Finding Meaning in the Music of David Maslanka

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Abstract

David Maslanka is one of the preeminent composers of today. Known primarily for his wind ensemble and chamber music writing, he also has an impressive output of valuable literature for the solo clarinet. As a clarinetist himself, he has an intimate understanding not only of the technical workings of the instrument, but its timbral and expressive capabilities as well.

Both musicians and non-musicians alike seem to recognize and sense a deeply emotional, even spiritual element in his music. This work seeks to explore how Maslanka’s spirituality gives meaning to his music. Chapter one provides a discussion of some of the issues encountered when exploring the subject of meaning in music. An array of widely accepted methodologies is supplied, along with brief descriptions of the ones predominantly used in the present examination of Maslanka’s work.

In order to facilitate a better understanding of the influences on the composer, chapter two provides a sketch of Maslanka’s personal and musical background. This section also deals with the prominent elements of various spiritual worldviews that affect the composer. These worldviews include aspects of Jungian philosophy, Christian and Buddhist traditions, and elements of Native American spirituality.

Chapter three provides a summary of Kofi Agawu’s semiotic theory of Classical music. The benefits and limitations of such an approach to discovering meaning in music
are addressed. Establishing the framework of Agawu’s theory allows for an adaptation of his approach to be utilized in chapter four. This adaptation retains the concepts of the formation of “topics” found in the music as well as structural considerations. Maslanka’s work, Desert Roads: Four Songs for Clarinet and Wind Ensemble is the subject of an in-depth examination utilizing Agawu’s conceptual framework. Through this approach, deeper spiritual implications can be extracted from Maslanka’s music.

The final chapter briefly explores considerations for the performer. An enhanced understanding of the inner workings and spiritual substance of the piece may affect how the performer approaches Maslanka’s music. Specific examples are given to aid in both preparation and performance of Maslanka’s work. Musical examples, when cited or discussed, are available in an accompanying appendix.
Acknowledgments

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Major Field: Music
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Chapter 1: Introductory Remarks and the Discovery of Meaning in Music

Introduction

David Maslanka is a preeminent American composer who intrigues fellow composers, conductors, performers, and listeners alike. The wide array of theses both completed and forthcoming, along with many commissions and a high demand for the composer’s musical insight, are testament to this. Perhaps, the biggest testament to his impact as a composer, however, is that his music is played frequently and reaches an international audience. In the summer of 2016, Maslanka traveled to China as the guest of the 19th Asia Pacific Band Directors Association Conference. Here, his Symphony No. 4 was performed by the Beijing Wind Orchestra, the first independent professional wind ensemble in the Peoples’ Republic of China.¹ During my own career as a college clarinetist in the USA, I have been exposed as both a listener and performer to numerous large-scale and chamber works by Maslanka. There is something about his music that keeps people coming back for more.

This “something” seems to relate directly to the strong emotional and spiritual impact Maslanka’s music has on its listeners. How Maslanka is able to achieve such

significant and meaningful musical connections is the focus of this research. This investigation will be carried out through consideration of one of his clarinet concertos, *Desert Roads: Four Songs for Clarinet and Wind Ensemble*. Featuring the clarinet serves the dual purpose of not only furthering the understanding of important literature for the instrument, but also highlighting a musical voice important to Maslanka himself. He is a clarinetist and often assigns particularly moving and melodic lines to the instrument, as well as a high degree of technical challenge. There is a variety of existing scholarship that covers the music of Maslanka, including performance guides, theoretical analyses, conductors’ insights into his music, and even the formulation of a “Maslankian” approach to music-making.²

Exploring the communicative nature of Maslanka’s music lends itself to the uncovering of spiritual topics that establish meaningful musical connection. The importance of spirituality in his process of making music is identified by Maslanka himself. For example, the composer admits to a Jungian meditation-style approach to composing.³ Jungianism tends toward a universalistic spirituality. At the same time, it is not uncommon for a J.S. Bach chorale tune to find its way into one of his compositions. Bach held his faith in the highest esteem, and his music represents a Lutheran tradition. Maslanka also mentions certain inner spiritual guides akin to Native American spirit animals playing a role in his discovery of music. These, along with his own noted

2 Lane Weaver, “David Maslanka’s Symphony No. 7: An Examination of Analytical, Emotional, and Spiritual Connections Through a ‘Maslankian’ Approach” (DMA thesis, University of Kentucky, 2011).
readings, point to the influence of Native American spirituality. His work also includes a heavy dose of Buddhist tenets. One main question of this paper lies in determining if spiritual references or content can be audibly detected in the music and felt by the listener. Consideration of musical elements is crucial in concretizing and defining these spiritual bounds.

This study is especially aimed at the performer who craves a deeper understanding of Maslanka’s music. Most performers do not have time for such in-depth examination during a standard rehearsal series of a work. However, trained musicians may have a wider array of references available at their disposal than the average listener. Yet, the spiritual references examined here remain accessible to the average listener. These ideas will be studied in further detail below. In fact, a lifetime could be spent pondering such topics. Reflection of the various and ever-evolving methods of research available to the researcher supports the importance of such concerns.

It should be acknowledged that the succeeding conclusions and summaries drawn from the music are but one possible perspective among countless others. This work strives for one informed and thoughtful opinion of the emotional and spiritual impact of Maslanka’s music. Immediately following this section is a broad look at the many methodologies that can be used in analyzing music in general, including brief descriptions of those dominantly used in this paper. Additional chapters will dissect specific aspects of Maslanka’s music.

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4 See chapter two, pages 22-3, for discussion of Maslanka’s connection to Native American spirituality.
Discovering Meaning in Music

Discussion about meaning inherent in music or induced by it can certainly be messy. The fact that there is no sole accepted methodology for examining expression in music upon which all scholars can agree, or even an agreement on whether music is even expressive at all, is testament to this. So, it must be said at the outset that the purpose of this paper is not to try to provide a single, definitive way of comprehending meaning in music. There will never be one sole approach to extracting meaning from music. This is part of what propels continued investigation. The endless array of possibilities and informed opinions are part of what keeps such discussions relevant and ensures further inquiry for years to come. The present research is constructed with the understanding that the same musical excerpts and source material could be used to arrive at completely different conclusions. It is likely, for example, that Maslanka himself might disagree with some of the conclusions drawn here. The point is, however, that there is validity in all such views that adopt scholarly methodologies and carefully examine all types of evidence. Interpretation of information varies greatly.

The concept of determining meaning in music holds importance and relevance for both musicians and non-musicians alike. In my own experiences, discussion of this topic often provokes visceral responses in other people, even to the point of physical altercation. There is something about such discussions that seems to strike a deep nerve in people on a primal level. Getting to the root of what the music means seems to involve exploring, acknowledging, and even challenging the very belief systems and worldviews held by those engaged in discussion. Again, it is these types of passionate responses and
concerns that make further inquiry so compelling. Such passionate reactions indicate that meaning in music is a subject of great importance to many individuals. Exploring and selecting from the following methodologies allows for the various meanings contained within the music to be examined and discussed.

Brief Overview of Various Methodologies Used to Determine Meaning in Music

The variety of lenses through which music can be viewed is dizzying. The various approaches are often, if not always, used in combination with each other. Even if one strives to use a single approach, it is nearly impossible to escape the influence of at least some of the others. This is not to imply something negative. Views and expertise from many areas of study can inform and enhance the discussion of music.

A musicological approach provides the first and most obvious lens through which to view musical content. This methodology can be defined as simply as “the scholarly study of music.” In 1954, a committee of the American Musicological Society defined it as the “field of knowledge having as its object the investigation of the art of music as a physical, psychological, aesthetic, and cultural phenomenon.” In the 1980s, the concept of “new musicology” arose as a revived musicological approach, especially in the United States. This concept was formulated and driven to remove what many perceived as the

excess focus on fact-finding, sources, and documentation. Instead, there was a push for examination of more contextual issues, such as those of a perceptual, psychological, aesthetic, or sociological nature.

The capacity of musicology to continue accepting cross-disciplinary influences seems to be the key for both its continued and future success. Another musicological perspective takes into account not just music, but the social and cultural environments in which musicians exist and work. Understood in this way, the line between musicology and ethnomusicology becomes blurred. Frank Harrison, noted musicologist, went so far as to state, “. . .it is the function of all musicology to be in fact ethnomusicology, that is, to take its range of research to include material that is termed ‘sociological.’” Consideration of such social and cultural factors plays a dominant role in the present analysis of Maslanka’s music.

Another approach that finds its way into other disciplines on a foundational level is the philosophical approach. Stephen Davies has tried to illustrate the role of philosophy in meaning in the following way: Picture several knotted skeins of yarn that need to be untangled. These skeins represent deep conceptual confusions or subtleties
about music, extremely tangled knots. When all other branches of knowledge have tried their hands at untangling these skeins, philosophy may then step in as the only method to successfully order the knotted mess piled in front of us.\textsuperscript{14} Philosophy deals with matters that are not merely empirical or matters of opinion; when fact-finding, scientific theorizing, calculating, voting, and legislating are not the appropriate tools, for example, philosophy may be the most illuminating approach.\textsuperscript{15}

While making sense of the deep conceptual confusions and subtleties within the music may seem to be a daunting task, choosing the conceptual theories through which to do this increases the difficulty. Should the researcher subscribe to a semiotic theory, such as Kofi Agawu’s, in which the expression of a piece is determined by the analysis of its topics and structural rhythm?\textsuperscript{16} Or, does one instead ascribe to Nattiez’s tripartite division of music and the relationship of the signs located in each dimension?\textsuperscript{17} Does music seem to have strong emotive power due to its resemblance to passionate human speech?\textsuperscript{18} Perhaps, as Kivy asserts, we are simply “evolutionarily programmed to ‘animate’ what we perceive”?\textsuperscript{19} Maybe, instead, music actually has the mechanisms and intrinsic expressive characteristics to communicate emotions and ideas directly, despite its lack of sentience. How else does one account for the “direct and unmediated fashion in which

\textsuperscript{14} Juslin and Sloboda, \textit{Handbook of Music and Emotion}, 15-16.
\textsuperscript{15} Juslin and Sloboda, \textit{Handbook of Music and Emotion}, 15.
\textsuperscript{19} Juslin and Sloboda, \textit{Handbook of Music and Emotion}, 33.
emotional expression imposes itself on our experience of the music?” As the contour theory suggests, perhaps music contains characteristics of emotions that allow the expressive tools to be a part of the music itself. A direct connection to occurring emotions is not part of this theory, however. On the complete opposite end of the philosophical spectrum, however, it may be that “the expression or representation of distinct feelings cannot be considered the ‘content’ of music or the basis of its aesthetic value” at all, as perceived by Eduard Hanslick and other formalists.

In his book that has been described as a “tour de force of destruction” for its critical and thoughtful review of musical philosophies, Malcolm Budd seems to conveniently boil these philosophies down to two major camps. Those falling into the first camp depend on music’s relationship to something extramusical in which the listener has an independent interest. The most common phenomena considered in these types of philosophies are emotions. Philosophical theories in the second camp align with formalist theories, such as Hanslick’s discussed above. These theories state that music’s value as art is purely musical. Accordingly, music is appreciated for its own intrinsic qualities.

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and not along with any extramusical references or relationships to emotions.\textsuperscript{26} With such clear-cut divisions opposing the two sides, one would think that choosing one would be easy. Even Budd’s own conclusions on the matter show this is not the case. Budd acknowledges that a philosophy belonging to either side, or even a hybrid of the two, does not seem to do justice to the phenomenon of music. Budd himself does not offer one fail-proof theory to deal with music. In his influential work, Aaron Ridley acknowledges his debt to Budd and his convincing arguments. He admits, however, that Budd “offers no positive account of his own.”\textsuperscript{27} So where does that leave the scholar and performer who wishes to gain a deeper understanding of the music placed in front of him or her?

The diversity of philosophies contributes to music’s enduring interest. For as long as there is music, there can be spirited debate about its meanings and function. The previous discussion highlights the difficult decisions that will need to be made when choosing a philosophical framework through which to view music. In many cases, there are unclear boundaries between theories and no obviously “right” or “wrong” way to apply them. This discussion seeks to acknowledge an awareness of the wide array of points of view from which music can be approached. With this awareness illuminated, this study offers an adaptation of Kofi Agawu’s semiotic approach in the examination of Maslanka’s music. Agawu’s theory is outlined in chapter three, and an application of its principles is found in chapter four.

