s works.
Chapter 2

Biography of Robert Boury

Robert Wade Boury was born in Wheeling, West Virginia in 1946. Boury was influenced by his mother’s beautiful piano playing and later began his piano study at age ten with Dorothy Ackerman Zoeckler. She recognized Boury’s musical talent and encouraged him to explore not just music, but also poetry and art. Boury took piano lessons and composition lessons from Ackerman for seven years.

In 1964, Boury continued further music education at the Manhattan School of Music, earning his bachelor’s degree in Music. He studied with David Diamond in the junior level composition class during his undergraduate years. Diamond believed that counterpoint study would make music pour out of his students after that work was done.\(^3\) Boury also enrolled in private compositional lessons with Mario Davidovski during his undergraduate years.

In the fall of 1968, Boury enrolled in the School of Music at the University of Michigan for his master’s degree in music, and pursued his doctoral degree in Musical Arts in 1970. Boury served as a teaching fellow during these graduate years at the University of Michigan. After graduation from the University of Michigan, he worked in some companies as a song writer before returning to his hometown in

---

\(^3\) Robert Boury, E-mail Interview, (July 6, 2009)
Wheeling, West Virginia to open a piano/composition studio.\(^4\)

In 1977, Boury was offered a job as a professor at Lansing Community College. He mentioned in an email interview that the experience at Lansing Community College changed his life tremendously, as the career opportunity that led him to his current position at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.\(^5\) Boury joined the University of Arkansas in 1981 as a resident composer and a professor of music theory and composition. Currently, he teaches courses such as; analyses, songwriting, as well as offers private sessions, which he enjoys.\(^6\) Boury also hosts a Songwriters’ Showcase for his students every semester. Boury’s devotion toward teaching and being a resident composer can be observed just by talking to him. Boury says that he loves to teach and explains:

“\textit{The teaching philosophy is my message whether to children, adults, hospital patients, or university students both to general education students and to music majors and minors...}”\(^7\)

\(^5\) Ibid.
\(^6\) Hathcock
\(^7\) Robert Boury, E-mail Interview, (July 6, 2009)
Table 1: Relationship of Boury and His Primary Teachers/Compositional Influence

- Mario Davidovsky
  - Boury took private composition lessons at Manhattan School of Music (B.M.)
  - Compositional Influence:
    - a song cycle
    - fugal style
    - counterpoint

- David Diamond
  - Boury took composition course at Manhattan School of Music (B.M.)
  - Compositional Influence:
    - electronic music

- Leslie Basset
  - Boury studied at the University of Michigan (M.M. / D.M.A.)
  - Compositional Influence:
    - very short
    - strong spiritual content
    - clean, not many doublings

- Ross Lee Finney
  - Boury studied at the University of Michigan (M.M. / D.M.A.)
  - Compositional Influence:
    - Romantic style,
    - American/Midwestern roots
    - complex serial techniques
    - Atonal
Chapter 3

Overview of Boury’s Piano Works

Boury comments that he was in love with his first instrument, the piano, from age thirteen. Although his piano solo works constitute a substantially fewer number within his overall output, his piano pieces illustrate an interesting diversity of style tendencies in his music. Score excerpts shown in this paper are used to assist the discussion of musical interpretation and performance aspects. The following chapters - Boury’s selected piano pieces - will be discussed from a broad perspective, including when each piece was written, dedication information, and the basic elements of musical aspects (texture, style, melody, meter and rhythm, and harmony) of each movement to support performance perspective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opus #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Style/Era</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WoO 1</td>
<td>Sonata for Piano</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WoO 4</td>
<td>Fantasie, Ostinato and Fugue</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WoO 8*</td>
<td>HONK (for Piano and Tape)</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Ragtime/Atonal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Complete Piano Works by Boury (*discussed in this chapter)

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8 Robert Boury, E-mail Interview, (July 29, 2009)
Table 2 continued

| Op. 1 | Blues, Rags and Stomps  
|------|-------------------------|----------|------------------|
|      | Book I  
|      |   I. A Tristan Two-Step  
|      |   II. Alice Walking  
|      |   III. The Rocket’s Red Glare  
|      | Book II  
|      |   I. Eubie’s Blues  
|      |   II. Stroller in Air  
|      |   III. I Left My Heart  
|      | 1970-73  
|      | Ragtime/Jazz  |
| Op. 2a | Suite for Piano  
|        | I. In Without Knocking  
|        | II. Nothing to Do  
|        | III. Invitation to the Dance  
|        | 1974  
|        | Music for Children  |
| Op. 3 | Hats ’n Horns  
|       | I. Kevin’s Boogie  
|       | II. Target Practice  
|       | III. Pony Express  
|       | IV. A Real Hard Piece for Joe  
|       | 1974  
|       | Music for Children  |
| Op. 4 | Two Beguines (2 piano, four hands)  
|       | 1975  
|       | Music for Children  |
| Op. 10d | Duelin’ Pianos (2 piano, four hands)  
|        | 1976  
|        | Music for Children  |
| Op. 15* | Beautiful Ohio  
|        | 1980  
|        | Traditional Style  |
| Op. 19 | The Mice Will Play  
|        | (1 piano, eight hands)  
|        | 1981  
|        | Music for Children  |

Continued
Table 2 continued

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Op. 20</th>
<th>Portrait of Chopin</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I. Fantasy Etude</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>II. Prelude after John Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>III. Nocturne after Chopin</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Op. 53</th>
<th>Sonatina</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I. Allegretto Cantabile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>II. Blues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>III. Chaconne</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Op. 60*</th>
<th>12 Secret Designs for piano</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I. Luna Moth</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>II. Sphinx Moths</td>
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<td></td>
<td>III. Owlet Moths</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IV. Hook-Tip Moths</td>
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<td>V. Tiger Moths</td>
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<td>VI. Geometer Moths</td>
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<td>VII. Grass Moths</td>
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<td>VIII. Lappet Moths</td>
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<td>IX. Bell Moths</td>
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<td>X. Case-bearer Moth</td>
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<td>XI. Leopard Moth</td>
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<td>XII. Prominents</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Op. 61</th>
<th>Three Poetics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I. Solitaire under the Oaks</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>II. A Child Asleep in its Own Life</td>
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<td></td>
<td>III. Of Mere Being</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Op. 62</th>
<th>Cherokee Months</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I. January (Cold Month)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>II. February (Bony or Hungry Month)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>III. March (Windy Month)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>IV. April (Flower Month)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>V. May (Planting Month)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>VI. June (Green Corn Month)</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1985</th>
<th>Traditional Style</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Traditional Style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Atonal era (soggetto cavato)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Atonal era (soggetto cavato)</td>
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Continued
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>VII. July (Corn Tassel Month)</th>
<th>VIII. August (End of Fruit Month)</th>
<th>IX. September (Nut Month)</th>
<th>X. October (Harvest Month)</th>
<th>XI. November (Big Trading Month)</th>
<th>XII. December (Snow Month)</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>Atonal era (soggetto cavato)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Op. 63</td>
<td>Three Lost Waltzes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>I. Happiness</td>
<td>II. Sadness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>III. The Union of Joy and Sadness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Op. 64</td>
<td>From Dictionary of Angels</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I. The Watchers</td>
<td>II. The Throne Angels</td>
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<td>III. Mansions of the Moon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4.1 Background Information

*HONK* was composed for piano and tape in 1970, and premiered in the same year by pianist and composer, Paul Schoenfield. The title is short for “Honky Tonk”. Honky Tonk is related to blues and ragtime music that emphasize heavy beats played with an old, out-of-tune piano (a honky tonk piano) in saloons, clubs and some dance halls. This music is frequently played on a piano that has the additional of a “honky tonk” bar placed between the strings and the felt strikers, giving the music a distinct “tinny” timbre. Boury composed this piece at the end of

---

9 Robert Boury, E-mail Interview, (February 23, 2011)

10 A honky-tonk piano is an old out of tune piano like those that would be found on a honky-tonk bar. Some people will go so far as to put tacks in the hammers to get the percussive sound of hammers that have worn through the felt and are hitting the strings with the wooden core molding of the hammer. These contents are informed by a piano technician, Mitchell Staples.

his student year at the University of Michigan, where he witnessed many campus protests against the Vietnam War. He remembered that time and said,

“...I myself was coming to the end of my schooling and sensing that my increasingly chromatic music led me into a corner. Ragtime offered me a way out—one based on rhythm, not harmony primarily. But yes, the atmosphere was rebellious.”

