AN OVERVIEW OF THREE AMERICAN CHORAL SYMPHONIES

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Humanities

By

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B.M., Wright State University, 2005

2008
Wright State University
I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY
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ABSTRACT


During the 20th century, serious composers in the United States increasingly wrote symphonies, and a few of these composers expanded the form with the use of chorus. Three key examples are Marc Blitzstein’s *The Airborne Symphony*, Peter Mennin’s Symphony No. 4 (“Cycle”), and Leonard Bernstein’s Symphony No. 3 (“Kaddish”). Although all three are choral symphonies each composer took a much different approach to the form. The paper will focus on analysis of these three symphonies and examination of their place in the history of the American symphony.
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I. Introduction

The choral symphony has been one of the least used forms by classical composers. While many choral works can be considered symphonic, there are few that are called a symphony and use a chorus. Works for chorus and orchestra have been around long before the invention of the symphony and continued alongside the first example of the choral symphony, Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony of 1824. But, while there have been several important choral symphonies, it has not become a common genre.

Choral symphonies are often compared to previous genres for chorus and orchestra, particularly cantatas and oratorios. The symphony started as a composite of multiple instrumental movements. It started with three movements in the early eighteenth century, but moved to four by the mid-century. Early choral symphonies usually consist of purely instrumental movements with the chorus used only in the final movement or section. This is in direct contrast to the cantata and oratorio, in which chorus and orchestra interact throughout. Another factor was the evolution and growth of the orchestra. When the symphony emerged at the beginning of the eighteenth century, it began as an abstract piece of music. Eventually programmatic instrumental music\(^1\) became more important in the early nineteenth century, with Hector Berlioz and others,

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\(^1\) Programmatic music had been around before the nineteenth century, but absolute music still dominated music until the Romantic era.
to add an additional element. However, some composers believed that instruments were limited in their expressive possibilities.

While the choral symphony has been a widely used genre by famous American composers, there are only a few examples from popular composers. Three of the most prominent composers to write a choral symphony are Marc Blitzstein, Peter Mennin and Leonard Bernstein. Each of these composers is widely recognized for other types of composition and for teaching in New York City, but they have also provided key examples of three different approaches to the choral symphony, namely, historical/narrative, philosophical and religious.

Each composer had his own reason for writing a choral symphony. While all three symphonies are programmatic and use the chorus throughout, the intended roles of the audiences were different. Marc Blitzstein’s *Airbourne Symphony* is an example of a historical/narrative approach to a choral symphony. The symphony explains, in an entertaining way, the history of aviation and the success of the United States and the Allies in the Second World War. This idea is different from Peter Mennin’s choral symphony, Symphony No. 4 (*Cycle*), which is a symphony with a philosophical text. Mennin tries to communicate with the audience about the cycles of the earth with a text that affects the listener. Leonard Bernstein’s Third Symphony (*Kaddish*) has a religious topic; the Kaddish is the Jewish prayer for the dead. Bernstein’s work does have a theatrical element that the previous two symphonies do not include. The symphony functions as if the audience were witnessing a prayer.

Each work takes an innovative approach to the genre of a symphony and reinterprets the typical forms of independent movements; none of these works uses the
traditional four-movement symphonic scheme. The symphonies also use different number of performers and instrumentation, and use the voices (soloists and/or chorus) in various ways. The approaches and executions of each symphony will be compared in the context of the history of European and American choral symphonies. In order to take an adequate look at these three choral symphonies, the history of the choral symphony (both European and American), needs to be explored. After providing a background, each symphony will be analyzed to find how it figures in the history of the choral symphony.
II. An Overview of European Choral Symphonies

The original choral symphony was Ludwig van Beethoven's Symphony No. 9; his last completed symphony. He completed it in 1824 and used Friedrich von Schiller's ode, An die Freude, as inspiration for the symphony. Beethoven composed many works for large chorus and orchestra and this symphony is a prime example of the style of his large works. Beethoven only used mixed chorus and four soloists in the last movement and provided the first example of voices and instruments used as equal forces in a symphony. Beethoven's primary influence for the use of chorus and orchestra together was the masses and oratorios of George Frederic Handel (1685-1759) and Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809).

The final movement of Beethoven's ninth symphony is a large set of variations set to several stanzas of Schiller's ode. The movement opens with a long introduction, which includes themes from the previous movements and continues with variations by the soloists, chorus and orchestra. When Beethoven was composing the piece, he had a problem with the choral finale. According to Nicholas Cook, "...Beethoven had serious doubts about the chorale finale even as he was composing it, and actually wrote down the main melody for an alternative, instrumental version of the movement" (17). However, many musicologists point to examples in Beethoven's sketchbook for the instrumental finale. The seriousness of Beethoven's doubts has also been in question.
When Beethoven wrote his publishers about this symphony, he described it as comparable to his Choral Fantasy, Op. 80, but bigger (Cook 34). Once the symphony premiered many critics praised the piece, but it also provided an avenue for some of them to show that instrumental music had its limitations. According to one critic after the premiere of the symphony, “The airy frame of instrumental music is no longer sufficient for the deeply moved artist. He needs to take the word, the human voice, to aid him so that he may express himself adequately” (Cook 37-38). The Ninth Symphony opened up a new possibility for the symphony, but only a few composers attempted the genre even though the first one was a success.