\textsuperscript{26} Budd, \textit{Music and the Emotions}, xi-xii.  
\textsuperscript{27} Ridley, \textit{Music, Value, and the Passions}, ix.
Another set of approaches that are closely related and important to the analysis at hand are ethnomusicology and anthropology. Anthropology is mainly concerned with human behavior and the cultural ideologies that inform it or, more simply, the modes of being human.\(^ {28}\) Ethnomusicology deals with the same subject matter, but through the lens of music. Music is examined as a means of cultural expression and for possible meanings contained within it.\(^ {29}\) This ethnomusicological approach will be very prevalent in the following pages as Maslanka’s music is examined. This will become evident as topics uncovered in the music are applied to various segments of people.

In order to try to make sense of the melting pot of music from the different traditions contained within Maslanka’s writing, it seems important to dissect these traditions and examine certain perspectives individually. Then, an attempt may be made to understand the impact that the usage of traditional music has on a certain group of people. Such people may even be thought of as “owners” of that music or at least perceive themselves in that way. In this sense, music may be an extremely important form of cultural expression.

As mentioned above, there are many musical influences from Buddhist, Native American, and Christian traditions often found in Maslanka’s writing. One reason for pursuing this project was a gut feeling I had as both a listener and performer of Maslanka’s music over many years. Specifically, I had the opportunity to work with


Maslanka on his Symphony No. 7 as a member of The Ohio State University Wind Ensemble during the spring semester of 2016. I also recorded his well-known work, *Give Us This Day: Short Symphony for Wind Ensemble*, with the Drake University Wind Symphony in 2011. Through these performances, I was able to experience firsthand not only Maslanka’s careful attention to detail in the demand for performers to play exactly what is marked on the page, but also his challenge to the group to be unafraid of truly *playing* the music. This meant trusting the technique he laid out on the page, from the carefully selected tempi, to the dynamics and articulations. This also meant letting go and allowing the music to be about more than just the individual performer. This was a total group experience. When the performers began to interact with each other and let go of their inhibitions, as well as pay direct attention to the carefully selected markings on the page, I sensed what I would characterize as a spiritual quality in his music. I found his music to be beautiful, moving, and powerful. Yet, there was something unsettling in it. I came to realize that much of the spiritual quality I perceived in the music was the use of certain traditional music that is very familiar and important to me. The unsettled feeling I had concerned the mixing of this traditional music with other forms of expression outside of this tradition. These ideas are broken down in analysis in chapter four by incorporating, in part, an ethnomusicological approach.

The discipline of sociology lends itself to anthropological approaches and is especially open to cross-disciplinary influence.\(^{30}\) The main difference between sociology

and anthropology is that sociology is more concerned with the “how” of social order whereas anthropology is more concerned with the “what.” More specifically, anthropology focuses on defining specific cultural patterns and customs. Sociology deals with how these practices affect communal interactions and experience within the culture. While sociology is not one of the main approaches used in this paper, its influence cannot be escaped. This approach helps contribute to a deeper understanding of Maslanka’s music as it relates to distinct traditions. Certain issues of sociology, such as the function of certain music for a given group of people, seem inextricably bound with ethnomusicological concerns that seek to define culture and tradition.

Two additional methodologies carving out increasingly significant roles in analyzing music are psychological and neurobiological approaches. Music-related psychology seeks, in part, to describe internal mechanisms that intervene from the time music reaches our ears but before we experience emotion. Other important goals of music-related psychology include understanding the role emotion plays in producing music. Understanding these mental processes and their relation to how one makes sense of music, offers another tantalizing window into the various meanings assigned to music.

Neurobiology’s place in the investigation concerns the study of the function of the brain and biologically-based emotional and cognitive responses to music. What is especially exciting in this field of research is that emotions are assigned as great a value

as an object of research as any other mental function.\textsuperscript{36} The stigma that emotions are not worthy of scholarly study is diminishing.\textsuperscript{37} While psychology and neurobiology do offer exciting and ground-breaking possibilities to the research of music and meaning, their paths simply lead beyond the scope of this paper.

In the following chapters, an analysis of David Maslanka’s worldview and his music seeks to combine philosophical, ethnomusicological and, ultimately, musicological methods. Especially prominent use is made of Kofi Agawu’s semiotic theory as adapted to the modern music of Maslanka. Brief concluding thoughts incorporate implications this research has for the performer. Lines between the various methodologies are blurry, and the possibility of neatly separating them is impossible. Nonetheless, it is the hope that these dominant influences will help to uncover an additional layer of meaning in the work of this preeminent composer of our time.

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\textsuperscript{36} Juslin and Sloboda, \textit{Handbook of Music and Emotion}, 100.
\textsuperscript{37} Juslin and Sloboda, \textit{Handbook of Music and Emotion}, 100.
\end{flushleft}
Chapter 2: Maslanka: The Man and the Musician

David Maslanka’s personal and musical backgrounds provide incredibly useful points of departure for increased understanding of his spiritually rich and complex music. Maslanka himself has shared his thoughts and philosophies on the nature of music, including its communicative capabilities. They are found mainly in interviews conducted for thesis research, along with articles published informally on Maslanka’s own website. The articles contained on the composer’s website include everything from responses to emails sent by curious students to transcripts of pre-concert talks, to stream of consciousness-type summaries on specific musical topics. There is also a transcript from a keynote conference address, among many other helpful nuggets of information concerning the composer’s thoughts on many aspects of music.38

Information from Maslanka’s background, including his own words, is not enough on its own to draw conclusions concerning the content of his music. Just because the composer makes a statement about his philosophy on music, or just because his background contains events that may have been crucial in his spiritual development, does not mean these things are necessarily audible in his music. What this information does

provide, much as in Agawu’s beginning research into the communicative nature of Mozart’s music, is a framework for how Maslanka is attempting to reach his audience. Observing the entire corpus of information available about the composer aids the researcher in making the most complete, well-rounded conclusions possible. Rather than approaching Maslanka’s music with abstract or, at best, well-educated guesses as to what his music means, the researcher has concrete sources of evaluation. The realm of spiritual and emotional meaning is opened to the performer and listener alike.

Biographical Information

There is a wealth of detailed biographical information available about Maslanka. These inclusive and well-researched accounts are available in the many dissertations published about the composer and his work. Maslanka’s biography is presently discussed with emphasis on events that were especially musically and spiritually formative in his life. Much of this information is drawn from two DMA theses, one by Lane Weaver and the other by Joshua Mietz. These are touted on David Maslanka’s website as biographically thorough and indispensable to understanding the development of his career as a composer through his concerto, Desert Roads.

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39 Agawu, Playing with Signs, 3.
40 Weaver, “David Maslanka’s Symphony No. 7: An Examination of Analytical, Emotional, and Spiritual Connections Through a ‘Maslankian’ Approach.”
many fruitful thoughts on the connection Maslanka and his musical voice have to nature. This information helps establish the powerful inspiration Maslanka draws from his environment and home of Missoula, Montana. Sutton’s work contains a wealth of valuable information about Maslanka’s spirituality and philosophy of music in the form of several interview transcripts.\(^\text{42}\) Finally, Kimberly Wester’s thesis provides an especially detailed breakdown of Maslanka’s compositional method, including Jungian and Freudian influence, as well as aspects of Native American spirituality. Maslanka’s own words contained in her dissertation are especially helpful in understanding the composer’s thoughts on music and meaning.\(^\text{43}\) Numerous statements from Maslanka indicate Buddhist influences, as will be more thoroughly explored in chapter four.

David Maslanka was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts in 1943. From childhood, he was exposed to music through his maternal grandfather, a competent violinist who also played clarinet. This grandfather would play music with one of Maslanka’s maternal great-uncles, who was a clarinetist. Even though his mother had no formal musical training, she did own a small collection of classical music recordings. Maslanka listened to these during his childhood. His father worked for Revere Copper and Brass, formerly located in Canton, Massachusetts.

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Maslanka began his own training as a clarinetist at nine years old. Weaver describes this training as “rather pedestrian.”\textsuperscript{44} Maslanka recalls “whacking away at Sousa and King marches in junior high.”\textsuperscript{45} Nonetheless, this training is important, as it formed a part of his musical influence. This influence combines with all the other formative experiences in Maslanka’s life to create his own unique compositional voice.

Maslanka continued playing the clarinet through high school. He began commuting to the New England Conservatory for weekly lessons with Robert Stuart during his senior year. The same year, he also participated in the Massachusetts All-State Band and held a position with the Greater Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra. This latter position proved especially beneficial to his development as a musician. Maslanka speaks of the conductor of this group, Marvin Rabin, as “the first real musician that I ran into as a conductor.”\textsuperscript{46} Maslanka felt like this was the point he was able to experience performing music literature of great quality.\textsuperscript{47} It was during Maslanka’s high school years that he began his ventures into composition.

As Maslanka explored music during high school, spirituality became an important influence in his life. As a teenager, Maslanka attended a small evangelical church in Westport, Massachusetts. He speaks of attending Sunday morning and evening services and nostalgically remembers gathering with friends after Sunday evening youth group

\textsuperscript{44} Weaver, “David Maslanka’s Symphony No. 7: An Examination of Analytical, Emotional, and Spiritual Connections Through a ‘Maslankan’ Approach,” 14.
\textsuperscript{47} Ambrose, “An Analytical Study of David Maslanka’s Symphony No. 2,” 13-4.
meetings. Maslanka even recalls a certain, Mrs. Smith who proved to play an important role in the development of his Symphony No. 7: “Mrs. Smith was a local piano teacher, and she did pre-service improvisations, usually around hymn tunes. She also accompanied hymns in the service, and any vocal numbers that were brought in. She had a very fluent, embellished kind of playing manner.” Again, it is experiences and recollections such as these that define Maslanka’s compositional voice. They inform his meditative thoughts and provide subject matter for his musical works even if he did not remain a devotee of this tradition his entire life.

After Maslanka graduated from high school in 1961, he attended the Oberlin Conservatory of Music as a scholarship student. He pursued a Bachelor of Music Education degree with an emphasis on clarinet and earned this in 1964. Maslanka also studied composition with Joseph Wood beginning his sophomore year. During his years at Oberlin, Maslanka was fortunate to see many notable contemporary composers, such as Elliot Carter and Igor Stravinsky, pass through the school. Maslanka was especially affected by a visit from Stravinsky to conduct his Symphony of Psalms.

Maslanka spent the year from 1963-4 studying abroad at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria. His composition teacher there was Cesar Bresgen. Bresgen was “an

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48 Weaver, “David Maslanka’s Symphony No. 7: An Examination of Analytical, Emotional, and Spiritual Connections Through a ‘Maslankian’ Approach,” 15.
50 Bolstad, “David Maslanka’s Symphony No. 4: A Conductor’s Analysis with Performance Considerations,” 2.
Austrian who was known well in his home country but little elsewhere.\textsuperscript{51} The time in Austria was important to the young Maslanka as he honed his skills as a musician and established belief in himself as a composer.\textsuperscript{52}

Maslanka was not enthusiastic about beginning a career as a public school band director, so he enrolled in a combined master’s and doctoral degree program in music theory and composition at Michigan State University.\textsuperscript{53} Here, his primary teachers included H. Owen Reed, composition; Paul Harder, theory; and Elsa Ludewig-Verdehr, clarinet. Reed was an especially significant mentor to whom Maslanka could relate.\textsuperscript{54} His teaching introduced current and experimental compositional techniques, but was also firmly grounded in traditional methods.\textsuperscript{55} It was this training that truly established the high value placed by Maslanka on the composer, J.S. Bach.\textsuperscript{56}

In 1970, Maslanka obtained a faculty position at the State University of New York (SUNY) Geneseo. Even though he characterized his final doctoral composition, Symphony No. 1, as “a scrap pile of musical ideas,” Maslanka continued to build his skills as a composer.\textsuperscript{57} The following year, 1971, he earned his doctorate. During his time

\textsuperscript{51} Weaver, “David Maslanka’s Symphony No. 7: An Examination of Analytical, Emotional, and Spiritual Connections Through a ‘Maslankan’ Approach,” 16.
\textsuperscript{52} Ambrose, “An Analytical Study of David Maslanka’s Symphony No. 2,” 15.
at Geneseo, Maslanka taught theory, composition, analytical techniques, and applied clarinet. His first composition for wind band, Concierto for Piano, Winds, and Percussion, was written during this time, from 1972-4.