*HONK* is performed either as a piece for piano solo or as a piano solo with an optional audio tape. The audio tape consisted of the sounds of electric guitar, protests and music concrete. It also includes a speech made by an unknown individual. The original audio tape has been missing since 1970’s.

Written in through-composed form, *HONK* consists of ragtime sections and atonal sections. The atonal section of *HONK* shows no time signature; no discernible beat, but the instruction of “*Each line represents 10 seconds*”. The ragtime sections are highly syncopated with many accent markings. Mixed-meters and irregular meters in the ragtime sections can be found, keeping the flow through the atonal sections. The entire piece covers the lowest key to the highest key, uses all three pedals, and the dynamic range spans *pppp* to *ffff*. Many thick chords with jumps and roll motions raise the difficulty level of this work. Additionally, the pianist will need to be prepared to use every part of the fingers, hands, and forearms.

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12 Robert Boury, E-mail Interview, (February 23, 2011)
13 Robert Boury, E-mail Interview, (March 22, 2011)
14 Robert Boury, E-mail Interview, (February 23, 2011)
for glissandi, palm clusters, finger clusters, and forearm clusters. Boury indicated very specific instructions to each tones and/or sections. All instructional terms he used in this score are listed in Appendix A, along with their definitions.

4.2 Atonal Section

_HONK_ starts with an atonal section; Boury stated that he simply followed his ears to create these pitches rather than following any compositional technique as if he had his own opinions toward the protests on the Vietnam War. In the atonal sections, it is obvious that he chose an open key signature to adhere strictly to a twentieth-century notational tradition. A young composer at the time, Boury followed the atonal movement to experiment with an open-ended approach, yet being a very emotional personality, he felt trapped in an atonal movement without expressing himself. Quickly he realized that increasingly chromatic music led him into a corner and struggled to look for his identity as a composer. Being an American, he mentioned that Ragtime was the answer to his style in expressive writing and to identify himself as an American composer. He stated that he tried to follow the composers like Alban Berg and Arnold Schoenberg, yet he was breaking out of his definition as a European style composer, and claiming his American

\[\text{Ibid.}\]
roots.\textsuperscript{16}

Since there is no key signature, a section like this requires hours of practicing until the pianist can recognize the pitches audibly. Practicing with a slower tempo helps, though practice in grouping as shown in Figure 1 works effectively.

Unlike the traditional music notation with key signature, each accidental refers only to each note and this is something that the pianist should keep in mind. Concerning Boury’s statement, ‘aggravation toward atonality’ and ‘claiming my American roots as an American composer’,\textsuperscript{17} the second atonal section shows his frustration toward the atonality. To support his mental state at the time, the indication changes from ‘Fantastic’ in the first atonal section to ‘Frenzied’. As well as the indications, the second time an atonal section is written with the same pitches as the beginning of this piece, yet, there are no rests (Fig. 2). This subtle change in the writing may refer to Boury’s panicked state. Also, all chords on the first page are now written in

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
broken chords with ascending patterns, as if he were searching for the way out from the atonality. For practice suggestions, although there are no rests, practice in grouping helps to familiarize the sound, therefore leading to a quicker learning process. This practice strategy helps for wider leaps and thick chords.

This section in page 11 (See the score, Appendix C) seems easy, yet those tied-notes are placed in different beats in both hands (Fig. 3). Those tied notes create a very sad mood, and one should be careful not to accent any of the notes in the group. This piece ends with a delicate Lydian mode-like scale in the right hand, to which the *glissando* technique can be applied.

![Line 1, Page 1](image1.png)

![Fig. 2](image2.png)

![Line 1, Page 7](image3.png)
4.3 Ragtime Section

The ragtime section does not start until the 5th page into the music. Numerous technical difficulties, such as *glissandi*, clusters and thick chords are seen, along with wider leaps. Because the ragtime section is tonal, listening to the melody and harmony assists the pianist to make many difficult jumps. Wider leaps with bigger chords require under-tempo practicing with quicker horizontal motions. On page 6, Line 1, measure 8 has both ascending octaves in the left hand with descending thick chords in the right hand (Fig. 4). Due to the tempo marking and the wider range, the pianist will need to practice without looking at one of his/her hands. To practice this passage, move both hands horizontally as quickly as possible. Make sure to repeat the previous chords before moving to the next one. When rolling wider chords, the
bottom note must be played on the beat (Fig. 5). Also, the pianist should play them with loose arms for more powerful sounds so that the sounds are emanating from the whole upper body rather than just the fingers.

4.4 Clusters

Mainly clusters are seen on page 5, where the ragtime section begins. The
instruction in the score is very clear as to which part of the hands/arms should be used. In the case of the black and the white note clusters in Line 2 page 5 (Fig. 6), the pianist should use flat hands with flat fingers for ease of playing. By placing both hands close to the key’s surface in a flat shape rather than the traditional round hand shape, hands can cover both black and white notes easily.

In Line 4, page 5 has white-key clusters followed by black-key clusters. Since the white-key clusters need to be accented, it is easier to apply the wrist gesture of down-motion on the white-key clusters and up- motion on the black-key clusters (Fig. 7). The forearms cluster in Line 5, page 5 involves upper body adjustment (Fig. 8).

There are four measures of triplet-chords in the right hand with jump-bases in the left hand before the forearm clusters in the upper range. Due to the tempo
marking, $j = 126$ and the rhythm of the cluster notes, the pianist needs to stay very close to the keys. By moving the whole upper torso close to the keys, the pianist should have a short moment to play the forearm clusters without stopping or slowing down (Fig. 8).

![Fig. 8 Line 5, Page 5](image)

4.5 Pedals

The pedal markings are also unique in this piece. Boury used the first letter with an arrow symbol to indicate pedal markings. ‘D’ stands for a damper pedal, ‘S’ is for a sostenuto pedal and ‘UC’ for an una corda pedal. Other than these indications, Boury also marked four different levels of damper pedal usage. They are; ‘Light D’, ‘Slight D’, ‘Very slight D’ and ‘almost no Ped.’ This may need to be adjusted based on the piano size and acoustics of the room, yet ‘Light D’ translates
as a half-pedal to quarter-pedal, ‘Slight D’ as a light quarter-pedal, ‘Very slight D’ as a very light quarter-pedal, and ‘almost no Ped.’ is for a subtle touch of the damper pedal. In many piano pieces, a *sostenuto* pedal is rarely used but a *sostenuto* pedal is used in this piece in its entirety. Before learning this piece, the pianist must ensure that the piano’s *sostenuto* pedal is working correctly. The *sostenuto* pedal deals tremendous effects in the color and mood of *HONK*. If the *sostenuto* pedal does not function correctly, it can change the atmosphere of the entire piece.

Generally, a *sostenuto* pedal is used by the right foot, yet, *HONK* requires one to hold the *sostenuto* pedal by the left foot in some places. In Line 5, page 4 there is an indication, “*matter of fact very slight D on each lick*” on the *sostenuto* and *una corda* pedals (Fig. 9). It means that the pianist will need to use his/her left foot

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**Fig. 9**

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18 For some pianos, the middle pedal is a practice rail, which muffles with a felt cloth damper. It allows all keys to play quietly, mainly built for night-time practicing.
to sustain both the *sostenuto* and *una corda* pedals, such that a damper pedal can be applied to each note with the right foot. Due to the subtleness in using all three pedals, and sustaining two pedals by one foot in some places, choosing the right kind of shoes can change the ease of performance. Wearing flatter bottom shoes with low or no heel is suggested for the utmost control of pedals.