Some musicologists believe that if the first example of a choral symphony had not been composed by Beethoven, the history of the genre would have been different. According to Nicholas Cook, “If the Ninth Symphony had been written not by Beethoven but by, say Hector Berlioz (a student of twenty when it was first performed), then it would surely have been rejected as eccentric, willful, and probably incompetent too.” (viii). Beethoven had long been a highly regarded composer, and while some critics believed he had declined due to his deafness, his popularity provided an opportunity to compose a work that challenged tradition.

Hector Berlioz (1803-1869) did write the next prominent example of a choral symphony, *Romeo et Juliette*, in 1839. He was never popular in his lifetime and often lost money on his compositions, but his importance as a composer has grown since his death. He was an innovator in both composition and orchestration. *Romeo et Juliette* depicts the story of Shakespeare’s play, *Romeo and Juliet*, published in 1597. Berlioz
hired Emile Deschamps to write the libretto for the symphony based on Shakespeare’s play.

Romeo et Juliette is called a ‘dramatic symphony’ by Berlioz, but he claims that the work is the first of its kind. According to Julian Rushton:

In his preface to Romeo et Juliette, made available to its first audience in 1839, Berlioz insists that it is ‘a symphony, and not a concert opera’. The composer’s view is of course to be respected, but need not end the argument. The seven movements of Romeo et Juliette resemble no previous symphony, not even the obvious, indeed only, precedent for a ‘symphonie avec chœurs’. (1)

Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony only had four movements and used the chorus in the finale. Berlioz’s Romeo et Juliette was a new take on the symphony with minor use of the chorus before the end, but he did use the soloists and choruses predominantly in the finale. Berlioz’s also uses the soloists and chorus sparingly thoroughly; the main use of voices outside of the finale is the prologue in the first movement.

The following year saw the premiere of the next choral symphony, Felix Mendelssohn’s Symphony No. 2, Op. 52 (“Lobgesang”, or “Hymn of Praise”). Mendelssohn (1809-1847) was a rather conservative composer and more well known for his oratorios. His Second Symphony was written for the 400th anniversary of the invention of the printing press by Gutenberg. The piece had another rare form in comparison to normal symphonies. The work was a combination of symphony and cantata. The work opens with a three-movement sinfonia and is followed by nine choral movements. The texts are entirely Biblical. The symphony was a combination of sacred and secular music.

Although the form showed contrasts to Beethoven’s Ninth, many critics of the time believed that the symphony imitated it too much. According to R. Larry Todd,
“Now generally the least esteemed of Mendelssohn’s five mature symphonies—it was severely criticized by his erstwhile friend, A.B. Marx, and others for an ‘excessive’ reliance on Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony…” (180-181). The form also shows an expansion of Beethoven’s movement structure, but only inasmuch as the finale is divided into independent sections.

The first composer to write two choral symphonies was Franz Liszt (1811-1886). Liszt was influenced by the works of Berlioz and the idea of programmatic music. Liszt’s first choral symphony was the Faust Symphony, completed in 1854, which was dedicated to Hector Berlioz because he introduced Liszt to the text. The work was based upon Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s Faust. Each of the three movements of the symphony focuses on one character: Faust, Gretchen, and Mephistopheles. The first version of the Faust Symphony did not include a chorus, but Liszt revised the work in 1857.

In the second edition of the symphony, Liszt added soloists and chorus to the finale like Beethoven and Berlioz. He set the last eight lines of Goethe’s text and called it the ‘Chorus Mysticus’. The change of the finale was for dramatic effect. According to Reeves Shulstad:

Ending the symphony with a chorus intoning Goethe’s closing verse makes the symphony a closer dramatic parallel to the play. The ‘Chorus Mysticus’ signifies the end of Faust’s earthly striving, so masterfully portrayed in the first movement, and appropriately enough it is to a solo tenor and a male chorus that give the last eight lines of the drama. (218-219)

Both versions are extant and Liszt revised the symphony two more times, in 1861 and 1880; both of the later versions retained the choral conclusion.
Liszt’s other choral symphony was the *Dante* symphony, finished in 1856, but largely composed at the same time as the *Faust* Symphony. Liszt based this symphony on Dante’s *Divine Comedy* and followed a compositional process similar to that of *Faust*. Liszt had planned to write a three-movement symphony with the movements called “Inferno,” “Purgatorio,” and “Paradiso.” However, Liszt completed the first two movements, which are purely instrumental (like his symphonic poems), and decided to finish the symphony by adding a Magnificat for boys chorus (or women’s) to the end of the second movement in place of the final movement, “Paradiso.” The Magnificat is a canticle that is usually sung at Vespers, and is a prayer supposedly spoken by the Virgin Mary. In Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, “…[Mary] is humanity’s advocate in heaven and the facilitator of Dante’s journey to Beatrice” (Shulstad 222). Liszt was conflicted on how to end the symphony. According to Reeves Shulstad:

Liszt chose to end the symphony in a mood of pensive anticipation and avoided portraying the bliss of heaven itself. He did, however, provide two alternative endings, one quietly rapt (and admired by Wagner) and the other loudly grandiose (favoured by the Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein but deplored by Wagner). The former is surely the more successful… (222)

Typically both the *Faust* and *Dante* symphonies are performed or recorded together. The composition of the two symphonies overlapped, and so they exhibit a very similar style.

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) elevated the choral symphony to a new level. Mahler wrote relatively few works, but a large percentage of them included voices. Mahler wrote three choral symphonies: Nos. 2, 3, and 8 (Symphony No. 4 only uses a solo soprano). Each of the symphonies uses the chorus differently. Mahler started with the tradition of Beethoven, but then wrote the first choral symphony in which the chorus is equal to the orchestra throughout the entire work.
Mahler completed his Symphony No. 2 ("Resurrection") in 1894. The work started as a conventional symphony, but after the completion of the first movement in 1888, he decided to change the work to a symphonic poem called Todtenfeier ("Funeral service"). He returned to the piece after starting to write Des Knaben Wunderhorn five years later. He decided to add one of the songs from Des Knaben Wunderhorn ("Urlicht") as the fourth movement. Mahler added a large choral finale and completed his symphony, but only after finding his inspiration. According to Mahler:

> Whenever I plan a large musical structure, I always come to a point where I have to resort to ‘the word’ as a vehicle for my musical idea.—It must have been pretty much the same for Beethoven in his Ninth...In the last movement of my Second I simply had to go through the whole of world literature including the Bible, in search of the right word, the ‘Open Sesame’—and in the end had no choice but to find my own words for my thoughts and feelings. The way in which I was inspired to do this is deeply significant and characteristic of the nature of artistic creation...Then Bülow died, and I went to the memorial service. The mood in which I sat and pondered on the departed was utterly in the spirit of what I was working on at the time. Then the choir, up in the organ-loft, intoned Klopstock’s Resurrection chorale. It flashed on me like lightning, and everything became plain and clear in my mind! It was the flash that all creative artists wait for—'conceiving by the Holy Ghost'! (Reilly 87-88)

This was the idea that Mahler needed to complete his symphony in a rather short time.

The finale was for soprano, alto, mixed chorus and large orchestra.

Mahler only used two stanzas of Klopstock’s hymn for the finale. The number of performers needed to perform the Second Symphony makes the ending a wall of sound, but Mahler knew how to use the orchestra like a chamber ensemble. This created a bigger contrast between the soft and the loud parts of the symphony.

Mahler was a busy musician and conducted performances of several choral symphonies. He felt the pressure of the precedent of Beethoven, and feared being accused of lack of originality. According to Mahler, "I had long contemplated bringing
in the choir in the last movement, and only the fear that it would be taken as a formal imitation of Beethoven made me hesitate again and again” (Reilly 112). The symphony does invite multiple comparisons to Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, mainly because of the three instrumental movements and an immense choral finale as well as the finale’s inclusion of some of the previous themes.

Mahler’s next symphony, his Third, includes two vocal movements (fourth movement for alto solo, fifth movement for alto solo and boys’ and women’s choirs), but this symphony includes four instrumental movements. The symphony was completed in 1896 and at one time included seven movements, but the seventh movement was removed and placed in the Fourth Symphony. The fourth movement uses a poem, ‘Midnight Song’ from Also sprach Zarathustra by Friedrich Nietzsche. In the next movement Mahler uses ‘Es sungen drei Engel” from his own song collection, Des Knaben Wunderhorn. Mahler’s Third Symphony uses the solo voice like his Second Symphony, but the chorus is lighter in the Third. The Third Symphony is one of the longest in the standard repertoire; it runs about ninety to one hundred minutes. The two choral movements are a small part of the symphony, with the outer movements each around thirty minutes.

Mahler did not use the chorus in a symphony again until his Eighth Symphony, which has the nickname of “Symphony of a Thousand.” The symphony was completed in 1907, and called for a large orchestra, three sopranos, two altos, a tenor, a baritone, a bass, a boys’ choir and two mixed choruses. The nickname was due to the forces needed to perform the symphony, but the actual performers rarely reach a thousand. This symphony is the first to use chorus completely throughout; while previous examples have
either used the chorus in the final movement or a couple movements, the chorus in Mahler’s Eighth only rests for small moments.