The time at Geneseo was not an easy one for Maslanka, personally or musically. His first marriage ended in divorce. Maslanka observes, “Following the Piano Concerto I had a time of serious mental stress, and went into therapy. I didn’t write any music for over a year.”58 Some of this tumult is reflected in a letter Maslanka wrote to esteemed composer, Michael Colgrass: “Why is it that you go on writing music? The answer, obviously, is that you love it, but as a composer among composers I feel myself to be a shrub in of (sic) forest of trees. My voice is lost and will stay lost except for an accident of fate.”59

After the position at Geneseo ended, Maslanka moved to New York City in the fall of 1974 to begin teaching at Sarah Lawrence College. The following year, his experience in therapy changed his outlook on life and the way he composed music. It was during this time he began anew his search for a spiritual path.60 His psychologist steered him toward the philosophies of Freud and Jung, which, according to Maslanka, “profoundly affected my composing life.”61

58 Weaver, “David Maslanka’s Symphony No. 7: An Examination of Analytical, Emotional, and Spiritual Connections Through a ‘Maslankian’ Approach,” 17.
The Jungian concept of “active imagining” that Maslanka discovered during this time came to be central to his compositional method. Active imagining “describes a temporary suspension of ego control, a ‘dropping down’ into the unconscious, and a careful notation of what one finds, whether by reflection or some kind of artistic self-expression.”\(^62\) Of this Jungian concept Maslanka said:

For the past nearly 40 years [since the early 1970s] I have been exploring the possibility of moving in the other direction, to go into ‘dream space’ while fully conscious. This has been the source of all the music. It sounds like this is really bizarre and hard to do, but it isn’t. It starts with something as simple as daydreaming, or being aware of sleep dreams. The hard part, the same ‘hard’ as learning any other high skill, is persistence, and willingness to explore. Probably the most difficult idea is the understanding that there is an awareness beyond personal psychology, and that it is possible to touch and interact with that ‘other place.’\(^63\)

Composition is a conscious realization of the dreaming process for Maslanka.\(^64\)

In Jungianism, this marriage of dreams and conscious thought is a principle that takes on theological dimensions. Jung perceived the inescapable influence religion has on civilization.\(^65\) He believed that a god, or whatever is substituted to occupy this position, will always be present.\(^66\) He understood religion to occupy a central place in channeling the psychic energy of people into various individual and communal forms.\(^67\) Jung saw religion as a sort of container of collective experiences that sheltered people from an

\(^{63}\) Wester, “Expressive Interpretation in David Maslanka’s *Eternal Garden: Four Songs for Clarinet and Piano,*” 15.
\(^{67}\) Young-Eisendrath, *The Cambridge Companion to Jung*, 315.
experience of the divine that was too direct.68 This god seems to escape human definition, but its numinous quality is acknowledged in Jungianism.69

There are strong traces of Native American spirituality that Maslanka applies to his music complementing the Jungian principles. Maslanka’s second wife, Allison, suggested the book, The Way of the Shaman by Michael Harner, to him.70 In this book, the idea of a Shamanic State of Consciousness is discussed. Through this “transcendent” state, a shaman may “contact and utilize an ordinarily hidden reality in order to acquire knowledge, power, and to help other persons.”71 Harner’s book on American Indian spirituality matched well with Maslanka’s Jungian dream process. In Harner, the shaman enters another reality which directs him or her to some kind of enhanced understanding.72 Maslanka mentions a “someplace else” to which he arrives via a pathway, often a cave.73 Harner describes a guardian or power animal that often greets the shaman once he is in this “other place,” or on the way to it. These guardians are believed to have been with the shaman, in many cases, since childhood. They are viewed as protectors and servers of the shaman as well as his possible alter ego. They may also accompany the shaman on shamanic journeys.74 A parallel exists in Maslanka’s compositional process. He speaks of certain guides taking all sorts of forms from grizzly bears to a holy mother that assist in

guiding his creativity and path to deep intuition.75 These guides inspire his compositional direction.

When Maslanka began composing again after his break in 1977, his outlook on life and his music was changed. He felt as though he had a more positive view of life and grew as a person through these spiritual and philosophical explorations.76 His music became more tonal and melodic.77 The first major piece to gain widespread popularity using his newly-embraced compositional approach was *A Child’s Garden of Dreams* in 1981.78 Maslanka taught for one year as a visiting lecturer at New York University from 1980-1. Then, he taught at Kingsborough College of the City University of New York for nine years. Maslanka felt that during this time he had his greatest development as a composer and became prepared to take the leap into freelance compositional work.79

Maslanka and his wife, Allison, decided to uproot their lives and move to Missoula, Montana in 1990. Montana truly became home to Maslanka. He has composed many of his most cherished works there. Perhaps, this relocation with his second wife was Maslanka’s biggest step in heeding the advice given to him by Michael Colgrass. Colgrass told him to surround himself with people who were right for him and to arrange

75 Wester, “Expressive Interpretation in David Maslanka’s *Eternal Garden: Four Songs for Clarinet and Piano.*”16.
76 Weaver, “David Maslanka’s Symphony No. 7: An Examination of Analytical, Emotional, and Spiritual Connections Through a ‘Maslankian’ Approach,” 20.
77 Weaver, “David Maslanka’s Symphony No. 7: An Examination of Analytical, Emotional, and Spiritual Connections Through a ‘Maslankian’ Approach,” 18.
78 Weaver, “David Maslanka’s Symphony No. 7: An Examination of Analytical, Emotional, and Spiritual Connections Through a ‘Maslankian’ Approach,” 19.
his life in order to find his most effective voice as a composer.\textsuperscript{80} Indeed, since this move, Maslanka has successfully worked as a freelance composer, frequently travelling to work with ensembles around the world in preparation for performances of his music.\textsuperscript{81} Maslanka speaks of this move as kicking his composing career “in to high gear.”\textsuperscript{82}

This move significantly connected Maslanka to the nature surrounding his new home. He says, “I began to come out of myself in a very particular way. I have a strong sensation of the earth here.”\textsuperscript{83} As will be examined in chapter four, this connection to nature is often an audible element in his music. Even more explicitly spiritual is Maslanka’s claim to the animal and Indian spirits he hears echoing in the land of western Montana. He admits to composing in a rundown barn. He finds inspiration, in part, by taking long walks with his dogs in the large green spaces near his home along with other natural settings near Missoula.\textsuperscript{84} Maslanka has found a location that feeds his musical inspiration. Maslanka’s Montana lifestyle has become a source of both spiritual and musical inspiration that has restored his compositional voice and rescued what he feared had once been lost in the forest of countless other voices.

\textsuperscript{81} Weaver, “David Maslanka’s Symphony No. 7: An Examination of Analytical, Emotional, and Spiritual Connections Through a ‘Maslankian’ Approach,” 19.
\textsuperscript{82} Weaver, “David Maslanka’s Symphony No. 7: An Examination of Analytical, Emotional, and Spiritual Connections Through a ‘Maslankian’ Approach,” 19.
\textsuperscript{84} Weaver, “David Maslanka’s Symphony No. 7: An Examination of Analytical, Emotional, and Spiritual Connections Through a ‘Maslankian’ Approach,” 21-2.
Maslanka, Spirituality, and the Role of Music

Spirituality plays a central role in the creation of Maslanka’s music. Discussion of some of Maslanka’s general thoughts on spirituality is merited. Such consideration aids in enhanced understanding of Maslanka’s music to be examined in chapter four. It will also illuminate some of the complications that arise when delving into spiritual matters. Efforts toward an increased understanding of Maslanka’s spiritual makeup lead to an increased understanding of the sources of his music.

Maslanka admits to being a “spiritual seeker” but denies that there is any mystical element involved in entering his unconscious mind. He labels his path to creativity, “meditation” or “contemplation,” but believes that the imagery and energy gained during this process allow the music to speak without imposing any expressive philosophy upon it. The brief discussions contained in the section above do point to elements of Jungianism and Buddhism present in his compositional process. Both these worldviews are ripe with spiritual elements and guide practitioners down spiritual paths. Although Maslanka would like to distance the creation of his music from particular spiritual philosophies, he nonetheless observes that, “everything is spiritual.”

In a keynote address at the Society of Composers Incorporated Region VIII Conference in 1998, Maslanka said, “There are no words or philosophy attached to true

\[86\] Wester, “Expressive Interpretation in David Maslanka’s *Eternal Garden: Four Songs for Clarinet and Piano*,” 22.
\[87\] Wester, “Expressive Interpretation in David Maslanka’s *Eternal Garden: Four Songs for Clarinet and Piano*,” 19.
music. True music comes from the realm of Being and not from conforming to standards of modernism.”

Even this statement concerning “the realm of Being” is imbued with philosophical connotations. The specific meaning one attaches to this does, of course, vary from person to person. What it means to “be” is at the very root of one’s worldview. Truth, as mentioned in the quotation above, also comes with its own spiritual connotations. Maslanka notes that “as soon as one speaks about ‘truth’ there will be objections.” He also speaks of “absolute values upon which our world of relative values rest.” Maslanka seems to be aware that speaking on a topic such as truth is bound to stir up at least a little controversy. Further, when he speaks of “absolute values,” he is applying his spiritual views as to what those values are, however nebulously defined. These unshakable and immovable values vary between worldviews. All of this makes defining “true music” a subjective endeavor.

Maslanka describes the forces he perceives in his meditations as numinous, or having a “heightened spiritual quality, giving the feeling of being ‘right’ or ‘true.’” He is hesitant to assign the label “absolute” to his perceptions, but he attempts to receive them with an open mind. In the aforementioned keynote address, he immediately

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89 Maslanka, “Some Things that are True: Reflections on Being an Artist at the End of the 20th Century (1998).”
90 Maslanka, “Some Things that are True: Reflections on Being an Artist at the End of the 20th Century (1998).”
91 David Maslanka, “Some Things that are True: Reflections on Being an Artist at the End of the 20th Century (1998).”
92 David Maslanka, “Some Things that are True: Reflections on Being an Artist at the End of the 20th Century (1998).”
proceeds with the idea that Jung believed happenings at the unconscious level were a direct connection to God.  

With all this in mind, it is hard to deny the spiritual quality bound up in Maslanka’s compositional process. Perhaps some of the confusion as to whether Maslanka views his descent into the unconscious in relation to any mystical qualities lies in his self-perception as a composer. Maslanka views himself as a conduit through which distinct energies and forces can pass.

He then shapes this material that “needs to be spoken” into music. Maslanka seems to dissociate himself from the creation of subject matter when viewing his role as a composer in this way. He elaborates, “The process. . .and my job is to allow my ego to receive the gifts that are given and to accept them without question. That’s the only thing I know how to do, simply to accept without question that this has happened.” He understands his conscious mind to be involved in composing the music, but what “needs to be spoken,” or the core of what the music is, seems to come from a universe outside himself. Understood in this way, he is a neutral channel, a mediator between somewhere beyond himself and the rest of us who experience his music. Inconsistency still remains in this viewpoint, however. Each person brings his or her distinct worldview to any piece of music, whether as a performer, composer, or listener. All information is

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93 David Maslanka, “Some Things that are True: Reflections on Being an Artist at the End of the 20th Century (1998).”
95 Breiling, “David Maslanka’s Use of a Chorale Tune in In Memoriam,” 15.
96 Weaver, “David Maslanka’s Symphony No. 7: An Examination of Analytical, Emotional, and Spiritual Connections Through a ‘Maslankan’ Approach,” 170.
97 Weaver, “David Maslanka’s Symphony No. 7: An Examination of Analytical, Emotional, and Spiritual Connections Through a ‘Maslankan’ Approach,” 171.
filtered through the lens of one’s belief system. Maslanka’s view of descending to a
dream space to receive the gifts from another transcendent place is one aspect of the
Jungian worldview. Neutrality in which a composer does not impose some sort of
philosophy upon the music through the creative compositional process seems impossible
to attain.

When asked if music is meaningful, Maslanka’s reply was, “I think it has to be
taken for granted that music is meaningful (therefore has meaning) because we simply
persist in doing it with such passionate devotion. The question may be more ‘what does it
mean, and are these meanings shared.’” Maslanka has a deep care for everyone
involved in all aspects of his music, from the commissioners of his works, to the
performers who will play them, to the audience who will experience the music. Maslanka
considers the commissioner of his work, including the ensemble who will perform it,
during his meditation sessions. In some cases, he simply meditates about the person
directly. Other times, he will ask for a personal object from the commissioner to hold
and upon which to meditate. Items he has received range from a baton to the personal
hymnal of the dedicatee of his wind ensemble work, In Memoriam. Maslanka believes

99 Bolstad, “David Maslanka’s Symphony No. 4: A Conductor’s Analysis with Performance Considerations,” 19.
100 Lauren Denney Wright, “A Conductor’s Insight into Performance and Interpretive Issues in Give us This Day by David Maslanka (DMA thesis, University of Miami, 2010), 77.
102 Weaver, “David Maslanka’s Symphony No. 7: An Examination of Analytical, Emotional, and Spiritual Connections Through a ‘Maslankan’ Approach,” 49.
those who commission his work do so because of some underlying conscious or
unconscious spiritual issue. In his own words, he says,

There are things which have to be accomplished with this piece of music and we
don’t know what they are. They have to do with your evolution as a person and
you have intuitively felt that it is possible for your evolution as a person to
proceed through this composition by me. I agree to enter into this and we move
something in both of us because of the musical process.