**4.6 Tempo**

In the beginning of the piece, there is an instruction by Boury: "*Each system represents 10 seconds*”. What he meant by “system” is the section between the wavy markings (which should be played in 10 seconds). Since there are no bar lines, meters, or tempo indications in some areas, Boury inserted wavy markings in the beginning or middle of the line (Fig. 10). To practice each section between the wavy markings with an accurate tempo, a stopwatch becomes a very useful tool to measure 10 seconds.
In Line 6, page 1, there is a tempo marking for the first time. It has no meter, yet the tempo marking of ♩ = c. 126 is indicated. This passage is very fast and accented notes must create a long line from E-flat, A, B-flat, C-sharp, C to B (Fig. 11). To maximize the effect of the accents, the left hand should play those non-accented notes. Additionally, the right hand’s finger numbers 1 and 2 should support finger number 3 for strength and sound. The first appearance of meter is in Line 5, page 2. This five measure section (Fig. 12) needs to be played according to the indicated tempo, although it is still in the wavy-lined section. Therefore, five measures of ♩ = 92 will need about six seconds to complete, which gives the pianist four seconds to play the previous section (Fig. 12). In some places, Boury indicates the tempo by writing the number. The pianist will need to subtract the number from ten seconds and play with the indicated tempo marking for the rest. One other indication that affects tempo are ‘V’ markings. The duration of each mark is about
one second, and the pianist will need to pause for a moment in silence.

![Fig. 12 Line 5, Page 2](image)

The ‘V’ mark with a fermata indicates a twice longer duration, and the ‘V’ mark followed by slur-like lines means to allow the previous sounds to fade away (Fig. 13). Along with using a stop watch, making a bigger copy of the score is a smart idea for ease of reading as well as for space to write time duration.

![Fig. 13 Line 5, Page 2](image) ![Line 1, Page 3](image) ![Line 6, Page 2](image)

4.7 Performance Terms Used in HONK

The piano is Boury’s favorite musical instrument; he loves the sound of it.\(^{19}\) He did not want to use ‘piano’ to create something else, but to seek unique and special sonorities by using the entire range of the piano, expressing with various

\(^{19}\) Robert Boury, E-mail Interview, (July 29, 2009)
dynamic indications, and extraordinarily using all three pedals.

Boury successfully created the sound effects that only the piano could produce. In this score, he gave a very specific instruction regarding the sound he wanted to hear. For instance, ‘smear’ refers to using a lot of damper pedal effect. By doing so, every pitch will be blended in together as a muddy line. ‘Scramble’ should sound messy, and should not be lined-up together (Fig. 14). In Line 6, page 4, are two glissandi, white and black keys moving in opposite directions with a damper pedal pressed. These lines lead to the clusters that are played by the sides of the pianist’s hands to give a dramatic effect (Fig. 15). Boury did not want to lose the ‘whaa’ sound that the piano created. In order to keep the vibrating sound and begin the next section in mp within four seconds, the pianist should rapidly flutter the damper pedal for a very short moment, then use a sostenuto pedal to hold the sound of ‘whaa’.

\[20\] Ibid.
In the section ‘Slapstick’, Boury described that, as in The Keystone Kops (the early silent films), the music should sound very active and silly. Watching this classic movie will give the pianist an idea of the sounds. The ‘Triumphant’ section is about victory against the atonality, and it should sound majestic and bold. All terms used in HONK are listed by alphabetical order with definitions in Appendix A.

4.8 Performance Issues

Problematic issues always arise, whether performing with or without the audio tape. Unfortunately, the tape has been missing since the early 1970’s, and the author was able to contact and interview the last pianist, Paul Schoenfield, who performed HONK with the original tape. Recreating the original tape was impossible\textsuperscript{21} due to the circumstance of years, the medical condition of Boury and equipments issues. The studio Boury used in the 1970’s in California is destroyed,\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{21} Mark Rubinstein, Personal Interview, (August 24, 2011)
and there is no way to recreate similar sounds without knowing the duration of each of the sounds because Boury does not remember exactly how he made them. With help of Mark Rubinstein, who is an audio engineer at The Ohio State University, the author was able to recreate the ‘tape’ part through the performance recording from 1970’s. It is impossible to clean up the piano part completely\(^{22}\), yet, this gives the pianist the opportunity to play *HONK* with the tape part. The performance issues without the tape are from the author’s personal experiences on performing in public, November 20, 2010. This document provides the recordings of: 1) complete performance with the original tape; 2) re-creation of the tape part, and; 3) complete performance as a piano solo.

### 4.8.1 Performing with the Tape

The last pianist who performed with the original tape was Paul Schoenfield, a composer, pianist and professor at the University of Michigan. Schoenfield said that the tape had to be started by another person on the stage.\(^{23}\) The tape enters at the end of the Line 3, page 6, as soon as the last chord is played by the pianist. The pianist will need to keep playing, according to the score, and cannot be late to play, especially in the second return of the atonal section. There are slightly different sound effects in the tape for each section; therefore, the pianist can use them as a

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\(^{22}\) Mark Rubinstein, Personal Interview, (August 24, 2011)

\(^{23}\) Paul Schoenfield, E-mail Interview, (March 3, 2011)
guide for ensemble unity. Playing HONK at the proper tempo ensures synchronicity with the tape. According to Schoenfield, the major problem he had during his practice sessions with the audio tape was when the cassette player broke.\textsuperscript{24} As long as the tape functions properly and the pianist plays with the indicated tempo, the performance with the tape can be less frustrating. Schoenfield said, “It was a lot of fun to learn and play”.\textsuperscript{25}

### 4.8.2 Performance Issues Without Tape

Boury stressed in his most recent email that playing HONK with the audio tape is optional. He expressed that “…if the composer says the tape is optional--it’s optional. It’s my call. Every composer is a law unto himself – by William Bolcom”.\textsuperscript{26}

HONK is an extremely difficult piece, yet it is highly artistic and can be played as a piano solo piece. There are some advantages to playing this piece without the tape. When HONK is performed without the tape, it is easier for the audience to recognize the atonal section returns without the loud protest noises made by the tape. Also, it is easier for the pianist’s ears to follow the atonal section without the tape noises. In the section, ‘Hue and Cry!’ at Line 3, page 8, the piano

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{26} Robert Boury, E-mail Interview, (March 22, 2011)
part has twelve measures of the same chords to accompany the tape. If the pianist chose not to play with the audio tape, he/she can decide whether to play the whole section as written or omit them.\textsuperscript{27} By doing so, the listeners can hear the musical direction approaching the climax, which the pianist creates. Playing \textit{HONK} is an attractive piece visually, not just audibly. Due to many clusters and wider jumps, the pianist will need to stretch across the entire piano. The correct execution of performing \textit{HONK} attracts other pianists to learn this piece, and it is a memorable performance to the audience overall.

4.9 Issue of the Missing Original Tape

Recreation of the audio tape was the only option; however, after consulting with the recording engineers, they commented that;

\begin{quote}
\textit{“After listening to the piece (which I really like) I have to say I'm even more sure that it's unlikely to separate the piano from the tape. Also, it would be even more difficult to recreate the tape part "by ear"... At the very least you would need detailed information about the composer's original process and sound sources - and I don’t think you'd be able to make any significant claims about the original.”}\textsuperscript{28}
\end{quote}

When the author questioned the reasons why Boury does not intend to recreate the audio tape, he reiterated that it was very long time ago and he did not remember the

\textsuperscript{27} Robert Boury, E-mail Interview, (September 6, 2010)\textsuperscript{28} Pete Tender, Mark Rubinstein, E-mail conversation, (March 3, 2011)
process of creating the tape. He said;

“You must understand...if the composer says the tape is optional--it’s optional. It's my call .... I no longer have access to the electronic studio...Regrets, really...”\(^{29}\)

Even though the recreation of the original tape may not be possible any time soon, the author is hoping for the future technology.