The text of the Eighth Symphony was based on the Latin hymn “Veni Creator” and the end of Goethe’s Faust. This creates a conflict between the texts, one being sacred and the other being secular. The symphony consists of two big movements, each divided into separate sections. While Mahler decided to use two different texts for the symphony, he wanted to portray an overwhelming idea with the entire symphony: the idea that God is responsible for art and therefore works through Goethe as well as through more traditional sacred texts. The symphony is similar to a cantata or an oratorio, with contrasting solos and choruses throughout, with the forces united for a big choral finale.

The first English-language choral symphony was by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958). He completed A Sea Symphony in 1909. This symphony was Vaughan Williams’ first and longest symphony. It used the chorus throughout the entire work, like Mahler’s Eighth. Unlike Mahler, Vaughan Williams wrote the symphony in the traditional four-movement form of the symphony, but this work is programmatic. He used a soprano, a baritone, mixed chorus and large orchestra. For the texts, Vaughan Williams used words from Walt Whitman’s Leaves of Grass. He used a style reminiscent of sixteenth-century polyphonic music and wanted to convey to the audience that the chorus was speaking to them. This work is considered Vaughan Williams’ first major work and was the start of the rise of English music in the twentieth century.

A couple of minor examples by popular composers were the next choral symphonies. In 1913, Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943) completed a choral symphony
called *The Bells*, a poem by Edgar Allan Poe, translated into Russian by Konstantin Balmont. Rachmaninoff called the piece a choral symphony and also his Third Symphony, but he would later write a purely instrumental Third Symphony. In fact, he originally sketched an instrumental version of this symphony, but this music was redistributed into *The Bells*.

The poem includes vivid imagery in the text and four different bells separated into four movements. According to Max Harrison:

Poe’s stanzas celebrate different types of bell, each being associated with a particular stage of life. Hence sleigh bells stand for birth and youth, golden bells for love and marriage, while bronze is for alarm bells, for fire and terror, and the sound of iron funeral bells marks the end of man’s time on earth. The shape of the poem implied a sequence of four movements, two mainly happy and two worse than merely sad; it also imposed the seeming disadvantage of a slow finale, although, as Rachmaninoff himself later pointed out, this had the precedent of Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 6. (187)

Rachmaninoff took the programmatic ideas from Poe’s words to create his choral symphony. He is mostly known for his works for piano and piano with orchestra, but also wrote many choral works. *The Bells* is one of the prominent of these choral works and the first Russian choral symphony.

Gustav Holst (1874-1934) wrote a choral symphony completed in 1924, simply called his *First Choral Symphony* for soprano, chorus and orchestra. Like that of his friend Ralph Vaughan Williams, Holst’s symphony is in four movements. The texts are by John Keats, both poems and letters to family and friends. This combination of texts was unsatisfactory to many critics of the time.

The next major composer of a choral symphony was Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975). His first choral symphony was his Second Symphony ("To October"), completed
in 1927. Unlike any previous example, the symphony is written in one movement. The piece is divided into five sections, four instrumental sections and a choral finale. The text is a poem by Alexander Bezylensky that celebrates Lenin and the 1917, or October, Revolution. This early example of choral writing by Shostakovich was not that complicated. He mostly wrote in unison and two voices for the choral finale. Shostakovich was young when he wrote this piece; it is typical of the experimental approach found throughout his early symphonies.

Shostakovich finished his next choral symphony two years later with his Symphony No. 3 (“The First of May”). This symphony is similar to the earlier choral symphony. This work contained one movement, which divides into three sections with a choral finale. Shostakovich uses another Russian text, by Semyon Issakovich Kirsanov, about the Soviet Union’s celebrations of May Day.

Both symphonies have experimental musical language that maintains the traditional form. Shostakovich incorporated ideas from previous choral symphonies, like the choral finale after several sections (or movements) of instrumental parts, into his style. Later in life, Shostakovich said that the Second and Third Symphony were his two biggest disappointments. These works were not the type of music that the socialist Soviet Union preferred to hear with experimental music and big choral finales.

Igor Stravinsky completed his Symphony of Psalms in 1930. The piece was commissioned by Serge Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the orchestra. Stravinsky wrote the piece during his neoclassical period and named after his use of Latin psalms. Stravinsky believed that he was uniting symphonies and psalms, not simply bringing the texts of the psalms into a symphony.
This symphony uses the chorus completely throughout the three-movement work. Stravinsky uses the octatonic scale, typical for him during this period, and tries to represent Renaissance and Baroque music in this symphony.