Maslanka has a deep concern for his audience as well. He speaks of always
keeping audience members in mind when composing and always attempting to hear his
music from their point of view. He believes that if his music is able to touch his heart
and appeal to his sense of drama, then there is a great chance those things will happen for
the audience. This concern for the audience’s perception reflects what may be the
ultimate aim of his work: to “heal a global wound.”

Maslanka shares his thoughts concerning the state of the world extensively. He
often comments how the world is a dangerous place. He perceives the earth’s
communities as shattered and individuals as alienated. He ascribes to the Jungian idea
that the world is “dead, cold, and unending.” The creative impulse is of the utmost

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103 Weaver, “David Maslanka’s Symphony No. 7: An Examination of Analytical, Emotional, and Spiritual
Connections Through a ‘Maslankian’ Approach,” 49.
104 Wester, “Expressive Interpretation in David Maslanka’s Eternal Garden: Four Songs for Clarinet and
Piano,” 18.
105 Wester, “Expressive Interpretation in David Maslanka’s Eternal Garden: Four Songs for Clarinet and
Piano,” 17.
106 Wester, “Expressive Interpretation in David Maslanka’s Eternal Garden: Four Songs for Clarinet and
Piano,” 19.
108 Maslanka, “Dangerous Times (1994).”
importance to Maslanka. He says it is “the central and undeniable driving force of the human race” and that it will carry society “through the darkest times.”\(^{110}\) This clarifies why Maslanka writes music that he perceives is for the present. He has a certain set of performers in mind. He writes so that an audience may connect with his music in some profound way that may spark change and healing.

Maslanka acknowledges there is no universal experience of music.\(^ {111}\) He understands his music as a key that unlocks certain aspects of each individual listener’s unconscious.\(^ {112}\) He goes as far to say that it is not his business to say what those aspects are or to speculate on where his music may take someone.\(^ {113}\) He understands the dream space as containing symbols that escape definition but are evocative nonetheless.\(^ {114}\) Simultaneously, he believes music has the ability to touch on shared feelings among people.\(^ {115}\) What seems to be ambiguous, is exactly what those common feelings are. This commonality among people is directly related to the Jungian concept of the collective unconscious, which Jung defines as timeless.\(^ {116}\) The confusion that exists in defining precisely what the collective unconscious involves relates directly to the difficulty in

\(^{110}\)Maslanka, “Dangerous Times (1994).”
\(^{111}\)Wester, “Expressive Interpretation in David Maslanka’s Eternal Garden: Four Songs for Clarinet and Piano,” 2.
\(^{114}\)Wester, “Expressive Interpretation in David Maslanka’s Eternal Garden: Four Songs for Clarinet and Piano,” 125.
trying to define the divine or the universal. What Maslanka seems to know for sure, is that his job is to shape the gifts he is given into music. It is his hope that the music will then inspire the creative process and act as a key to the unconscious of any individual.

This ultimate goal of Maslanka’s music leads to one more important general spiritual view held by the composer, the idea of transformation. The idea of transformation is a Jungian concept which Jung held as the goal of psychotherapy. Jung says, “It [psychotherapy] is an encounter, a discussion between two psychic wholes, in which knowledge is used only as a tool. The goal is transformation—not one that is predetermined, but rather an indeterminable change, the only criterion of which is the disappearance of egohood.”117 Maslanka understands transformation as something everyone experiences while moving through life.118 This strikes a personal chord with Maslanka himself. He struggled through some difficult personal problems in life, but he was able to emerge on the other side of that transformed and healed. He credits music, specifically, with keeping him alive and allowing him to be well.119 Maslanka believes transformation to be a powerful tool that grounds one in a personal sense of the universal.120 The concept of transformation is an audible element of Maslanka’s music, often heard on many levels. This will be examined in more detail in chapter four.

118 Hippensteel, “A Study of David Maslanka’s Unending Stream of Life,” 34.
This general overview illustrates some of the most important concepts contained in Maslanka’s worldview. Defining these elements provides an enhanced and nuanced understanding of him as a person and as a musician. Knowledge of these spiritual concepts helps one approach his work with a more focused eye toward what may be found embodied in the music. Many of the spiritual concepts discussed above arguably manifest themselves in audible components of his music.
Chapter 3: Overview of a Semiotic Approach to Examining Music

Introduction

The next logical step after establishing the importance of spirituality to Maslanka is to determine whether elements of his worldview emerge as audible features of his music. In the pages following, it will be shown that his spirituality is, in fact, a tangible part of his music that does affect how the listener hears his pieces. As discussed in the first chapter, my perception of certain familiar Lutheran hymnody is what sparked the present investigation. The challenge for this thesis is finding a framework that allows for such connections to be made through examination of the music. One such approach that may be adapted for present consideration of Maslanka’s music is V. Kofi Agawu’s semiotic theory of Classic music.121

The Problem in Defining Semiotics

Semiotics has roots in the study of meaning in language.122 The term is most commonly associated with examining signs and how they relate to the study of logic and

121 Agawu, Playing with Signs.
epistemology. Epistemology is especially helpful in the present consideration of music, because it concerns the distinction between a justified belief and opinion. Currently, semiotics refers to a diverse array of interdisciplinary concerns, all related to study of meaning. Such diversity creates a boundless field with many possible schools of understanding. Agawu questions whether semiotics is even a field, or if it is a discipline. It seems to resist any simple definition and, simultaneously, encompasses limitless avenues of investigation. Semiotic considerations can be found, for example, in matters concerning biology, culture, language, and music. In many ways, aspects of all four of these categories overlap. Agawu views the ambiguity of semiotics as a positive attribute. He notes the “searching and dynamic quality” of such a method. Agawu also notes that this search for meaning is inevitably rooted in historicism, as no semiotic approach completely severs bonds with traditional modes of thinking. He elaborates that even if the mode of thinking did not have the label, “semiotics,” a “semiotic awareness” concerning music has existed for centuries.

A semiotic approach to examining music may lack the definite investigative bounds that many, especially formalists, crave. The material it allows to be uncovered seems to touch on content that should be of the utmost concern to musicians and listeners. Maslanka clearly has a concern that his music touch his listeners on profound spiritual levels. There seems to be no greater quest in the examination of his music than

123 Cumming, “Semiotics.”
124 Cummings, “Semiotics.”
125 Agawu, Playing with Signs, 10.
126 Cummings, “Semiotics.”
127 Agawu, Playing with Signs, 10-11.
determining how he is able to accomplish this. In uncovering how his music relates to different people, specific meanings are illuminated.

Such musical considerations are bound to stir up disagreements among researchers. Again, this does not imply something negative. Agawu views a black-and-white musical investigation as a surefire way to freeze further discussion.\(^\text{128}\). Those seeking a “yes” or “no” answer in relation to the validity of extracted musical meaning miss the point of the investigation. These types of answers are irrelevant to the semiotic approach. They serve no other purpose than to prevent mobility of further musical inquiry. The aim of the approach in the present study is to offer one semiotic perspective rooted in extensive research and consideration of the music. A dose of speculation remains unavoidably inherent in the semiotic methodology.

Aspects of Agawu’s Brand of Semiotics

Agawu’s starting point in laying the groundwork for a semiotic theory of music is a letter written by W. A. Mozart to his father. This letter contains thoughts about certain types of music the young Mozart plans to inject into his operatic work, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. He describes how “Turkish music,” for example, would add a comedic tone during one of the character’s scenes of rage. Mozart also outlines various musical tools he will utilize, such as a harmonic modulation to a remote key area, to thwart listeners’ general expectations of musical progression. Such careful and clever consideration of musical devices by Mozart illustrates the central place the

communicative quality of music held in his compositional mind. It also demonstrates the assumptions Mozart made regarding his audience. He expected them to hear and comprehend these devices without any further explanation.\textsuperscript{129}

If one of the main concerns of a composer is to connect with his or her audience, then a main concern of the analyst should be to discover how this is accomplished. Two needs present themselves in order for such a task to take place: an understanding of the psychology of an audience’s response, and a framework for examining the music that is both internally coherent and adequate for analyzing the common thoughts of an audience at a given point in time.\textsuperscript{130} Maslanka clearly has a deep concern for everyone involved in experiencing his music. Effectively communicating and connecting with people on profound spiritual levels is of the utmost importance to him. Correspondingly, uncovering the musical tools with which he is able to achieve this remains at the forefront of the musical investigation in chapter four.

Agawu’s semiotic theory contains both formal and expressive analysis. Neglecting one or the other seems to leave part of the musical picture blank. In his book, \textit{The Composer’s Voice}, Edward Cone understands the two musical features as inseparable. He says they represent two ways of understanding the same musical phenomena.\textsuperscript{131} This mode of thinking about music, while helpful, is imperfect. Agawu finds the distinction between what he defines as extroversive and introversive musical

\textsuperscript{129} Agawu, \textit{Playing with Signs}, 3.
\textsuperscript{130} Agawu, \textit{Playing with Signs}, 4.
\textsuperscript{131} Cone, \textit{The Composer’s Voice}, 112.
features ultimately false, even though he does believe the distinction to be a useful component of his theory. Extroversive features are expressive elements of the music that contain referential, extramusical associations. Introversive features are described as elements of the music that can be explained in purely musical terms. They guide the overall formal structure of a musical work. Agawu describes how both aspects help determine musical meaning. They are linearly related and lie at opposite ends of a single continuum. A passage of music may be recognized as a fanfare. It may conjure up a certain tone of boldness and other referential extramusical associations. This type of music is composed of notes and other elements that can be described solely in musical terms. Agawu says,

The point of semiotic analysis, then, is to provide an account of a piece, in which the domains of expression (extroversive semiosis) are integrated with those of structure (introversive semiosis). . .It is the dialectical interplay between manifest surface and structural background that should guide the analysis. And it is only within such framework that we can appropriately acknowledge the rich and subtle meanings that underlie the deceptively simple and familiar music of the Classic era.

The application of a semiotic theory, such as Agawu’s, to Maslanka’s music seems especially appropriate, given the composer’s concerns about musical analysis. In an apparent display of frustration toward the common music student’s training, Maslanka said, “but the function of analysis—we have because of the need for people to have Ph.D’s.” He complains of seeing too many students focus excessively on the technical

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132 Agawu, Playing with Signs, 24.
133 Agawu, Playing with Signs, 24-5.
elements of the music, following the usual theoretical training learned in the classroom. For Maslanka, such analysis is incomplete and does not allow the student to understand the fundamental meaning of his music. He calls such technical theoretical enterprises “intellectual,” but ultimately empty if done for their own sake. They can, according to his perception, only form “the foundation for your intuition.”

It is abundantly clear that the student of Maslanka’s music needs an analytical framework that allows his music to be approached on a more profound conceptual level than pure theoretical analysis. Agawu’s semiotic theory provides this added depth and capability to analyze expression. Musical expression and structure work together to illuminate meaning. The ultimate goal of Agawu’s semiotic theory is to explore how a piece means rather than precisely what it means. Inevitably, these two concerns are intertwined. Focusing on the “how” leads the researcher to the potential of discovering a sense of the “what.”

**Music and Language**

An issue that needs to be addressed prior to proceeding with the outlining of Agawu’s theory is the comparison of music to language used in much of music semiotics. This apparent dependence on language comparison makes sense when taking into account semiotics’ roots in language study. Vera Micznik touches on a valid concern when she notes that music semiotics “lingered for too long in its dependence on

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linguistics." A comprehensive survey of the comparison of music to linguistics is beyond the scope of this paper, but a couple of examples must suffice in acknowledging the issue.

In his book, The Classical Style, Charles Rosen discusses music in terms of language. For Rosen, classic style is a mode of understanding in itself. He understands style as a way of “exploiting and focusing a language, which then becomes a dialect or language in its own right.” Rosen’s work reveals that searching for meaning in music by looking to the tools used to find meaning in language ultimately breaks down, because meaning conveyed through musical style is more art than science. Seemingly problematic is Rosen’s continued use of linguistic comparison throughout his book. Chapter one of the second part of the book is even entitled, “The Coherence of Musical Language.” Rosen’s work states that “the musical language which made the classical style possible is that of tonality, which was not a massive, immobile system but a living, gradually changing language from its beginning.” This adds another layer of confusion. One must wonder whether classic style is the language or if tonality is really the language.