\(^{29}\) Robert Boury, E-mail Interview, (March 22, 2011)
5.1 Poem

Beautiful Ohio by James Wright

Those old Winnebago men
Knew what they were singing.
All summer long and all alone,
I had found a way
To sit on a railroad tie
Above the sewer main.
It spilled a shining waterfall out of a pipe
Somebody had gouged through the slanted earth.
Sixteen thousand and five hundred more or less people
In Martins Ferry, my home, my native country,
Quickened the river
With the speed of light.
And the light caught there
The solid speed of their lives
In the instant of that waterfall.
I know what we call it
Most of the time. But I have my own song for it,
And sometimes, even today,
I call it beauty

This ironically titled poem, *Beautiful Ohio*, is about a reintegration of present reality with the original name of *Beautiful River*, given to the Ohio River by the Winnebago Native Americans. Wright grew up in Martins Ferry, the industrial town with steelworks and pollution along the Ohio River. Wright wanted to escape from his home state, Ohio, and mention the harshness of living in Ohio in his early poems. He left Ohio for more than thirty years and expressed that he could never have become the great poet he was, had he not left Martins Ferry, Ohio. He understood the feeling of being trapped in the town where the only “choice” of vocation was to work at the steel mill. He possibly condemned what it did to the other people who chose to remain working in smoky factories.

### 5.2 Interpretation of the Poem

The author was able to contact Benjamin Glass, who is in the master of fine arts program at The Ohio State University, who focuses on the life of James Wright and his poems. Glass commented that “*It's important to approach poems openly...there is no one perfect interpretation, as subjectivity, particularly in*

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Wright’s case..." With interpretation from Glass, from the author and the findings, the author clarifies this poem.

_Those old Winnebago men knew what they were singing._

Winnebago (Algonquin for “People of the Filthy Water”) is a Native American tribe. Wright is evoking the native people calling the river "Ohio". Like many other tribes among them, their traditional religious ceremonies are various festivals. One of their ceremonies includes vision quests. In the poem, Winnebago men foresee the future of the Ohio River.

_All summer long and all alone, I had found a way to sit on a railroad tie above the sewer main._

It is Wright’s childhood memory, expressing a childhood habit of going out by himself and seeing intoxicated water, slowly destroying the clean Ohio River.

_It spilled a shining waterfall out of a pipe somebody had gouged through the slanted earth._

This is the remembered moment. Here the ugly, industrial pipe and sewer are capable of producing some kind of beauty still: the shining waterfall. Glass stated that it is a common theme of Wright's, beauty despite the wasteland, despite pollution and industrial colonization.

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33 Benjamin Glass, E-mail interview, (April 4, 2011)
35 Ibid. 681.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
Sixteen thousand and five hundred more or less people in Martins Ferry, my home, my native country.

‘Sixteen thousand and five hundred more or less people’ working hard and living the best they can even though their choice was only to work at the steel mill. Wright understood the harshness of living by the polluted Ohio River, and escaped from his home town; yet, it is his root, and this is his hometown.

Quickened the river with the speed of light. And the light caught there, the solid speed of their lives in the instant of that waterfall.

He must be seeing something about the life of his hometown reflected in that waterfall. The individual beauty juxtaposed with the context of blue-collar labor and difficulties. He must also be saying that people’s lives go quickly, too.\(^\text{38}\)

I know what we call it most of the time.

According to Glass, Wright knew what "we" call it most of the time: either literally Ohio, or some diminutive, negative term. He is saying in his poem that often people call it something usual, or negative, but now, in reflection, he is capable of seeing it as beautiful.

But I have my own song for it, and sometimes, even today, I call it beauty.

Here Wright is joining with Winnebago’s singing. Glass proposes that here is also the complex idea of two natives: the Winnebago who were native and are now pushed away, and the successive native: the poet born in Ohio. What unites them

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\(^{38}\) Ibid.
seems to be seeing beauty here. Wright also saw people living near the polluted river as best as they can. The human spirit is what Wright refers to, in the last line, ‘I call it beauty’.

Wright loved Ohio and he hated Ohio. He despised the industrialization, but also was able to see beauty and feel affection for his home state. This place made him who he was, and the Ohio River was a part of his history.

5.3 Background Information

Inspired by the poem, Beautiful Ohio by James Wright, Boury composed Beautiful Ohio as a chamber work that was scored for an English horn and string quartet in 1980. Later in the same year Boury arranged it for piano, and dedicated it to his wife, Angelique.

In the year Wright died (March 25, 1980), his widow, Annie, and Wright’s friend and a poet, Robert Bly, were invited to be the special guests at the James Wright Poetry Festival, held annually in early spring at the Martins Ferry Public Library since April, 1981. As a member of the Ohio Arts Council, Boury was asked to shuttle around Robert Bly that weekend, and they became fast friends. Boury

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39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
remembered that Bly couldn't hold back his tears as he read this poem by the late Wright.  

Boury admitted that he became very depressed looking at his deserted hometown. He had left his hometown at a young age, and did not return until the middle 1970’s. Perhaps Boury felt Wright’s ambiguous feeling toward his hometown. It is easy not to appreciate or realize what we have in our lives, especially at a young age. Both Wright and Boury left their home-town in their youth, yet they realized what made them, ‘them’. Their hometowns may not appear as ‘beautiful’, but their hometowns are a part of their histories, their identification of who they are. Wright spoke to Boury through his poem, and Boury illustrated it into music in honor of his death.

5.4 The Poem and the Piano Piece

Written in a through-composed form, Beautiful Ohio is from the era of Boury’s traditional writing style. The piece begins with a sad, two-measure theme in B minor (Fig. 16), in a similar mood to that of Oiseaux tristes ("Sad Birds") by Maurice Ravel. This figure is heard in different places later, although this sad mood phrase is less pronounced due to the new melody, made with a dotted-quarter note.

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41 Robert Boury, E-mail Interview, (December 13, 2010)
42 Robert Boury, E-mail Interview, (March 4, 2011)
followed by three eighth-notes (Fig. 17). These changes may be described as Boury’s feeling toward the scenery of his hometown, sad yet beautiful.

After the twelve-measure-long introduction, the piece moves to section 1, a choral accompaniment with a simple two-note phrase. The dynamic marking, $f$ and $ff$ are seen in this section, yet it has a dark color with less movement mood, as Boury describes the condition of the Ohio River and the lives of people living nearby. This first section leads to section 2, written in the key of $c$ minor at measure 24. The short section 2 keeps a similar two-note melody, yet Boury added a broken-chord
accompaniment in the left hand for deeper expression. The section may refer to the emotion toward the Ohio River and his childhood memory. Measure 32 begins the third section with a new meter in 3/4 in E major. In section 3, Boury maintains the dark color of minor seventh chords for picturing the polluted river; however, Boury also added more major ninth chords, almost as if Boury were describing the positive spirits of people who live nearby. The final section 4 starts at measure 56 with four-measure-long phrases. These phrases are composed of E and A major ninth chords, reaching C major seventh and ninth, and D major ninth chords. This last section is rather reminiscent, even a bit of nostalgic, as if Boury illustrated his own childhood memory of the Ohio River. The piece reaches with an A major eleventh chord with an indication of *ritardando* before this piece comes to an end in the home key, E major triad (Fig. 18). The *pp* dynamic marking and longer notes support the color and mood of ‘acceptance’ and ‘beauty’ regarding the Ohio River.

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**Fig. 18** Structure and Keys  
*Beautiful Ohio, Op. 15*
5.5 Performance and Practice Suggestions

The piece is not too demanding technically, although it is musically challenging. Young pianists may not understand the true meaning of this piece and, hence, Wright’s poem. The pianist must read James Wright’s *Beautiful Ohio* before ever learning the first note. There are some other suggestions on performing this piece. From measure 13, the right hand needs to cover both the melodic line and part of the accompaniment (Fig. 19). The pianist should strike a balance between the melody and filler notes in the right hand.

![Figure 19](image)

Try brushing the melody notes to have the illusion of a two-note slur. When the left hand changes to an arpeggio accompaniment pattern, the lowest notes must be heard and sustained by the damper pedal (Fig. 20). In addition, any of the moving notes
should be shaped according to the directions. Use of a long-stroke motion for each note would help to achieve the right color for this piece.