The next choral symphony from Europe is by Benjamin Britten (1913-1976). His Spring Symphony, completed in 1949, was for soprano, alto and tenor soloists, mixed chorus, boys’ choir and orchestra. According to Britten, “…a symphony not only dealing with the Spring itself, but with the progress of Winter to Spring and the reawakening of the earth and life which that means” (Ashby 224). The texts of the symphony were from multiple English poets as far back as sixteenth century. The symphony is divided into four parts with all but the finale having multiple texts within each part. The climax is in the finale and the chorus has parts without text. The symphony is an independent work and a good example of a choral symphony in the mid-twentieth century.

Dmitri Shostakovich completed a third choral symphony, Symphony No. 13 (Babi Yar) in 1962. The symphony was controversial because the poet that Shostakovich set, Yevgeny Yevtushenko, was considered subversive by the Soviet government. Shostakovich set five different poems in this symphony with the poem Babi Yar serving as the text for the first movement. Several parts of the text are explicitly anti-Soviet, including references to the Jewish massacre in Babi Yar, the failure of communism to deliver to its people, and the repression of the Soviet people. Shostakovich tries to express the severity of the subject of the symphony. According to Roy Blokker:

The Symphony is intense, concentrating sheer drama throughout its pages, and all five of the poems signal protest…Shostakovich’s writing…in the symphony has an untypical astringency, it remains accessible—a clear indication that he wished his music to be heard and appreciated by a wide audience. (134)
Shostakovich, who was criticized for pandering to the Soviet regime, wrote a symphony that was explicitly in opposition to his country’s government. This symphony led to the second longest gap between symphonies in Shostakovich’s career.

In Europe, there have been several more choral symphonies by composers including Granville Bantock (1868-1946), George Enescu (1881-1955) and Hans Werner Henze (b.1926), but the works listed above have stayed within the standard repertoire of major orchestras. Each work stands on its own, but all owe a certain degree of inspiration to Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. Many of them adhere to the tradition of the choral finale, but many make almost equal use of orchestra and chorus. In the twentieth century, the choral symphony has expanded to provide many more examples, but many of them have remained unpopular. Many problems have been associated with choral symphonies; the fact that the work is too long, the text is too grandiose, whether the music expresses the text, among others.
III. An Overview of the American Choral Symphony

George Bristow (1825-1898) composed the first choral symphony in the United States.² Bristow was a prominent violinist in New York, including the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, from 1843 to 1880, and founded many musical groups that supported American artists, including the American Musical Fund Society, the American Music Association and the Metropolitan Music Association. Bristow composed six symphonies, including one choral symphony. His Fifth Symphony was for chorus and orchestra, and was nicknamed *Niagara*. According to Neil Butterworth, “Bristow designated his last work *Niagara* a symphony but the result is in effect an extended choral cantata³. How appropriate it is that a man so eager to promote native American music should finally choose a national subject for his musical farewell” (16). This symphony has not gained popularity, like most of the early American choral symphonies.

The next American choral symphony was twenty-two years later: the symphony called *Hora Mystica* for men’s chorus and orchestra (1915), by Charles Loeffler (1861-1935). Loeffler was a German-born composer who moved to the United States in 1881 to play with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. His compositional style is considered a mixture of French and Russian elements. This symphony uses a men’s chorus for the

² Most of the information on American choral symphonies comes from *The American Symphony* by Neil Butterworth.

³ Based on the combination of solo, duets, quartets and ensemble pieces.
finale (of a one-movement symphony) and is a combination of texts relating to religion and nature. According to the composer, the title refers to a common religious ceremony “in the church, with its rose-window still aglow with the last evening light, the office of compline—known to the Benedictine monks as Hora Mystica—is tendered to God, and peace descends into the soul of the pilgrim” (Engel 325). This symphony is another example of combining religious and concert music.

Randall Thompson, (1899-1984) a famous composer of choral works, including many with orchestra. He wrote one choral symphony. His First Symphony was originally written for chorus and orchestra in 1929, but eventually he removed the chorus. The instrumental form of his First Symphony is the version that has remained. Much of the symphony is from his two vocal pieces, Poscimur (first movement) and Vidi ut alta for solo, chorus and orchestra (second and third movements). According to Elliot Forbes,

Despite its exuberance, the music seems to suffer from the lack of text; for the changes of mood seem arbitrary rather than inevitable, and the melodic material does not have the contour and directness that characterize so much of his music. Mention should be made of the indirect chords and implied tonal center, which occur at certain points in this work. (5-6)

Over the next decade, only minor composers wrote American choral symphonies. Some of these works are: Robert Mills Delaney’s Choral Symphony (John Brown’s Song, 1931), Lazare Saminsky’s Symphony No. 5 (Jerusalem: City of Solomon and Christ, 1932), Nathaniel Clark Smith’s Negro Choral Symphony for chorus and orchestra (1933), Harl McDonald’s Symphony No. 3 for soprano, chorus and orchestra (Tragic Circle: The Lament of Fu Husan, 1936), Mark Brunswick’s Choral Symphony for mezzo soprano, chorus and orchestra (Eros and Death, 1937), and John Joseph Becker’s Symphony No. 4 (Dramatic Episodes, 1948). John Joseph Becker (1886-1961) wrote a total of three
choral symphonies, his Sixth and Seventh Symphonies are the others. His Sixth Symphony, nicknamed *Out of Bondage*, was completed in 1942 and used the words of Abraham Lincoln. His next symphony, nicknamed *Sermon on the Mount*, was left incomplete, even though he started the piece in 1947, but stopped composing the piece in 1954.