Leonard Ratner is another prominent scholar to describe the comparison of music to language. In the preface of his book, Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style, he outlines the comparison in clear and direct terms. He references the comparison between music and oratory as something more than just a figure of speech, recalling

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139 Rosen, The Classical Style, 23.
structural parallels between the two in music theory of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He continues by pointing out that both music and oratory have descriptors, such as vocabulary and syntax, ultimately contained under the title *Rhetoric*. What seems problematic in the case of Ratner, as Agawu notes, is that he seems to treat the comparison of music to linguistics as a figure of speech even though his words claim otherwise. Agawu proceeds one step further by claiming Ratner’s explanation of the striking similarities between language and music is “the entire semiotic enterprise spelled out by one who does not claim a semiotic orientation.”

The comparison of music to linguistics is often problematic and imperfect. It can, however, provide useful analogies and ways of comprehending music through a mode of communication with which everyone is familiar. This present study does not shy away from linguistic comparisons, especially since Maslanka himself freely uses such analogies. He speaks of music as “one voice of the Earth, and by extension, one voice of the Universe.” He describes how musical language, like spoken language, is received by the language receptors of our brain. Some of the same problematic aspects outlined above are present in Maslanka’s comparisons. He admits that, eventually, music’s meaning cannot be pinned down to a verbal definition. He continues to speak of music’s

145 Maslanka, “Some Things that are True: Reflections on Being an Artist at the End of the 20th Century (1998).”
“grammatical constructions” and refer to music as a “musical language.” The analogy of music to language, however inadequate, seems to be important in Maslanka’s self-evaluation and, therefore, important for a study of his work.

*Extroversive Semiosis*

The expressive, or topical, features of Agawu’s semiotic theory are described as extroversive. Extroversive semiosis refers to the idea of topics, acting as signs that are found in music. Agawu discusses topic in terms of the character of a work and style. These signs reference something extramusical, or outside of the music. The rationale for hearing topics in music and relating them to music’s expressive capabilities is summed up effectively by Wye Jamison Allanbrook, in reference to Mozart’s operas:

>[Composers were] in possession of something we can call an expressive vocabulary, a collection in music of what in the theory of rhetoric are called *topoi*, or topics for formal discourse. [They] held it in common with [their] audience, and used it...with the skill of a master craftsman. This vocabulary, when captured and categorized, provides a tool for analysis which can mediate between the [works] and our individual responses to them, supplying independent information about the expressive content of the arias and ensembles.

The quotation above establishes the usefulness and, perhaps, the necessity of establishing topics. First, there is an understanding of shared responses among people in regards to certain musical discourse. This frees the researcher from applying any unnecessary personal feelings or meaning to the music. Shared responses add an important layer of confirmation to help validate perceived musical meanings. Second, this positions certain

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146 Maslanka, “Some Things that are True: Reflections on Being an Artist at the End of the 20th Century (1998).”
musical ideas at the disposal of the composer. If a meaning is common enough to be perceived and shared, then a composer is able to use such devices with the expectation they will be understood. Some examples of topic perceived by Agawu in regards to Classical music include, “aria,” “brilliant style,” “learned style,” “gavotte,” “French overture,” “singing style,” and “Sturm und Drang.”

Maslanka evokes similar notions of topics in his compositions, whether intentionally or not. J.S. Bach chorale tunes are often found in his work and act as referential topics to many people. As will be explored further in the following chapter, this can be true whether or not the listener is aware these are J.S. Bach chorales. Musical topics referring to nature and meditation are other common themes in Maslanka’s work.

Agawu is careful to point out that topics are not rigid structures. They retain a fluidity defined by context. Interplay between topics can, and often does, occur within a given piece. Such topical interaction may adjust how each topic on its own may be perceived. Topical hierarchy can also be achieved in any number of ways. Agawu cites an example of topical interplay beginning in measure 36 of the first movement of Mozart’s Piano Concerto in C Major, K. 467. There is a simultaneous unfolding of what can be perceived as a “march” topic and “learned style.” As he notes, the learned style, in this case, is perceived more dominantly than the “march.” The march moves in and out of focus at various points in the movement. For an eighteenth-century audience, hearing

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149 Agawu, Playing with Signs, 30.
150 Agawu, Playing with Signs, 36.
151 Agawu, Playing with Signs, 34-8.
aspects of a march presented in the more highbrow learned style could have been quite jarring. Topics do not gain meaning apart from their musical context. They are dependent on the other musical parameters present, not the least of which is harmony.¹⁵² They are also dependent on the conventional associations people within a certain cultural context recognize.

This dependence reflects an ethnomusicological understanding and is especially important in the identification of religious topics in the following chapter. Those who perceive themselves as owners of a certain music, as discussed in chapter one, may have strong reactions if they hear their traditional music combined with topics reflecting opposing worldviews. The same cultural group may also have similarly strong reactions if such music is reharmonized or altered significantly. One instance of this is examined in more detail in the next chapter concerning the usage and alteration of J.S. Bach chorale tunes. Musical context is very important in determining meaning.

After topics are located and labelled in a given piece, the next step is to attempt to develop an appropriate plot. A plot forms an understanding of a musical work based on the signs present. Such readings are fluid and subject to individual interpretation. Speculation is a necessary risk that must be taken in this step of musical interpretation. It is my belief that the benefits outweigh the potential downfalls. The fluid nature of plots allows for multiple valid readings of the music under consideration. As long as the

¹⁵² Agawu, Playing with Signs, 37.
reading is supported by careful and extensive consideration of the music, rich layers of meaning can be extracted. Perhaps, Agawu says it best:

But to the humanist for whom music is the product of human volition, such a step represents, at worst, an indulgence of his or her fantasy, and, at best, an opportunity to dip into other semiotic systems, societal structures, and specific historical events for traces of musical patterning. 

*Introversive Semiosis*

The second half of Agawu’s semiotic theory relies on consideration of the structural features of a musical work. Such examination is called introversive semiosis. Introversive signs relate to purely musical and sonic features inside the music. Members of this second class of signs considered by Agawu are also referred to as “pure signs.” They provide important information to the researcher, but without a need for extramusical references. This component of musical interpretation concerns the deeper sonic structure and procedures making up the “harmonic rhetoric” that guides a work.

This concept, invoking yet another linguistic comparison, is heavily influenced by Schenkerian analysis. The traditional Schenkerian approach to musical analysis focuses on locating the guiding structures of a work at various hierarchical levels, from the foreground to the background. Agawu’s approach is not a direct application of Schenker’s organicist approach, but is closely related to it. In this traditional organicist view, music is like a living tree in which branches and twigs represent more surface-level events, but are still ultimately linked to the trunk of the tree, or the background structure.

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Agawu perceives the music he is considering to be just as dependent on contrast, conflict, and other tools that may interrupt a strictly organicist approach to musical interpretation. He adapts Schenker’s theory to elucidate “more local levels of musical structure rather than that of the global ones.” 156 Agawu locates the rhetorical devices within the Schenkerian Ursatz to form what he calls the “beginning-middle-ending paradigm.” The idea behind this label is that there is a certain attitude in the music of the Classic era towards the function of a work’s beginning, middle, and end. These conventional attitudes towards the function of each component of this paradigm assist in determining the dramatic nature of a work. 157 Agawu chose to use some of the central ideas of Schenkerian theory to develop a system of examining Classic-era musical structure that seemed most appropriate.

Just as a direct application of Schenkerian theory does not seem appropriate for Agawu’s analysis of Classic music, neither does it seem appropriate for that of Maslanka’s music. Desert Roads, the work under consideration in the following chapter, is episodic. It is the product of combining disparate “dreams” into one piece. This technique is reflective of Maslanka’s approach to composition in general. As discussed in the previous chapter, he allows whatever material he perceives in his dream space to come to the surface. He sees his job as shaping this often fragmentary material into music. At the same time, Maslanka speaks of finding the emotional line running through

156 Agawu, Playing with Signs, 51.
157 Agawu, Playing with Signs, 51.
a work.\textsuperscript{158} Locating the musical tools Maslanka uses to synthesize the material from his dream space into a united composition becomes the task of the analyst. In the present examination of Maslanka’s work, this does not manifest itself in a strictly Schenkerian approach. Instead, it is reflective of the Schenkerian concept of locating the underlying, unifying structures of a work. The information collected from this endeavor can be combined with the information collected from an interpretation of expression to paint a more complete picture of the work than either aspect would allow on its own.

\textit{Semiotics and Musical Eras}

It should be clarified and addressed that Agawu’s semiotic framework is specifically formulated for use in extracting meaning from Classic-era music. His work lies in formulating an approach for music from roughly 1770-1830. He dedicates a short chapter, forming the epilogue of his book, to outlining some of the main differences that would exist between a semiotic approach to Classic and Romantic-era music. He also outlines what many conveniently boil down to be the differences between Classic and Romantic music. These differences include the often private agendas in Romantic music compared to the particular schools of thought in the Classic era, and the emphasis on structure in Classic music versus the emphasis on expression in Romantic music.\textsuperscript{159} While seemingly obvious differences between the surface elements and the overall nature of music from the two eras exist, Agawu describes how developing a theory of sameness

\textsuperscript{159} Agawu, \textit{Playing with Signs}, 135.
may be equally as desirable as developing a theory of differences. This idea stems from those such as Schenker who demonstrate a more synchronic approach to tonal music. This approach notes the continuities in the use of tonality and suspends any concerns over what are perceived as surface differences.¹⁶⁰

In the end, Agawu concludes that Romanticism “remains inextricably linked to the fundaments of Classicism.”¹⁶¹ The two eras have their musical differences, but the tools they utilize have significant similarities that transcend the time period in which they are located. Both styles of music feature the use of introversive and extroversive signs, just with different patterns of weighting. Granted, Agawu does acknowledge that there is no simple formula to determine this difference in weighting.¹⁶² This reflects the complicated nature of musical interpretation.

Romantic music continues the use of topics, many of these with the same morphology as Classic music. For example, the category of “march” is still found in much of the instrumental music of the time. What changes between the Classic and Romantic era, and what becomes the problem with direct transference of the Classic semiotic theory to a Romantic one, is the socio-historical context. Agawu says that in Romantic music, there “is what may be described as a dislocation of the signifier from the signified.”¹⁶³ What was arbitrary and conventional to listeners in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century may not have been as relevant to audiences in the following

¹⁶⁰ Agawu, Playing with Signs, 136.
¹⁶¹ Agawu, Playing with Signs, 142-3.
¹⁶² Agawu, Playing with Signs, 137.
¹⁶³ Agawu, Playing with Signs, 137.
Romantic era. Agawu also describes the tendency for Romantic composers to retreat into more private agendas, weakening a direct connection between signifier and signified. In this way, a sign can transform into more of a symbol in which the universality of the sign is challenged. Similar issues of continuity and discontinuity exist when considering introversive, or purely musical, signs. 164

In a complex way, the two eras are linked through the usage of similar tools. They are, however, used in different ways to communicate meaning to the audience. The audience, itself also exists in different socio-historical settings between the two eras. This obviously affects their comprehension of the various signs used. Being aware of such differences and contexts can assist in applying a semiotic theory effectively, whether considering the Classic era, the Romantic era, or beyond to modern times.

Awareness of how the same tools can be used in different ways between eras is taken into account in the following analysis of Maslanka’s music. Agawu’s concern for the Classic-era social context in determining meaning can be adapted to Maslanka’s music through careful consideration of the present social context. The topics and corresponding signs developed by Agawu for consideration of Classic music may be irrelevant to Maslanka’s music, but identification of new topics related to a modern audience is a logical extension of his semiotic approach. Identification of topics and location of basic, guiding structures of his work are executed with careful consideration

164 Agawu, Playing with Signs, 137-8.
of the current musical atmosphere and psychological makeup of the audience who experiences his music.

The following chapter attempts to apply an adaptation of Agawu’s framework that allows for heavy emphasis of expressional as well as structural application. Such consideration adds a depth of understanding to Maslanka’s music that a purely traditional, structural analysis would not capture. A multifaceted approach, such as Agawu’s semiotic theory, is a necessary tool, however imperfect, that leads the researcher to the deeper spiritual meanings present in Maslanka’s work.
Chapter 4: A Case Study of Desert Roads: Four Songs for Clarinet and Wind Ensemble

Background

Desert Roads, composed in 2005, is a concerto in four movements for clarinet and wind ensemble belonging to Maslanka’s self-identified “mature” period. This compositional period started around 1999 and occurred well after the significant stylistic and spiritual shift inspired by his time in therapy and, especially, his studies of Jungianism. Maslanka’s “mature” period comes after his move to Montana. This relocation, as described in chapter two, deepened his spiritual connection to the surrounding natural landscape. This influence is prevalent and audible in Desert Roads. Maslanka described himself in 2011 as being in an “early late” period. The music from this current time period seems to assume a deeper sense of calm and quiet. Maslanka cites Eternal Garden for clarinet and piano as indicative of this stylistic change.