The pianist must read and understand the poem by Wright in order to set the mood and find the right color for this piece. A piece like this requires the life experience of leaving one’s hometown and may not be suited for young pianists. It requires a mature life experience, and the young pianist may not understand or may not able to produce the right color and moods.
Chapter 6


6.1 Background Information

Boury has been enchanted by moths since he was ten years old. He said, “...They are mysterious... I find their designs far exceed what they need for natural defense. That’s art...” Boury was influenced by the writing of John Cage and used the medieval technique of soggetto cavato in this twelve-piece set, which is discussed later in this chapter.

All twelve pieces are very short, with free rhythm, and the register of those notes on the piano is free as well. By letting the pianist choose the register in which to play notes with free rhythm, the pieces provide freedom for personal tastes and an individual, unique performance experience. They are composed to be performed as a group. This twelve-piece set is dedicated to the author, Rina Shimizu Grow. Each scale that is used in this set is listed in Appendix D. All movements in this set are easy to read, yet are difficult to perform. Due to their tempo markings and the structure of the music itself, the pianist is required to have moderate to advanced experience in playing atonal music. There is no clear melody or tonal center that assists in learning the piece quickly. If the pianist listens to him/herself

43 Robert Boury, E-mail Interview, (December 20, 2010)
44 Ibid.
very carefully while practicing this set, however, it helps to master the set much faster. Additionally, this set requires that the pianist has skills of playing without constantly having to look at one’s hands.

6.2 Similar Works by Other Composers

Nature has been composers’ inspirations for centuries. There are several composers prior to Boury who chose insects as themes for their compositions. For instance, Robert Schumann composed a suite of piano pieces, *Papillons (Butterflies)* Op. 2. An orchestral interlude, *Flight of the Bumblebee*, was composed by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. Using musical elements in a certain manner, composers like Maurice Ravel and Seymour Bernstein also portrayed insects in compositions for their musical expressions. Including Boury’s set, these pieces demonstrate the incredible observations by the composers, including detailed insects’ movements, behaviors, and appearances. As an example of similar pieces to those of Boury, *Noctuelles (Night Moth)* by Ravel and *Insects* by Bernstein are briefly discussed in the section below.

Ravel has been one of Boury’s favorite composers, someone he admires very much. Boury was aware of *Noctuelles* by Ravel, and likes the piece very much. Additionally, his fascination toward moths led him to create his own “moth’s

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45 Robert Boury, E-mail Interview, (March 7, 2011)
pieces.” Their moth works are composed through different compositional techniques, yet they are very similar in some points. Both works have a mysterious atmosphere and express the immaterial presence of moths, with whirring wings and rapid movements. They are sketched very well for both pianists and audience to enjoy the imagery of moths.

Another similar work, *Insects*, a total of eight pieces by Seymour Bernstein, was composed about thirty years before Boury composed his set. Boury admired and respected Bernstein as a composer and his talent to sketch insects’ movements into musical composition. Both Bernstein’s and Boury’s sets are very unique characteristic pieces that describe the movements and characteristics of insects very precisely. These sets are very attractive for a theme recital. Although the idea behind both of these sets is based on insects, pianistic and technical levels are dissimilar. The set, *Insects* by Bernstein is more approachable because of many repeated patterns and recognizable motives. The repeated patterns and short motives assist the pianist for a quick learning experience and a solid performance. Due to *12 Moth Toccatas* by Boury consisting of irregular patterns, *Insects* by Seymour Bernstein would be an ideal set for preparing more difficult characteristic pieces, including Boury’s set.

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46 Robert Boury, E-mail Interview, (March 7, 2011)
6.2.1 Noctuelles (Night Moths) by Maurice Ravel

Maurice Ravel composed the solo piano suite, *Miroirs*, in 1904-1905. The first piece, *Noctuelles*, was dedicated to the poet Léon-Paul Fargue, a friend and fellow member of “Les Apaches”, which was a group of French musicians, writers, and artists. Ravel composed *Noctuelles* after Fargue’s poem, *La Petite Gare* (The Little Train Station). He was inspired by the lines in the poem, “the nocturnal moths in their barns launch themselves clumsily into the air, going from one perch to another,” and illustrated this phrase into music.

Written in a ternary form with coda, *Noctuelles* is an exceptionally chromatic and delicate piece that illustrates fluttering night moths hovering around lights. The initial motive expresses a somewhat agitated mood, created by intricate rhythmic patterns with frequently changed meters. Multi voices may represent the layer of moths, and ornamentations may refer to their disoriented movement near the light. Ravel precisely observed the movements of night moths and wrote the piece in a dark, nocturnal mood as background.

6.2.2 Insects by Seymour Bernstein

A pedagogue, author, composer and pianist, Seymour Bernstein wrote two
books of short characteristic pieces, *Insects*. They were composed in 1974, while he was living in a rustic setting in the coastal state of Maine, where he saw many insects living in his residence.

A total of eight pieces in these books are titled, *Carpenter Ant; Cockroach; Mosquito; Dying Moth; Humbug; Praying Mantis; Centipede and Black Fly-Witty*. They are atonal étude-like pieces that employ technical study on the piano. Along with playing these pieces in a traditional manner, the pianist is also required to produce musical effects such as clapping hands, slapping legs, and slapping a piano lid. Bernstein’s precise use of musical elements is evident in these sets, and they encourage the audience to imagine those insects in their mind’s eye.

6.3 Soggetto Cavato

6.3.1 Origin and History of Soggetto Cavato

*Soggetto cavato* (Italian) is a compositional technique used by Renaissance composer Josquin des Prez, derived from phrases or words associated with them by matching the vowels with the traditional Guidonian solemnization syllables (*ut re mi*.

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52 Tsu, 124-126.
The term named by the theorist Zarlino is, literally, ‘soggetto cavato dalle parole’ – a subject ‘carved out of the words’. The first piece of soggetto cavato was Josquin’s Mass, Missa Hercules dux Ferrarie, which was composed in Duke Hercules’ honor. The vowels in Hercules’ name and title were equated with syllables in the hexachords (Fig. 21).

![hexachord](image)

**Fig. 21 Traditional Soggetto Cavato Technique**

### 6.3.2 Soggetto Cavato Used by Other Composers

Many composers after Josquin experimented with the soggetto cavato compositional technique. In the traditional soggetto cavato, there are very limited choices in musical notes; for instance, composers can choose either fa (F) or la (A) for the vowel ‘a’. Perhaps some composers felt like rearranging the line. Works by

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J. S. Bach (using BACH motif), Schumann (*Abegg Variation Op. 1* and *Carnival Op. 9*), Ravel (*Menuet sur le nom d’Haydn*), and many other composers experimented with this technique. Although the German and French composers may have slightly different ways of placing and repeating the letters due to their languages, they both have more possibilities of choosing notes (Fig. 22).

| Alphabet | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z |
| Pitch    | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | A | B | C | D | E |

Fig. 22 Example of Soggetto Cavato, Letters to Pitches

**6.3.3 Boury’s Approach to Soggetto Cavato in 12 Secret Designs for Piano**

Boury often encouraged his composition students to employ the technique of *soggetto cavato*. He explained the process of this compositional technique as if it were a musical game dealing with words. In *Secret Designs for Piano “12 Moth Toccatas”*, he selected the name of moths, and then matched the letters of the alphabet to world music scales by spelling their names in music. The difference between his approaches as compared to Figure 22 is that he chose the musical scales of the entire world as a canvas, over traditional major or minor scales. Sometimes he used the scales themselves; with some he employed a chromatic scale as

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55 Robert Boury, E-mail Interview, (December 20, 2010)
supplemental in his tone choice (Fig. 23).