The first choral symphony by a prominent American symphonist was the Fourth Symphony of Roy Harris (1898-1979), nicknamed the *Folk Song Symphony*. The symphony was completed in 1940. The symphony used well-known American spirituals and songs. When discussing the symphony, Roy Harris said:

> The work opens with the song ‘The Girl I Left Behind Me’ and ends with ‘When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again’, both famous Civil War Tunes. To express the nostalgia of loneliness, I chose two of America’s best loved lonesome songs, ‘Bury Me Not On the Lone Prairie’ and ‘He’s Gone Away’. For the Negros—who so admirably represent our nation both in war and music—I choose that wonderful spiritual ‘De Trumpet Sounds It In my Soul’. I wrote the choral parts for the range of good high school choruses, with the thought that such choruses might have a work to prepare with the symphony orchestras of our cities. (Butterworth 87)

The symphony includes five choral movements with two instrumental interludes (third and fifth movements), which were added after the premiere. The work shows the American tradition of folk songs and spirituals in the style of Roy Harris.

Roy Harris returned to the choral symphony in 1965 for his *Abraham Lincoln Symphony* (Symphony No. 10), finished in 1965. Harris wrote the symphony for men’s chorus, women’s chorus, brass, two amplified pianos and percussion. The five-movement work uses the words of Abraham Lincoln as the text to commemorate the 100th anniversary of his assassination. Harris had a lifelong admiration for Lincoln, with
whom he shared a birthday. This symphony is one of the few uncommissioned works and has yet to be published. According to Malcolm Robertson:

I personally find No. 10 among Harris’s weaker works. The texts, by Harris himself (mainly in the first two movements), from the US Constitution and from Lincoln’s speeches, are awkwardly handled; the frequent block chordal writing for the chorus soon become monotonous. The speaker’s part is small (used only as an introduction to the second and during the third movement) and unusually… is rhythmically notated in the score. The instrumental writing is of more interest, however, and Harris uses his chosen forces with great skill to create some highly original textures that help to hold one’s interest in performance. (24)

David Diamond (1915-2005) wrote a choral symphony called To Music for tenor, baritone, mixed chorus, and orchestra in 1969. The work was commissioned for the new auditorium at the Manhattan School of Music, where Diamond taught from 1965 to 1967. The work is a celebration of music with texts by two American poets. The three-movement symphony sets a text by John Masefield, “Invocation of Music,” for the first movement, and another by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, “Dedication,” for the third movement. The second movement is for orchestra only. Most of the choral music is simple unison or homophonic writing.

During that same year, experimental composer George Rochberg (1918-2005), wrote his Third Symphony for double chorus, chamber chorus, four soloists and large orchestra. The work’s original intent was to be a passion, but Rochberg decided against it and wrote a choral symphony on a similar topic. According to Neil Butterworth:

In the symphony he brings the past into collision with the present, simultaneously commenting on the present with the greater wisdom of the past. He accomplishes this by juxtaposing music by Heinrich Schütz, J.S. Bach, Beethoven (the Eroica Symphony) with Mahler and Charles Ives in the context of their own music. (160)

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The symphony is one of key examples of Rochberg taking many different styles and melding them into one united work. While he wrote a lot of music for instrumental ensembles, this work is a rare example of his style with chorus and orchestra.

In 1976 Roy Harris finished his Fourteenth Symphony (so numbered out of superstition of the number 13) for speaker, mixed chorus and orchestra. This piece celebrated the bicentennial anniversary of American independence and was premiered by the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington D.C. in February. Harris took the words from the United States Constitution, Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, the Emancipation Proclamation and added his own text for the symphony. Harris altered the other texts because he was an advocate of the United States Civil Rights movement and he wanted the text to portray his views, especially those of civil rights for African Americans. According to Malcolm Robertson:

The Thirteenth Symphony thus opens with an orchestral introduction which leads to a chanting of the Preamble to the US Constitution by the chorus. The second movement highlights the quarrels over slavery between North and South using both sung and spoken/shouted parts. In the third movement we are on familiar ground with a portrait of the ‘civil war’. A linking solo oboe passage then leads to the fourth movement, based on Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation. The final movement, described by Harris as ‘a setting of democracy’ alters the words of the Preamble to the Constitution: ‘We the people of the United States all of us – to form a more perfect union for all of us – promote the general welfare for all of us – must secure the blessings of liberty for all of us’. Particular emphasis falls on each repetition of ‘for all of us’. (27)

Harris was an established American composer, but this choral symphony was still a risk because it was not a popular form. Both the audience and critics in Washington disliked the symphony.