There are several benefits to selecting Desert Roads as a case study of Maslanka’s music. Within Desert Roads, the researcher discovers many of the broader trends found

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165 Weaver, “David Maslanka’s Symphony No. 7: An Examination of Analytical, Emotional, and Spiritual Connections Through a ‘Maslankian’ Approach,” 41-2.
166 Weaver, “David Maslanka’s Symphony No. 7: An Examination of Analytical, Emotional, and Spiritual Connections Through a ‘Maslankian’ Approach,” 42.
167 Weaver, “David Maslanka’s Symphony No. 7: An Examination of Analytical, Emotional, and Spiritual Connections Through a ‘Maslankian’ Approach,” 42.
throughout Maslanka’s most well-known music. Works from Maslanka’s “mature” compositional period represent some of his most passionate and often-performed music, including Symphonies No. 5-7 and the well-known short symphony, *Give us this Day*. Maslanka speaks of music from his “mature” period as displaying the cultivated elements of “fierce edginess” and “serene calm.”\(^{168}\) Both these musical aspects are felt and heard strongly in *Desert Roads*. Within *Desert Roads*, one can observe the spiritual ideas developed within Maslanka throughout his life and that are present in many other works, especially beginning in *A Child’s Garden of Dreams* (1981). *Desert Roads* also highlights Maslanka’s rich instrumental writing. This is displayed in both the sensitivity and the virtuosity of the solo clarinet line, accompanied by rich combinations of timbres and extensive use of percussion. *Desert Roads* contains the musical essence of this great composer of our time. The work showcases many of the structural features and spiritual themes developed over the composer’s lifetime and found extensively in his ouevre.

In the program note for *Desert Roads*, Maslanka states how the concerto, as a genre, is “a particularly intimate vehicle of expression” for him.\(^{169}\) This intimacy is reflected in his description of each movement as a song. Maslanka connects this to the idea of the Romantic-era songs without words. He cites Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms as important influences.\(^{170}\) This usage of a highly expressive musical form may be reflective of the personal touch Maslanka leaves as a sonic fingerprint on his work. As

\(^{168}\) Weaver, “David Maslanka’s Symphony No. 7: An Examination of Analytical, Emotional, and Spiritual Connections Through a ‘Maslankian’ Approach,” 42.


\(^{170}\) Maslanka, *Desert Roads: Four Songs for Clarinet and Wind Ensemble*. 51
discussed in chapter 3, the Romantic era marked a time composers often retreated into more private agendas. Part of what makes Maslanka’s music so powerful seems to be how his musical message transcends his individual compositional voice to reach a large audience. He finds a way to sound distinctly like himself in his music but, simultaneously, relatable to many people.

The descriptions of both the title and movements of Desert Roads have spiritual and biblical allusions. The dream imagery Maslanka experienced during preparation of this piece has biblical ties. He discusses how, when he asked for guidance concerning the composition in his meditations, he was transported to a desert and became old and Middle Eastern. He describes how he knew he was in the time of Christ and in a desert.171 Desert imagery represents times of personal and spiritual seeking to Maslanka. The title of the piece, “Desert Roads,” which is also the title of the first movement, reflects this. In his description of the first movement, Maslanka references Christ’s forty days in the desert, as well as the forty years Moses and Israel spent in the desert. He labels this, “a time of inner searching.”172 The second movement is entitled, “Soliloquy—Not Knowing.” It is described as “a brief movement, looking deeply and fervently for guidance.” The third movement, “Coming Home,” is described as a “life journey” movement and is dedicated to the memory of renowned wind band conductor, Frederick

172 Maslanka, Desert Roads: Four Songs for Clarinet and Wind Ensemble.
Fennell. Finally, the fourth movement, “Prayer for Tender Voices in the Darkness,” is labelled “a sober contemplation of death—a benediction.”

These allusions can become problematic once Maslanka’s thoughts on them are revealed. He does not want his pieces to be viewed programmatically. He does not purposefully strive to illustrate anything the titles suggest. He believes each movement has a reason for being with the others, and that his works are dreams, but in musical form. Titles are not meant to be explanations of the music. Maslanka even encourages stripping away titles to consider the music apart from any associations evoked by labels. The issue that arises with such a request is the difficulty in dissociating the music from the corresponding titles and descriptions. Each performer and listener who sees the biblical and spiritual references so clearly written at the beginning of the Desert Roads score brings his or her own associations and relationships to those concepts. The titles and descriptions seem to strengthen what one detects audibly in the music.

Language conveys meaning. Maslanka uses language to establish ideas within his music. To then try to disassociate the music from the stated descriptions, seems inconsistent with labeling the elements of the piece in the first place. Maslanka says that titles can be illustrative in certain ways, but he is very hesitant to pin things down by designating specific meanings. In discussing his piece, Eternal Garden, he says, “A dream of a deep nature, by a very definition is elusive; it will not have definition as soon as you have

173 Maslanka, Desert Roads: Four Songs for Clarinet and Wind Ensemble.
defined something, and say this is what this means; then you have limited that thing to that meaning.” If this statement represents an overarching principle in his music, as it seems he believes it does, then he contradicts his own principle by referring to specific events, such as Christ’s time in the desert. It is unavoidable that the listener who is familiar with the biblical account will bring specific associations to the music. Instead, Maslanka may wish the listener to associate the idea of a more general inner searching, or allow the examples cited to unlock an inner spiritual meaning within each individual listener or performer. He does, however, refer to very specific historical events that have unavoidable religious implications for many people.

*Desert Roads* was commissioned by a large consortium headed by Dr. Peggy Dees who currently teaches at Cornish College of the Arts. Other commissioning members include Dr. Stephen Steele, Dr. Patrick Dunnigan, Jerry Junkin, John Whitwell, Gregg Hanson, Jerry Kirkbride, Dr. Timothy Mahr, Dr. Mark Scatterday, Ray Cramer, Allan McMurray, Dr. John Carmichael, Dr. John Patrick Rooney, Dr. Lynn Musco, Dr. Bobby Adams, Frank Wickes, Dr. Frank Tracz, Dr. John Culvahouse, Dr. John Weigand, Dr. John Cody Birdwell, Dr. Scott Wright, Dr. John Lynch, Dr. David Waybright, and Dr. Maxine Ramey. *Desert Roads* was premiered on April 12, 2005 by the Dallas Wind Symphony, conducted by Jerry Junkin, with Peggy Dees as soloist.

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176 Wester, “Expressive Interpretation in David Maslanka’s *Eternal Garden: Four Songs for Clarinet and Piano,*” 125.
The following review of *Desert Roads* owes much to Joshua Mietz’s thorough formal analysis of the piece.\(^{177}\) His dissertation reveals a thoughtful and, largely, technical dissection of the work. Included, are formal diagrams of each movement, identification of important thematic ideas, labelling of prominent key areas, and detailed consideration of timbral combinations and their effects. This work provides an excellent point of departure for the following analysis. While it provides a detailed technical discussion, it does not delve extensively into the deeper spiritual connections present in the music. An even more powerful reading of *Desert Roads* is possible by joining a more technical analysis, such as Mietz’s, with a more thorough reading of the expressional signs that can be drawn from the music.

**Current American Spirituality**

*Desert Roads* contains several recurring ideas that can be perceived by performers and listeners as topics, or referential signs containing extramusical meaning. The topics explored in this chapter are of a spiritual nature. Before they can be discussed, one must consider the prevailing current spiritual atmosphere in which people receive this music. This current investigation was sparked by my perception of Maslanka’s music through the lens of a Lutheran background. Yet it is safe to say that the majority of those who hear his music are influenced by a more general American spirituality. Both Lutheranism and American spirituality are points of reference in the following examination of topics

in *Desert Roads*. These differing approaches to spirituality serve as an example of how distinct groups of people perceive Maslanka’s music in different ways. Of course, this does not suggest the many other spiritual views that are brought to Maslanka’s music are invalid. Discussion of these many other views is simply beyond the scope of this study. Accounting for a general American spirituality will capture the prevailing spiritual attitude of many Americans.

A general American spirituality can be described as a sort of “choose-your-own adventure.” Charles Lippy, Distinguished Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, grapples with what he terms, “popular religiosity,” in his book, *Being Religious, American Style*. He ultimately concludes that the way many people try to make sense of life and, often, connect with the supernatural, is by “fusing together an array of beliefs and practices to construct personal and very private worlds of meaning.” He speaks of a “central zone” of shared symbols upon which people may draw to formulate their belief systems. These symbols may be drawn from those of formal religious institutions, and others may not. So, people may construct personal and private belief systems, but they often retain at least some connection with the beliefs, values, and symbols shared by others. Such worldviews are personal and, simultaneously, related and overlapped.

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Maslanka’s music and worldview seem to fit into this atmosphere of American spirituality exceptionally well. One of the hallmarks of formal religion is that each tradition teaches its unique understanding of right and wrong. Most of these express their theology in written statements of faith that not only define their view of truth but also point out what they consider to be errors among other spiritual teachings. Popular spirituality lacks these codified teachings that bind and organize more traditional religious institutions together. It is acceptable within general American spirituality to have beliefs that appear contradictory and do not possess the conceptual coherence of established religious institutions.\(^{181}\) This understanding sheds light on some of the inconsistencies noted in chapter two concerning aspects of Maslanka’s worldview, such as his attempt to detach any mystical association with his descent into the unconscious, while simultaneously claiming to be a spiritual seeker who believes that “everything is spiritual.” Such apparent inconsistencies are perfectly acceptable in postmodern spirituality. Those who practice within a form of organized religion may be confused by what seem like such obvious contradictions within someone else’s worldview. This could also explain my sense of discomfort when hearing the Bach chorales, used in the hymnody of the Lutheran tradition, combined with other topics that seem to indicate Buddhist tenets.

Noted author and Lutheran pastor, Bryan Wolfmueller notes how the tendency to embrace contradiction cannot be linked to a specific denomination, church body, person, person,

or teaching. Instead, he refers to so-called Christian Americans as “theologically nose-blind.” Even within much of Christianity, spiritual decisions forming the basis of one’s belief are up to individual preference rather than the faith claimed to be taught in many Christian churches. Besides this, there is a noted decline in membership of the mainline Christian groups. This does not necessarily suggest a decline in spirituality, but, rather, could suggest a privatization of faith that does not have use for participation in a formal religious tradition.

One further aspect of American spirituality that seems to hold particular relevance to Maslanka’s music is mysticism. Mysticism is one of the broad trends that has found its way into much of American spirituality. It refers to the religious practice in which people perceive an internal and direct experience with the presence of God. This approach searches for the internal divine spark and is subjective. Such a practice also aligns with basic aspects of Eastern religions and philosophies, such as Buddhism. The search for divine guidance from within seems to perfectly describe Maslanka’s compositional approach.

Finally, the current form of American spirituality is fluid and adaptable to the constantly changing times. This is especially true as mass media continues to “flood the

183 Wolfmueller, Has American Christianity Failed?, 8.
184 Wolfmueller, Has American Christianity Failed?, 8.
185 Lippy, Being Religious, American Style, 4.
186 Wolfmueller, Has American Christianity Failed?, 18.
market with a barrage of new ideas.” The internet and other new media allow for immediate and constant connection to music from all over the world and from many religious and spiritual traditions. This exposure to spiritual music from all over the world can either introduce people to previously unknown religious traditions, or it can foster a personal connection that may not be perceived as religious at all. The ubiquity of music through many forms of technology, coupled with the individual trend of privately constructed worldviews tends to disassociate music from the specific theology in which it was born. The music from religious traditions that may have very specific spiritual associations does not have to be bound to those traditions in current American spirituality. This understanding justifies the many worldviews combined within Maslanka’s music.

Extroversive Analysis

The J.S. Bach Chorales and the Buddhist Bell Theme

Now that light has been shed on a broad spiritual attitude present in American culture, the stage is set to explore some of the spiritual topics found in Desert Roads. Undoubtedly, other readings of this work will produce other varied topics. Hopefully, the present reading sparks more discussion and debate over the spiritual meaning found in Maslanka’s music.

188 Lippy, Being Religious, American Style, 7.
One of the most obviously religious topical designations in *Desert Roads* is the J.S. Bach chorale. Maslanka uses this topic throughout his oeuvre. In *Desert Roads*, two Bach chorales are present in Movement I. They are *Jesus Christus, unser Heiland* and *Nun danket alle Gott*. These chorales are contained in *371 Harmonized Chorales and 69 Melodies with Figured Bass* as numbers 30 and 32, respectively. Maslanka’s treatment of the chorales varies throughout the movement. Each different setting and handling of the chorales seems to alter how they are spiritually perceived and understood. As mentioned in the previous chapter, musical context determines a topic’s meaning, and Movement I is a great example of how one topic can be heard and understood in multiple ways.