Figure 24 shows the first two words of *Luna Moth*. Notice in the first movement, Boury used not only the name of the moth but also the Latin name related to Luna Moth.
Luna Moth uses a Byzantine scale with a chromatic scale for the optional pitch choice (See Appendix D). The words hidden in Luna Moth are: Adrastea; Amalthea; Callisto; Chron; Cordelia; Deimos; Dione; Enceladus; Galilean; Ganymede; Hyperion; Iapetus; Janus; Landsat; Luna; Metis; Mimas; Miranda; Oberon; Pan; Pandora; Phobos; Portia; Prometheus; Puck; Rhea; Terra; Tethys; Thebes; Titan; Tracc; Triton; Yahkoh; and Luna. They are all names of moons. Some of the other movements include the locations where the moths live, their colors and appearances, and the alternative names of the moths.

Fig. 24  Hidden Names in Luna Moth
6.4 Brief Information on Each Moth with Suggestions for Practicing/Performing

6.4.1 Luna Moth

The Luna moth, also known as “Moon moth”, belongs to the family of *Saturniidae* (Fig. 25).\(^{56}\) It has a large wingspan of five inches and a long dangling tail. Their color is a very beautiful mint green, accented by maroon and yellow “eyes” dots. The life of the Luna moth is brief and it is commonly observed in May.

and June.\textsuperscript{57}

This movement is written in the Byzantine scale (See Appendix B), in which Boury employed the \textit{soggetto cavato} technique. Compared with other movements in this set, Boury created more space between notes by adding longer notes, tied-notes, and fermata markings. This gesture creates the image of the Luna moth flying very gracefully from one spot to another. The movement is in 3/4, and it may be played as dance music to imitate the Luna moth under a bright moon. It ends very quietly, as if the Luna moth disappears into the dark night sky.

\subsection*{6.4.2 Sphinx Moths}

The Sphinx moth (Fig. 26)\textsuperscript{58} is often mistaken for a hummingbird due to its rapid wing movements and its habit of hovering in front of flowers to extract the nectar. There are many kinds of Sphinx moths with various color schemes. Those colors appear in harmonious combinations and are of exquisite contrast. They are

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.
moderately large in size, yet are some of the fastest flying insects.\textsuperscript{59}

![Fig. 26 Sphinx Moth](image)

This is one of the movements in which Boury well illustrates the music’s title. As mentioned earlier, sphinx moths behave like hummingbirds. As evidence of this, the range of this piece stays within two octaves, as though the sphinx moth is hovering in the mid-air. Additionally, each pattern is filled only with constantly moving eighth-notes. The final two-measures show that the Sphinx moth flies away very quickly. To play the scale quickly and smoothly, the pianist should cross both hands, 4-3-2-1 for the left hand, and 1-2-3-4 for the right hand (Fig. 27). The pianist should be careful not to accent any of the notes, especially in the scale at the end.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.
Owlet moths (Fig. 28), also known as Noctuidae, are the largest North American moth group. They range from small to large, generally have gray or

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brown body color and fly at night, with the exception of some brightly-colored species that fly during the daytime. Most of these moths that fly at night have very large glowing eyes and are attracted to light.

This movement is indicated as ‘incandescent’ at the beginning, as if the Owlet moths are flying to the street light at night. The composition itself is written in a very busy and energetic mood, created by the endless sixteenth-notes that jump to one another randomly. Boury knew their behavior of flying around the light and, therefore, avoids scale-like patterns that may refer to ‘flying straight’ to the light. These sixteenth-notes are not easy to master; it requires keeping one’s eyes on the score at all times in order to play in performance tempo.

6.4.4 Hook-Tip Moths

The ‘Hook-Tip moth’ (*Drepanoidea*) is named after their hook-shaped apex

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61 Ibid.
of the fore wings (Fig. 29). There are many different types of Hook-tip moths that exist worldwide; their color and size vary depending on their location. Some fly only at night and are attracted to the light.

![Hook-Tip Moth](image)

This piece is in 7/8 time and in the key of A-flat major. This is the only piece in this set in which Boury used the traditional key signature. The piece itself has a very elegant yet clean sonority that moves constantly, as in the previous movement. When the author asked for the indication of ‘perfumed’, Boury replied, “When you become experienced with butterflies and moths...you can tell their nearness by their smell. It comes from the plants they ate as a caterpillar.” There is no theme or melody in this movement, yet the ascending passage of G–A flat–E flat–A flat that is heard three times may refer to the theme for the Hook-tip moth. Due to a lack of accidentals, this movement is not too technically difficult compared with others in

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64 Ibid.
this set; however, it still requires that the pianist find the correct keys by feel most of the time. The end of this movement has many tied notes in the right hand that are tricky to perform without using the left hand. By using the left hand for some of the tied notes in the right hand, the pianist can maintain the A flat–E flat–A flat–D flat–A flat sonority (Fig. 30).

6.4.5 Tiger Moths

The ‘Tiger moth’ (Fig.31)\textsuperscript{65} is named after its appearance of colorful tiger-

like markings on the wings. There are both small and large tiger moths belonging to
the Arctiidae family, a very prevalent species that is found worldwide. Some of
them use their bright-colored wings to warn predators that they are toxic. When they
are attacked by predators, Tiger Moths produce a series of ultrasonic clicks which
advertise that they are distasteful.

The indication on the score at the beginning is ‘Fierce’, perhaps deriving
from the toxic appearance of Tiger moths and their defense mechanism to protect
against predators. Also, Boury notes, “To be played two octaves lower with only the
light pedal (optional)”. This may refer to the size of the Tiger moths. The music
itself is very tricky to play and may take longer to master the notes that have no
patterns. In addition to the unexpected patterns like the Tiger moths’ behavior, there

66 Thomas Brown, The Book of Butterflies, Sphinxes, and Moths (London, General Books LLC,
67 Simmons et al., 126.
are a number of accidental markings, as well as a faster tempo. When the pianist plays the continual eighth-note piece two octaves lower, the demand is even greater.

In order to maintain the delicacy of the moths, the pianist needs to play without creating too heavy or ‘muddy’ sound, yet the ferocious tension must be continued. To create this atmosphere, the pianist must control the damper pedal as lightly as possible and use finger pedals for an ultra-legato touch.

6.4.6 Geometer Moths

Geometer Moths, also known as Geometridae (Fig. 32)⁶⁸, is derived from the Greek word for “measure the earth”. It is named for the way in which caterpillars move. The caterpillars have no legs on their middle segments, and for this reason they move forward with a loop in the middle like inchworms. Geometer Moths have a delicate, narrow body with wings that are often spread flat like a butterfly. These small-to medium-sized moths fly at night mostly, although there are some day-

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fliers.\textsuperscript{69}

Fig. 32  Geometer Moth

The tempo marking and the indication of ‘graceful’ fits this movement very well. Although this piece does not follow the traditional gavotte rhythm of common-time or cut-time, Boury kept the duple meter to be a dance movement for the geometer moth. It is very straightforward and less technically challenging, due to the moderately slower tempo. When the pianist plays this, both listener and player must feel the two beats in each measure, rather than feeling each eighth-note.

6.4.7 Grass Moths

Grass moths (from the family of *Crambid* snot moths, Fig. 33)\(^70\) are very common small moths that are light brownish-yellow in color.\(^71\) They move very quickly and fly up from the grass when disturbed. Their camouflage techniques are very effective. They are also known as lawn moths because they damage grass and crops.\(^72\) Because they are attracted to light, they fly at night.

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This piece captures the characteristics of Grass moths. The tempo indication is ‘quick’- like their movement - and the dynamic marking is piano, as is the size of Grass moths. Like many other movements in this set, this may take a longer practicing time to master due to the tempo and continuous eighth-notes that are patterned irregularly. Slow practicing with careful listening, and keeping the same finger numbers will help to build both kinetic and auditory memory.

6.4.8 Lappet Moths

The name ‘Lappet’ is derived from the tubercle, shaped like a little flap or lappet that is found on its caterpillars. This medium-sized moth (Fig. 34)\textsuperscript{73} is from the \textit{Lasiocampidae} family, having a very hairy body. Typically, they have reddish-brown wings, and hold their wings folded over their backs like a tent when they are at rest.\textsuperscript{74} Because of their shape and colors, they often can be mistaken for dry leaves.