The last two Harris symphonies are considered minor works in the scope of his compositions. According to Malcolm Robertson, “Roy Harris’s later symphonies, with
the exception of the Seventh, are almost totally unknown and have rarely been performed since their premieres. No doubt they are uneven works, like much of their composer’s output, but they are still products of a lively and individual mind” (27). While the works are not great examples of Harris’s style for the choral symphony, because of his popularity, these are two of the most prominent examples of an American choral symphony.

Howard Hanson (1896-1981) wrote a total of eight symphonies (one remained unpublished), but only wrote one choral symphony, which was his last completed one. Symphony No.7 for chorus and orchestra was completed in 1977 when Hanson was eighty-one years old. The symphony was commissioned by the National Music Camp for their 50th anniversary at Interlochen. The work was nicknamed Sea Symphony, the same name as the earlier choral symphony by Ralph Vaughan Williams. Both symphonies use texts by Walt Whitman; Hanson’s symphony is a three-movement work with three short texts. The finale is the only movement that is similar to Vaughan Williams’s symphony. This symphony is typical of Hanson’s writing for chorus and orchestra. According to Neil Butterworth, “This is vintage Hanson, with ecstatic choral climaxes, modal melodies and vivid sea effects in the orchestra but the results are hardly symphonic in concept” (81).

While there have been several other examples of American choral symphonies, the examples given are the symphonies that have attracted some critical attention. Many of the choral symphonies that have been written in the United States have disappeared since their premieres. Other examples were composed by prominent American
composers, including Alan Hovhaness (1911-2000) and Robert Ward (b.1917), but their scores are not readily available to the public, nor have most of the pieces been recorded.
IV. Marc Blitzstein's *Airborne* Symphony

Marc Blitzstein was a famous composer of musicals, including *The Cradle Will Rock* (1938) and a version of Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill's *Die Dreigroschenoper (The Threepenny Opera)*, 1954). While these works gained Blitzstein popularity in New York, his classical compositions received less attention. After writing several musicals as well as other classical pieces, Blitzstein joined the US Army Eighth Air Force during the Second World War. His background in music led Blitzstein to obtain many assignments away from the fight. His first job was with a film crew, in which he had to do minor tasks, including delivering music, scripts and transcripts. Blitzstein also worked in radio while serving in the military and stayed away from the battlefields.

The United States government knew Blitzstein’s talent was being wasted and asked him what he wanted to do. Blitzstein said he wanted to write a big symphony on flight. However, approval for the project was a slow process. First, Blitzstein had to come up with a theme for the entire symphony. He included the war effort as part of the work to increase his chance of getting the work commissioned. In Marc Blitzstein’s own words:

*Theme*: The sacred struggle of the airborne free men of the world, but particularly of the USA and in the US Army Air Force—to crush the monstrous fascist obstructionist in their path; to crush completely the power of an enemy who abuses the very achievements of the air for purposes of persecution, murder, enslavement. The threat is airborne, free fight is airborne; and victory will be airborne. Once the battle is won, free men can resume their historic task in this
Age of the Air: the conquest of the skies, men over nature. This is good conquest, the good enslavement. (Gordon 232)

The original intention of the work was to be a piece in four movements for orchestra and six-part mixed chorus.

Blitzstein also compared the symphony to Dmitri Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony (*Leningrad*), which had recently been premiered in Russia in March of 1942, and was performed shortly after that in London and New York. Blitzstein had gained many friends in the US Army Air Force and used these connections to help with the approval of this work. Along with his friends, Blitzstein created a film that highlighted his concept of the symphony. He used film of planes and the sky with previously composed music to persuade his superiors to approve the commission of the symphony.

The symphony was finally approved in January 1943, along with Blitzstein’s promotion to Corporal. During this time, Blitzstein did not have to perform normal duties of a soldier, including daily inspection. He received a stipend and a deadline of eight months to write the symphony. Blitzstein had revealed very little to anyone outside of the US Army Air Force. In a letter home to his parents, Blitzstein wrote:

> The project has been accepted—an hour ago!...so I can spill it. I submitted a plan to do a big lyric-and-dramatic symphony, to be called “The Airborne”—for orchestra, chorus, speaker, singing-and-acting-solos. A concert-work, but one adaptable for radio—or even film production. Four movements and a prelude. To take about an hour in performance; to be exploited in a big way (translations in Russian for Moscow performance, Spanish for Mexico and S. America, French for the underground movt.), with initial London performance radiating repeats everywhere else. A big throw, and to be treated as such. Lt. Tex McCrary, Major Wyler and Col. Lay got steamed up, and begin to investigate possibilities of my being released full-time to do the work. Now it has happened, right up to the Air Force Generals... (Gordon 234)
The letter shows that Blitzstein has altered his original plan for the symphony, adding the speaker plus the idea of singing-and-acting-solos, and planned performances of the symphony in other countries on the Allied side. Blitzstein always planned on writing the texts for the symphony, which he eventually did write.