The initial iteration of the first Bach chorale used, *Jesus Christus, unser Heiland*, is a complete statement of the tune beginning in measure one. The first three measures of the chorale tune are repeated before the remaining nine bars are heard. While this is practically a note-for-note statement of the chorale tune which Bach harmonized, the harmonization Maslanka employs seems to juxtapose the chorale with another topic, designated in this study as “Buddhist bell theme.”

This topic references the drones throughout the work that are established at the beginning of the piece in the harp, piano, marimba, and crotales. This instrumental timbre recalls the Buddhist meditation bowl heard at the beginning of the fourth movement of

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190 J.S. Bach, *371 Harmonized Chorales and 69 Chorale Melodies with Figured Bass*, Albert Riemenschneider, ed. (U.S.A.: G. Schirmer, 1941), 8. See also Appendix A, Figures 1 and 2, for Bach’s complete harmonizations.
Symphony No. 7. It also recalls the opening of *Give us this Day*. The chorale tune, presented by the doubling of the vibraphone with the piano, matches the bell-like timbre of the drone. The repeated drones at the beginning of *Desert Roads* are in fifths, creating a very resonant, open sound quality. They recall the bells that are such an important part of the ordering of Buddhist spiritual life. If someone desires to be a Buddhist monk, then that person is required to go so far as to eliminate musical sounds that are not considered Buddhist, and there are different mantras that must be recited when one hears the sound of the bell.\textsuperscript{191} The repetition of the bell-like tones suggests Buddhist meditation practices. In Vietnamese Buddhist tradition, there is a practice of ringing “the big bell” to awaken an entire town. This signifies the beginning of chant. Once the chant is completed, a series of 108 beats are played slowly on the big bell. These continue until the end of the meditation session and service.\textsuperscript{192} Bells provide points of concentration that aid in the spiritual practice of focusing oneself inward. Maslanka’s thoughts support such a reading of this topic. He refers to bells as the “voice of Buddha.”\textsuperscript{193} He notes how their use calms a person and allows a shift to the internal.\textsuperscript{194}

From a Lutheran perspective, juxtaposing a spiritual musical idea, such as the “Buddhist bell theme” with a J.S. Bach chorale, creates meaning that is spiritually conflicted. The original tunes set by Bach existed before the composer’s time and are

\textsuperscript{192} Nguyen, “Music and Movement in Vietnamese Buddhism,” 57.
\textsuperscript{193} Wright, “A Conductor’s Insight into Performance and Interpretive Issues in *Give us this Day* by David Maslanka,” 24.
\textsuperscript{194} Wright, “A Conductor’s Insight into Performance and Interpretive Issues in *Give us this Day* by David Maslanka,” 24.
very familiar in the modern Lutheran tradition as congregational hymns. *Jesus Christus, unser Heiland* was composed in 1533, and *Nun danket alle Gott* was composed between 1598-1662.\(^\text{195}\) Whether approaching this tune through the Bach chorale settings or the congregational hymns, the text is of the utmost importance. This music is used in both cases to worship the Christian God and the text is often directly scriptural. As noted by Albert Riemenschneider, editor of *371 Harmonized Chorales and 69 Chorale Melodies with Figured Bass*, “it is now well-known that Bach’s method of setting a chorale was directly influenced by the words used. . . The fact remains that the results cannot be explained from a purely musical standpoint, and only the association of the text makes it possible to solve some of the strange chords and progressions.”\(^\text{196}\)

Bach regarded study and proper interpretation of Scripture as tasks of the highest importance. The markings in his personal copy of the Calov Bible commentary are testament to this. He not only adds increased detail to some of the commentary, he also provides completion of verses Calov omitted.\(^\text{197}\) He was a careful student of Scripture. The librettos chosen for his cantatas demonstrate this respect for biblical text. In one case, he uses some poetry from B. H Brockes in his St. John Passion, but he rejects the poet’s versification of the scriptural text, and, instead, quotes the Bible directly. In his St. *Matthew Passion*, Bach labels biblical text in red ink.\(^\text{198}\) A deep spiritual understanding

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\(^\text{195}\) The Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Lutheran Service Book* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), Hymn #627 and Hymn #895.


\(^\text{198}\) Leaver, *J.S. Bach and Scripture*, 27.
of J.S. Bach requires an acknowledgment of the deep faith he possessed. The texts of *Jesus Christus, unser Heiland* and *Nun danket alle Gott* contained in the *Lutheran Service Book* retain strong ties to the original texts, including the direct scriptural references.¹⁹⁹

Locating meaning within a Bach chorale tune based on its relation to scriptural teaching is directly opposite to Maslanka’s approach to the music. Maslanka plays selections from Bach’s 371 Harmonized Chorales on the piano as a daily warm-up, but he uses an edition with the text absent, except for chorale titles. The value Maslanka places upon the chorales is largely melodic and harmonic mastery. Further downplaying the value placed upon the text, he says, “In everything I have ever previously said or written about my use of the chorale melodies I have always downplayed the values expressed by the titles. I have taken the melodies as things that showed up when I needed them, and never verbalized the ‘why’ to any extent.”²⁰⁰ At the same time, however, Maslanka seems to recognize something spiritual that is present in the music. He describes the chorales as “mysterious doors to other worlds,” and “the musical root points of what it is to be human.”²⁰¹ He even acknowledges a basic understanding of Christian doctrine in his assessment of the hymn tune, *O Sacred Head Now Wounded*. In his work, *Montana Music: Chorale Variations*, he chooses this tune for its representation of the blood of

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¹⁹⁹ The Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Lutheran Service Book*, Hymn #627 and Hymn #895.
²⁰⁰ Weaver, “David Maslanka’s Symphony No. 7: An Examination of Analytical, Emotional, and Spiritual Connections Through a ‘Maslankian’ Approach,” 40.
²⁰¹ Weaver, “David Maslanka’s Symphony No. 7: An Examination of Analytical, Emotional, and Spiritual Connections Through a ‘Maslankian’ Approach,” 40.

Hippensteel, “A Study of David Maslanka’s *Unending Stream of Life,*” 33.
Christ and its power to transform peoples’ lives. One main issue for someone of a Lutheran background hearing a Bach chorale and familiar hymn tune juxtaposed over a Buddhist topic, lies in a fundamental doctrinal difference between the two religions. Lutheran spiritual practice directs one’s attention outward to objective truths, whereas Buddhist spiritual practice directs one’s attention inward to subjective experience. An audience member who ascribes to neither a Buddhist nor a Lutheran faith may be able to place this music into the broad category of “religious” or “spiritual” music, and may not have any qualms with the juxtaposition of the two spiritual topics. See Appendix A, Figure 3, for a musical excerpt of Maslanka’s initial setting of Jesus Christus, unser Heiland.

In measure 35 of the first movement, there is a striking key signature change to three sharps. This marks the first presentation of Nun danket alle Gott. While not a direct transcription of Bach’s harmonization, it is much closer to his four-part compositional style than the first presentation of Jesus Christus, unser Heiland. This setting lacks the open fifths and repeated “Buddhist bell theme.” On the very first listening of the piece, I perceived this as a hymn tune almost immediately due to this more traditional setting of the chorale tune. The solo clarinet enters at measure 39 and provides a countermelody over the chorale as its first four measures are restated before the rest of the tune follows. From a Lutheran perspective, this iteration of Nun danket alle Gott seems to present fewer spiritual contradictions than the opening of the movement

203 See Appendix A, Figure 4, for an excerpt of this setting of Nun danket alle Gott.
with *Jesus Christus, unser Heiland*. This is due to its similarity to the original Bach harmonization and the lack of the “Buddhist bell theme” that accompanied the tune at the beginning of the movement.

*Nature Theme*

There are other themes Maslanka uses throughout *Desert Roads* that may be linked to spirituality. Beginning in measure 53 of the first movement, there is a sudden shift in character. Open fifths are again utilized in the clarinet and flute sections, as well as in the harp and piano lines. They are combined with various percussion sounds to evoke sounds one might hear in nature. The percussion voices sounding at this point achieve a very *secco* and hollow sound quality. Percussion voices included at this point are the timpani, wood chimes, wood block, and cabasa. As this new section continues, harp glissandi, suspended cymbal, temple block, egg shaker, and tambourine join to enhance the ambience. Mietz proposes that these hollowish sounds combined with stacks of open fifths mimic the “hummmmm” sound heard in nature. He compares this sound to the sonority heard in the first part of the second section of Maslanka’s Symphony No. 4.\(^{204}\) It is difficult not to hear the egg shaker, especially, as indicative of a rattle snake. This seems to align with the desert imagery Maslanka discusses in regards to his meditation about the piece. The open fifths and their medieval sound seem to suggest the ancient time in which Maslanka perceived these images taking place. All of this connects back to Maslanka’s spirituality, both in the use of meditation and in his connection of

nature to American Indian spirituality. An example of this topic is found in Appendix A, Figure 5.

Themes of Darkness and Lightness

Two final topical designations serve the further purpose of developing a possible plot for Desert Roads. In this study, these are referred to as themes of “darkness” and “lightness.” There are many instances of both themes throughout Desert Roads and throughout Maslanka’s body of work. Themes of “lightness” seem to indicate a generally positive and hopeful feeling or emotion. Themes of “darkness” tend to sound ominous and evoke a sense of negativity or anguish. One prominent example of a “darkness” theme is at the opening of the fourth movement. This theme is established beginning in measure one with an ostinato in the bass clarinet, tuba, double bass, and piano. This ostinato obtains its ominous sound by oscillating in the following pattern: D-C-D-E-flat. This cell of four pitches is both maintained and expanded through ascending pitches and different instrumentation until the grand pause in measure 49. The ostinato is absent in the ensuing clarinet cadenza, but appears again from mm. 53-57. Finally, after the statement of a lighter-sounding idea, the ostinato makes one final appearance from mm. 68-74. After this, a simple “Amen” plagal cadence concludes the piece, suggesting the benediction indicated in the program note. The theme of “darkness” established at the beginning of the fourth movement is further supported by the solo clarinet line which enters in measure 2 in its chalumeau range. It enters at a pianissimo dynamic, but

205 See footnote 49 in chapter two for the connection between Maslanka’s musical inspiration, nature, and Native American spirituality.
crescendos, gradually, until it reaches fortissimo by measure 14. Maslanka indicates “don’t let up” to the soloist. This solo line continues increasing in dynamic level and pitch, reaching $fff$ by measure 19. One effect this has is of a building toward some impending doom. Maslanka does not shy away from using such themes of darkness or anguish in his music. These are often accomplished through chromaticism and extreme dynamic range, as well as through exploitation of both the highest and lowest ranges available to the ensemble.

A prominent example of a theme of “lightness” can be found in the third movement, dedicated to the memory of Frederick Fennell. The movement begins with a more melancholy, searching quality to the sound. The solo clarinet line is composed of soaring long tones at a pianissimo to about a mezzo forte dynamic level over a persistent eight note accompaniment. Beginning at measure 24, one can sense a shift in mood in the solo clarinet line. There is a subito $mp$ marked in the score and the introduction of a new motive. This may be a shift to a theme of “lightness.” The solo clarinet line is doubled at the octave by the soprano saxophone. The only activity of the soprano saxophone up to this point in the movement consists of long tones. To reassure the listener, this motive is repeated again in the solo clarinet, and then again at a subito $forte$ dynamic level. After this, there are bursts of G major arpeggios in the first bassoon that are passed to the first oboe, and, finally, to the first flute. This builds to the “exuberant” marking in the score

206 See Appendix A, Figure 6 for an excerpt of a theme of “darkness.”
where the solo clarinet reenters with sixteenth notes in C major. Most importantly, the atmosphere at this point is one of hopefulness and undeniable joy. This “lightness” theme continues throughout the movement, despite being interrupted by interjections of a more melancholy character. This interspersing of light and dark contained within this movement is indicative of a plot that can be applied to the work overall.

This proposed plot is one possible reading among many of the piece. It does seem to align with Maslanka’s view of the current state of the world and represent the emotional line he tries to weave through each one of his works. The themes of “darkness” seem to indicate the current suffering that takes many forms for everyone, a global suffering. Yet, amidst this, there is always a tinge of hope. The idea exists that among pain and suffering, there is hope and joy in something that can triumph over all of this. What form this hope and joy takes is up to the listener’s worldview brought to the music. For Maslanka, the hope lies in the belief that his music has the capability to spark transformation within each individual to inspire healing in the world.