\textsuperscript{73} Cragin, 174-6.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid.
The first half is written in the bass clef, to be played with a ‘muttered’ sound. The other half is written one octave higher than the first one with identical pitches. Because of this structure, the pianist should use the exact same finger numbers to accelerate the process of learning. The numerous accidentals also may slow down the pianist in order to master this piece. However, the melodic eight-measure line repeats in a different register through the entire movement. Therefore, by listening and mastering the first eight measures very carefully, the pianist could learn this movement in a short time by repeating the same pattern in a higher register.

6.4.9 Bell Moths

The “Bell moth”, also known as “leaf roller moth”, is from the family
Tortricidae (Fig. 35). The name, ‘Bell moth’, is derived from their bell-like shaped wings. The leaf roller is named after the habit of the larva. The adult moths are generally small with broad fore-wings. Most of them are brown, tan and gray without significant markings or spots. They are also attracted to light and are night flyers.

This movement is in stark contrast to the previous movement. It is marked as ‘Nocturnal’ and is the slowest tempo in this entire set. Because of the tempo marking and the fact that both hands are in treble clef, it is technically easier to play this movement. However, it may be tricky to play the right tones for this piece. This

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is a nocturnal piece for smaller sized moths, and their colors blend very well in nature. Therefore, no accents should be heard, and it should be played very smoothly with a legato touch. The use of longer brush stroke gestures for each note may help to produce the precise mood for this piece.

6.4.10 Case-bearer Moth

From the family Coleophoridae, Case-bearer moths (Fig. 36) received their name after the characteristic of their larva that lives in a portable case. The adult moths have very small, narrow and long bodies and are generally of one color. Some are dark and some have very light-colored bodies. Because of their eating habits, generally, case-bearer moths are potential household pests. This tiny moth prefers a humid atmosphere and is seen in spring and summer.

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77 Slingerland, 49.
This movement is one of the shortest in this set, consisting of thirteen measures, and to be played within ten seconds or less. Like many other movements in this set, this piece consists of constantly moving eighth-notes. Due to the accidentals and the *vivace* indication, it is a short piece, yet requires a longer practicing time. Additionally, playing with a lighter touch for each note is suited for this movement.

6.4.11 *Leopard Moth*

This larger sized moth has beautiful patterns like a leopard (Fig. 37). They

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79 Robert Boury, E-mail Interview, (March 11, 2011).
are from same family as Tiger moths (*Arctiidae*). Their white bodies are covered with black, oval-shaped rings; their abdomens are marked with blue and orange, although they are not visible when at rest. Obviously, this striking moth is named after its appearance. Their defense mechanism consists of emitting yellow-like liquid droplets to warn predators. They are also night flyers.

![Leopard Moth](image)

There are many facts that define this movement as one of the more difficult in this set. First, there is no consistency in either motion or pitch in this movement, unlike those observed in other movements in this set. The use of many accidentals as well as a faster tempo is another factor that increases its difficulty. After spending sometime on this piece with careful listening, each random note becomes a melody to the pianist’s ears and is successfully manageable. A ‘Grand Pause’ (G.P.) occurs

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at the end of this movement, before entering the final movement.

6.4.12 Prominents

Boury concluded this set with a small family of medium-sized moths, *Prominents*. They have various appearances depending on their locations. Many larvae bear strong humps or prominences, and they also are attracted to light.⁸²

This last movement does not carry a particular species of moth as indicated earlier. Since ‘Prominent’ are families of many different moths the number of eighth-notes per measure may refer to the crowded Prominent moths’ movements. Although the piece may contain many moths, it is played peacefully and quietly throughout, as the indication of pianissimo and ‘serene’ suggests. According to Boury, this should be played with a moderate tempo, and quietly. There is the possibility of applying the *una corda* pedal, although he did not indicate it, due to various effects from individual pianos. He added that the effect is not *con sordino* but simply quiet, so the pianist must listen and make discrete decisions.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

Robert Boury has explored various arts and expressed his emotions through his compositions. His piano works introduced in this document present his growth as a composer, revealing the evolution of his style. Boury’s early works exhibit influences of ragtime and jazz with his own musical symbols and instructions (Appendix A). Each of them describes the stage in his life events or his thoughts toward the world in which he lives. When the author asked Boury about his early works, Boury replied, “I was young and crazy back then...”\textsuperscript{83} Those piano pieces came straight from his heart to the manuscript paper, as if he were simply being a composer. In time his piano works became more of traditional western music notation, yet involved contemporary characteristics, such as the use of irregular meters, dynamic markings, and unusual chords to imply his expression. Many of his traditional-style pieces are very emotional and some require considerable mature life experiences to understand. His later piano works are based on the \textit{soggetto cavatos} technique. Boury did not just follow the technique by using major and minor scales, but he went a step further by exploring the music scales of the world, such as Japanese and Byzantine scales.

\textsuperscript{83} Robert Boury, E-mail Interview, (November 23, 2010).
Overall, his piano works are of short to medium length, yet require different techniques and attention, depending on the piece. Boury is the kind of composer who searches for an extraordinary approach, such as using arm clusters and music scales of the world. Performing many of Boury’s piano works requires not just technical piano skills, but also maturity in understanding the meaning of the piece. The composition, *Beautiful Ohio*, is a good example of this, and produces significantly deeper emotions than what is on the score. Perhaps the information and performing suggestions in this document will provide the separation between performance and artistic playing. In this manner the pianist can send accurate messages from the composer to the audience.
Appendix A

List of Terms by Boury in *HONK*

(Alphabetical Order)

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Should be played in 10 seconds

Hold until sound fades away

Pause for a moment in silence

Let the previous sound fades away

Almost no Ped. Subtle touch of the damper pedal

C. About

Chorale (distant). Richer, thicker sound but in mysterious way

D. Damper pedal

Distant. A mysterious, eerie sound

Dry. No damper pedal, dry sound

Fantastic. Bright sound

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Fingers.........................Finger clusters
Forearms........................Forearms clusters
Hue and Cry! Vicious!...........Demanding movement, loud shouts
Jerky ..........................Dry sound
Light D..........................A half-pedal to quarter-pedal
Mad, giddy! ......................Disoriented, dizzy sound
Palm............................Palm clusters
S.................................A sostenuto pedal
Scramble........................Messy sound, notes should not lie-up together
Slapstick!.........................Very active and silly sound
Slappy...........................Messy, less energy
Slight D..........................A light quarter-pedal
Smear.............................Using a lot of damper pedal effect
Tender..............................Sentimental sound
Triumphant!........................Victorious sound against atonal music
U.C..................................A una corda pedal
Very slight D......................A very light quarter-pedal
Violent!................................Aggressive, out--of--control sound
Appendix B
Scales and Compositional Sketches

Scales used in *12 Secret Designs for Piano, Op. 60*

*Luna Moth*—Byzantine scale

*Sphinx Moths*—Symmetrical Arabian scale (diminished scale)

*Hook-Tip Moths*—Balinese scale
Tiger Moths—Symmetrical Arabian scale (diminished scale)

Geometer Moths—Persian scale

Grass Moths—Chinese scale

Lappet Moths—Enigmatic scale
Case-Bearers—Hindustan symmetrical scale

Bell Moths—Japanese scale

Leopard Moth—Symmetrical Arabian scale (diminished scale)

Prominents—Egyptian scale
Appendix C

Discography

Appendix D

Email Interview with Robert Boury

Grow: Tell me about your parents, your childhood memory.
Boury: Michael Boury and Pearl (Mickey) Boury. My father ran the commissary for he and his brothers restaurants--made things like chili in huge vats. Dad was always bringing home new recipes to try out on us. My mom was a mother at home. Dad played trombone, my mother played alto saxophone in their high school band. Also she was a pianist. My mother had the most beautiful touch of anyone I've ever heard up close. She only taught me by example. I've been trying to recreate it ever since.

Grow: Who was your first piano/composition teacher (full name)?
Boury: Dorothy Ackerman Zoeckler was my piano and composition teacher from age ten through seventeen. She was a published composer herself, a member of Pen Women and she had books on Art and Literature that we, her students could take home. I would go to her house every day after school and sight-read downstairs where parents and students waited for their lesson--hoping for a cancellation so I could have an extra lesson.

Grow: How long did you take lesson from the teacher?
Boury: 7 yrs.

Grow: At what age, did you compose your first piece? For which instrument (s)?
Boury: My first composition was at about 13. It was actually, "March of the Toreadors" from Carmen, but my teacher didn't tell me. She just said, "It's good."

Grow: David Diamond, Mario Davidovsky, Leslie Bassett and Ross Lee Finney were your composition teachers. Correct? Could you tell me when/where and how long you were getting instructions from them? In what way, did they influence you and your compositional style?
Boury: David Diamond taught the junior level composition class at Manhattan School of Music in 1966-67. He told our all male class, "Gentlemen, you can write anything you want, so long as it's a fugue." I wrote a song cycle which was fugal--the first of the "Three Serious Songs" was a fugue, the second, an ostinatio, the third a double fugue. He had studied counterpoint with Nadia Boulenger and knew that it would make music pour out of us after that work.
was done. He was right. The following year, Mario Davidovski taught senior level composition, which for the first time was not a class but private lessons. I liked him very much, didn't understand his music, but did take his advice to apply to the University of Michigan for graduate school. 1968 was a watershed year for me, that Fall studying with a student of Alban Berg, Ross Lee Finney. Just being around Mr. Finney, in those expressionistic years (1968-69) produced a Second Viennese school score from me, without effort. Or, as my Theory Teacher Richmond Browne said on hearing my "Summer Music 1968" for orchestra, "How could you know so much about Vienna in 1935?" The answer was being with Ross Lee Finney. He had a photo of Berg behind his desk with an inscription, "To Ross Lee Finney--best Alban." Who wouldn't be influenced? Mr. Bassett was and is a master orchestral thinker. My lessons with him were largely quiet affairs, him looking for about a half an hour at a page of 30 line full score, then saying, "Aren't the trombones a little high?" Seemed like nothing was happening--yet I look at my own instrumental music and have to say, it looks like Bassett. Very clean, not many doublings. During my time at University of Michigan, 1968-72, I was a teaching fellow in composition, Mr. Finney was the lecturer, also I won the Joseph Hbearnes Prize from Columbia University, traveled to Brazil to hear the premiere of that winning work ("GrylliY for large orchestra) and came across the "Eighty-eight Years of Eubie Blake," a Columbia Records double album--which changed my life. But that is another story.

Grow: Why did you name it "HONK"? The whole piece is somewhat atonal with rags. Did you use soggetto cavato in the beginning of this piece?
Boury: It's short for "Honky Tonk". No soggetto cavato use. All by ear.

Grow: The section you called it, "slapstick" in pg. 5. Any particular comedy or cartoon in your mind when you composed this?
Boury: I felt zany, like the novelty rags, and parodies of ragtime, (as in Ketstone Kops early silent films).

Grow: "Triumphant" in pg. 7. Victory? Against what?
Boury: Against atonality. I was breaking out of myself definition as a European style composer, and claiming my American roots.

Grow: Could you tell me anything about this piece or any events that may influenced you as a composer and this piece?
Boury: Yes, in 1970 the Vietnam war was raging and there were protests on many
campuses. I myself was coming to the end of my schooling and sensing that my increasingly chromatic music led me into a corner. Ragtime offered me a way out—one based on rhythm, not harmony primarily. But yes, the atmosphere was rebellious. The tape consisted of electric guitar sounds, speech and music concrete. There were a number of statements announcing the end of serialism in 1970, George Rochberg's book, "The Politics of Survival," with an introduction by a young Bill Bolcom (himself a prime mover in the revival of ragtime,) and Syd Hodkinson's composition, "The Dissolution of the Serial." But HONK actually portrayed the "war in heaven" as the poet Ginsberg wrote. Notice HONK ends rather sadly.

Grow: Is there any way you could re-create the missing tape?
Boury: No. You must understand, works without opus numbers are of no musical interest to me, but only show where I came from. And if the composer says the tape is optional—it's optional. It's my call. "Every composer is a law unto himself," William Bolcom. If you want to recreate the tape, multi track wailing guitars, get a recording of Hopalong Cassidy ("Pardon me mister, but what's all the excitement about," and a Tarzan call for the ending. I have no interest in my works without opus numbers. None. Also, I no longer have access to a traditional electronic studio, splicing block, the whole apparatus of the '60's electronic music scene. Regrets, really, Rina,

Grow: You composed Beautiful Ohio, Op 15 for also chamber. Which one came out first? Piano solo or chamber? Tell me why / how the poem influenced you?
Boury: The version for English Horn and string quartet came first, then I reduced it for piano. I was living in my hometown at the time, the area where Wright was from, and the river is polluted and there's little in the way of musical culture. I was downcast. Actually, Wright passed away that year and we commemorated his life by holding the first of an annual James Wright Poetry Festival at the Martins Ferry Public Library. Martins Ferry is right across the river from the West Virginia border and my hometown, Wheeling.

Grow: You composed a short twelve pieces set, called 12 Secret Design for Piano, Op. 60. I'm very curious to know why you picked 'moths'? Are they your favorite insect? Are they played as a set in a performance setting? This seems like composed based on Soggetto cavato. If so, what scales?
Boury: I'm enchanted with butterflies and moths. I have been since age ten. I find
their designs far exceed what they need for natural defense. That's art. Under the influence of the writings of John Cage, I was trying to limit my power of choice—so I used the Medieval technique of soggetto cavato, matching exotic scales to the alphabet to give me the pitches. The rhythm is free, also the register where I placed the notes on the piano is free. They are in the tradition of Schumann's sets of small piano pieces. They too are meant to be played as a group. The names came first, then matching the letters of the alphabet to world music scales—and spelling their names in music.

Grow: I see the indication, 'perfumed' in the movement of Hook-Tip Moths. Why did you indicated 'perfumed'?

Boury: When you become experienced with butterflies and moths—you can tell their nearness by their smell. It comes from the plants they ate as a caterpillar. You can also tell which butterfly is flying nearby it's shadow—the way they move. Ultimately, these toccatas are compositions, not techniques (as Schoenberg said of his music when theorists tried to explain his choices. You have an advantage, being an excellent composer yourself, Rina. You know that composing happens very fast and the process of those choices are lost—no, abandoned in favor of the composition that results.

Grow: What do you think about using una corda pedal where you indicated pp?

Boury: Una corda is a possibility, but I find it is so different on various pianos that I advise caution. The effect is not con sordino—just quiet.
Dear Rina Grow

You have dipped a bit into the past, since Robert Boury was my student many years ago. He was a good man and an interesting composer, dedicated to music and working hard at it. I suggest that you write him.

Boury was a young composer in the 60's and 70s, a time when there was much change in manner and styles. Young American composers were fascinated by computers for making music, by new notation, as suggested from Europe, and by new ways of playing our instruments. It seemed exciting, and it was for many of us. Many of the inventions that seemed worthwhile then have not lasted well, and some of the changes that were discussed at the time have faded from use. Nevertheless, a substantial residue of that music remains in all of us.

Please give him my best wishes and blessings.

Leslie Bassett
Appendix F

Email from Paul Schoenfield

Hello Rina:
The tape had to be started by another person. Playing the piece at the proper tempo insures synchronism with the tape. The only problem I ever had was when the machine broke.
It was a lot of fun to learn and play.

PS
Hi Rina,

After listening to the piece (which I really like) I have to say I'm even more sure that it's unlikely to separate the piano from the tape. Also, it would be even more difficult to recreate the tape part "by ear". At the very least you would need detailed information about the composer's original process and sound sources - and I don't think you'd be able to make any significant claims about the original.

I'm assuming you've tried hunting down the original (composer, performer(s), libraries, internet, etc). Sorry I can't be of more help.

Pete

Rina,

Unfortunately, separating the elements of a finished recording back into its component parts is essentially impossible. There is no way to accomplish this using conventional audio manipulation tools.

Best,

Mark Rubinstein
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