This discussion provides a sampling of some of the most prominent topics audible in Maslanka’s work. By his own admission there is a spiritual dimension to his music. Each listener will give his or her own meaning to those spiritual themes. For some, the mixing of music and topics from differing religious traditions will fit well with their worldview. For others, the meanings present will create certain spiritual conflicts. It may well be that Maslanka’s popularity is due, at least in some part, to the fact that the

207 See Appendix A for an excerpt from this theme of “lightness.”
208 Maslanka, “Music and Healing (1999).”
spiritual “journeys” encompassed within his music do resonate with many who hear it. The mining of additional topics is certainly possible and encouraged for further research. Any such work will enhance the understanding of the complex spiritual connections and juxtapositions present in his music.

Introversive Semiosis

Elements that can be observed as purely musical in Maslanka’s work reinforce the accessibility of his music to a wide audience as well as support the clarity of the emotional line he takes such care to cultivate. One structural device Maslanka employs to drive home the message of his music is repetition. This feature is detectable on a first listen through much of his work, including in Desert Roads. An example of this was mentioned above when observing the theme of “lightness” that emerges in measure 24 of the third movement. Maslanka strengthens the perception of this topic by immediately repeating the idea. Starting in measure 31, Maslanka repeats the idea yet a third time. This occurrence even features accents on the first two half notes, with a subito forte dynamic level. In moments such as these, one can readily perceive Maslanka’s passionate pleading for the listener to hear and understand the message of lightness he wishes to convey. Repetition is employed on all levels of his music, from the local level of a group of measures to overall formal structure. It is used both melodically, as in the example above, and as an accompanimental feature to convey a sense of insistence. A prominent example of accompanimental repetition in Desert Roads, besides the ostinato of the darkness theme discussed above, is found in the second movement beginning in measure 14. The oboe, clarinet, saxophone, horn, and trombone sections begin a driving motor-
like figure consisting of eighth notes which the solo clarinet occasionally doubles. This repetition establishes another example of insistence, of urging the listener to continue to reach for understanding of the message being relayed. Repetition is a tool utilized by Maslanka frequently. When it is present, the listener and performer are compelled to search for the message that Maslanka is working tirelessly to establish and convey.

Another tool employed by Maslanka, that can be referred to as an element of extremeness, is often coupled with repetition to make detection of the musical message very clear. In the example above of the motor theme beginning in measure 24 of the second movement, a dynamic of fortissimo is maintained along with a held E-natural above the staff in the solo clarinet’s altissimo range for four measures. When Maslanka wishes the listener to hear something, he makes sure it is heard, both in volume and instrumental range. This is true for the low end of the dynamic and instrumental spectrum as well. The “darkness” theme mentioned at the beginning of the fourth movement is introduced in the tenor and bass instruments of the ensemble and in the low range of the piano at a pianissimo dynamic. Maslanka has as much care and concern for soft elements of his music as he does for the loud. He speaks of a rehearsal he was attending of his second symphony in which the ensemble approached a passage marked pianissimo at a mezzo forte/forte dynamic level. He remembers stopping the group four times to insist the dynamic level of pianissimo be observed. For Maslanka, there is power in extreme ranges, both in high and low registers, and loud and soft dynamics. There is also power in

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209 Weaver, “David Maslanka’s Symphony No. 7: An Examination of Analytical, Emotional, and Spiritual Connections Through a ‘Maslankian’ Approach,” 55-6.
extremeness, usually coupled with repetition, in defining clarity of the musical message
and the emotional line running through the piece.

The episodic nature of Desert Roads represents the formal clarity present in much
of Maslanka’s work. In a fitting article entitled, “Composing and its Relationship to the
Community,” Maslanka says

The vibrations of music are creative; they give an awareness of how universal
forces relate to one another: these relationships can be expressed as musical
forms. Perception of musical forms (which you do unconsciously whether you
‘know’ anything about music or not) opens an awareness in each individual,
allowing a sense of the universal, a sense of love and of being loved. 210

Even if Maslanka does not consciously start with a conventional musical form in mind,
the musical form never seems overly-complicated or difficult for the listener to detect. It
allows for the clarity of the emotional line. Maslanka challenges the usefulness of looking
for traditional forms in his music. He admits to the presence of “ABA qualities” that
seem to occur frequently in his music, such as in the overall form of the fourth movement
of Desert Roads. Beyond this, however, he questions how this informs more than an
intellectual understanding of the music. 211 The adaptation of familiar and often sectional
forms allows the underlying musical structure of the work to “get out of the way.” The
message of the piece is supported formally and on a purely musical level as much as it is
on an extroversive one.

210 Maslanka, “Composing and its Relationship to the Community (1993).”
211 Mietz, “David Maslanka’s ‘Desert Roads, Four Songs for Clarinet and Wind Ensemble’: An Analysis
The last introversive musical quality analyzed in \textit{Desert Roads} is tonality. Maslanka speaks of writing “essentially tonal music,” and this is reflected throughout the piece.\textsuperscript{212} While there are elements of chromaticism certainly present in the work, the listener perceives an overall sense of clearly melodic music aided by a strong sense of tonality and pitch centers. Maslanka references the discovery of the C-major chord as “his” chord when he was 28 years old. He finds great power and value in the simplest of tools.\textsuperscript{213} Similar to the formal tools Maslanka employs, his allowing tonality to remain defined and largely uncomplicated, permits the musical message to shine through to those receiving his music. A wonderful illustration of C-major can be found in the coda of the third movement of \textit{Desert Roads}, aptly titled, “Coming Home.”\textsuperscript{214}

Maslanka demonstrates a deep care and concern for all people who experience his music in his choice of guiding tools and structures. He is unapologetic in his adoption of simplicity and understands the power it can have. He even speaks of having become “perverse in looking for musical value in the utterest of common places.”\textsuperscript{215} He managed to find a compositional voice that is uniquely his own through the use of common materials easily accessible to a wide audience of listeners. The use of tools such as repetition and extremeneness help to drive his musical messages home. The concern for clear musical communication is at the forefront of Maslanka’s compositions.

\textsuperscript{212} Maslanka, “Some Things that are True: Reflections on Being an Artist at the End of the 20\textsuperscript{th} Century (1998).”\textsuperscript{213} Maslanka, “Thoughts on Composing.”\textsuperscript{214} Mietz, “David Maslanka’s ‘Desert Roads, Four Songs for Clarinet and Wind Ensemble’: An Analysis and Performer’s Guide,” 74.\textsuperscript{215} Maslanka, “Thoughts on Composing.”
This analysis of *Desert Roads* illustrates some of the common referential topics present in Maslanka’s music. It also outlines some of the introversive qualities that are used to support these meanings and the emotional line woven throughout the piece. Being aware of these qualities present in *Desert Roads* allows the researcher to explore their use and adaptation in the rest of his body of work. This type of semiotic research will allow the complex spiritual relationships contained in the music to continue to be uncovered.
Chapter 5: Performance Considerations and Concluding Thoughts

One of the main goals of this study is to equip the performer who approaches Maslanka’s work with helpful and relevant keys to unlock the meaning inherent in his music. One hopes that the topics outlined in the previous chapter will act as a useful starting point when beginning analysis of the referential meanings present in his other works. They can provide a sort of stock list for many of the spiritual features Maslanka employs frequently and which manifest themselves audibly in the music. The performer can search for the emotional line Maslanka takes such care to weave throughout the music and seek the structural features that support its audibility and accessibility to the audience. Those who consider Maslanka’s music as having a communicative purpose, rather than as a display of individual prowess, are already on the path to presenting meaningful performances in the vein of the composer’s intention. There are many elements that present technical difficulties to the instrumentalist. This can be observed throughout the solo clarinet part in Desert Roads. To stay as true to the message of the music as possible, though, the performer should not view these as places to show off one’s virtuosity. Rather, the performer should look for how these technical passages serve the message attempting to be conveyed.
Maslanka indicates that observing his technical markings with careful study and execution is important in allowing the music to speak. This was displayed in the previous chapter when discussing how he stopped an ensemble four times during a rehearsal to insist that a pianissimo dynamic marking be observed. Maslanka speaks of how musicians often “need permission” to perform dynamic extremes.\textsuperscript{216} Successful performance of Maslanka’s music also includes possessing the foundational skills to properly execute difficult technical passages. This is crucial in being able to escape the musical surface to unlock the meaning contained within the music. Maslanka says, “It is the performer’s job to be well enough trained that the intuition is free to open and embrace the soul nature of the music, and to bring forward his or her own soul response.”\textsuperscript{217} An outstanding example of technical preparation and the primary recording used for this study of Desert Roads is David Gresham’s performance as solo clarinetist with the Illinois State University Wind Symphony and Stephen Steele conducting.\textsuperscript{218}

Preparing for the physical demands of Maslanka’s work is no easy task. Peggy Dees says the following of Maslanka’s music: “These are not light, fluffy pieces; they require deep work, thought and detailed rehearsal time for them to really come to life.

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\textsuperscript{217} Maslanka, “Some Things that are True: Reflections on Being an Artist at the End of the 20th Century (1998).”

They are physically and mentally challenging.”219 She continues to describe how she prepared for her performance of Desert Roads by practicing long tones in all dynamic ranges, and by holding the notes for as long as she could. She also practiced standing and walking while playing in order to challenge herself physically.220

A primary component of Maslanka’s work involves travelling to rehearse his music with the ensembles who will perform it. He assumes the role of mentor, teaching his compositional voice to the students. He speaks of students using him as a “touchstone for their own sense of rightness and security.”221 Often, students verify many of the musical markings in their parts to reassure themselves they are on the right track in understanding the music until the piece “opens in them.”222 While working with the composer is the ideal way to understand the music as Maslanka intends it, this is simply not often practical. Through attention to the spiritual themes outlined in this document, the performer can come as close as possible to truly realizing and comprehending Maslanka’s music.

Finally, as mentioned in the above statement by Peggy Dees, one must bring his or her full concentration and mental focus to Maslanka’s music. I had the opportunity to rehearse with Maslanka as a member of the Ohio State Wind symphony in the spring of

221 Maslanka, “Some Things that are True: Reflections on Being an Artist at the End of the 20th Century (1998).”
222 Maslanka, “Some Things that are True: Reflections on Being an Artist at the End of the 20th Century (1998).”
2016 on his Symphony No. 7. Once the group worked on some of the technical details, especially observing the extreme dynamic ranges of the piece, Maslanka spoke about the importance of interaction within the ensemble. The group was not made up of passive members following the conductor. Rather, each performer was an integral member of a team combining to create a collective music. The members of the group worked hard on realizing the technical markings and needed to understand themselves as individuals and as a group in relation to them. Once the group members allowed themselves to explore these relationships within the music, the piece was transformed. I could sense the energy in the room transformed, and the passion present in the piece released. In the last movement of Desert Roads, the saxophone section is tacet. Maslanka still demands their full attention and concentration in rehearsals of this part of the piece. He perceives their energy as contributing to the overall group’s energy even though they are not playing any notes. Maslanka understands the power of the music to communicate on an emotional and spiritual level when all members are fully engaged and present in the music.

Maslanka’s music will continue to inspire and intrigue people as long as the meanings inherent in the music continue to be explored and experienced by musicians and audiences. His music is not only melodically and tonally beautiful, as well as technically demanding, but also has the potential to touch people on a deeply spiritual level. Connecting to this spiritual potential becomes the real challenge to the performer.


One must trace the spiritual complexities of the music and situate oneself in relation to these implications. Exploring this profound level of Maslanka’s music provides endless food for thought and ensures meaningful performances for years to come.
Bibliography

Books/Journals/Encyclopedias/Newspapers


**Theses**


Websites


Scores


Sound Recording

Appendix A: Musical Examples

Figure 1. J.S. Bach's harmonization of *Jesus Christus, unser Heiland*

Figure 2. J.S. Bach's harmonization of *Nun danket alle Gott*
Figure 3. Mvt. I, mm. 1-4: Maslanka's initial setting of *Jesus Christus, unser Heiland* against the “Buddhist bell theme”
Figure 4. Mvt. I, mm. 36-41: end of first phrase of Maslanka's more traditional setting of *Nun danket alle Gott* and beginning of second phrase showing the solo clarinet entrance.
Figure 5. Mvt. I, mm. 53-56: sudden shift in character from *Nun danket alle Gott* to the “nature” theme
Figure 6. Mvt. IV, mm. 1-5: beginning of a theme of “darkness” supported by the entrance of the solo clarinet line in the chalumeau range
Figure 7. Mvt. III, mm. 35-39: G major arpeggios leading to the “exuberant” marking in the solo clarinet part in a theme of “lightness”
Appendix B: Licensing and Permissions
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