The work on the symphony was interrupted on multiple occasions by military activities and other compositions. Blitzstein completed a translation of the fighting song for the French Resistance, which was performed in London, and wrote a symphonic poem called *Freedom Morning*. *Freedom Morning* has often been compared to Copland’s *Appalachian Spring* and many early works of Leonard Bernstein. The government also commissioned Blitzstein to write pieces for the black soldiers, who were still segregated from the white soldiers, often focusing on their freedom. The topic of freedom, seen in many works by Blitzstein of this time, was also a favorite of many other composers of the time, including Samuel Barber, Robert Russell Bennett, John Alden Carpenter, and Randall Thompson.

Blitzstein worried about the deadline, which was quickly approaching, because of the interruptions and the way he composed. According to Eric Gordon:

Blitzstein’s method of organizing his composition baffled those who saw him at work. He amassed a sheaf of hundreds of pages of music paper, all that he would require for the entire piece, and inserted his bar lines. Then he would write in a measure of music here, two measure there, another measure several pages later, with many blank pages in between, almost as though the exact length, the arc of the score was completely premeditated, the specific notes to be written in only as composed. (237)

Blitzstein’s style was unorthodox, but he still got his work done. In November of 1943, Blitzstein premiered parts of the symphony for his superiors and friends from Hollywood and Broadway, including Burgess Meredith and Tex McCrary. Blitzstein sat at the piano
playing the score, while performing both the singing and speaking parts. The performance was a success and another promotion soon followed, to Sergeant.

Along with his promotion, Blitzstein also obtained additional duties. One of his new responsibilities was music director of the American Broadcasting Service (ABSIE). The completion of the symphony was interrupted because of his promotion and the accelerating pace of the war. The push to beat the Germans and Italians, including the D-Day invasion, took many of the soldiers Blitzstein was using in the chorus. The premiere of the symphony was pushed back because the conclusion of the war was near, and in the end the work was never premiered by the military.

Blitzstein had to hold off on finishing the symphony until after the end of the Second World War. He returned to the United States in May 1945, but unfortunately his trunk, with the score for the *Airborne* Symphony, was lost. The premiere performance was never rescheduled with the US Army Air Force, so Blitzstein was not eager to rewrite the symphony and finish the parts he had not completed. In the fall, he met with an old friend, Leonard Bernstein, and played a few of the tunes he had written from the symphony. Bernstein loved the music and Blitzstein went back to rewrite and finish the symphony. Bernstein promised that his orchestra at the time, the New York City Symphony, would premiere the piece on April 1st and 2nd of 1946.

Blitzstein decided to isolate himself to finish the symphony in Stamford, Connecticut. He stayed at a friend’s studio from late 1945 through March 1946, when he finally completed the work. By the time Blitzstein had recomposed most of the symphony, the trunk had appeared in the quartermaster’s depot in Boston. The second version of the *Airborne* Symphony came out ten minutes shorter. The final scoring and
form of the piece was different from Blitzstein’s original intention. The symphony was written for speaker, tenor, baritone, men’s chorus and large orchestra in three movements divided into twelve parts.

Bernstein upheld his deal with Blitzstein and premiered the piece on April 1st, 1946 with the New York City Symphony, the Robert Shaw Collegiate Chorale, Charles Holland (tenor), Walter Scheff (baritone), and Orson Welles as the speaker. The symphony was premiered in the second half of the concert. According to Eric Gordon:

At the end of the performance, Blitzstein jumped to the podium to embrace Orson Welles, then shared a particularly warm embrace with Bernstein. The audience responded with such prolonged applause that Bernstein had to calm them down with an impromptu speech in which he congratulated everyone including himself—and the audience for its taste and awareness. (285)

The pro-American, anti-Fascist symphony was bound to receive applause because of the recent war.

The piece, however, received mixed reviews from the critics in New York. The famous critic and composer Virgil Thomson gave a mixed review, calling it:

“an ingenious piece of musical work and far from inspired,” “masterful but not entirely satisfactory,” the performance “a triumph of efficiency.” “His tunes are both distinguished and singable. And his whole invention, melodic, contrapuntal and orchestral, has a higher degree of specific expressivity, a clearer way of saying what it means, than we are accustomed to encounter in the work of American composers.” (quoted in Gordon 285)

One of the most prominent negative reviews was by Douglas Watt:

It is somewhat useless to criticize the work. To me, it said nothing new or fresh or moving and, in its studied use of familiar tragedies, it occasionally seemed a little callous. It is scarcely profound, more of a musical poster, but I appreciate that there is an audience which responds happily to these clichés. (Gordon 285)
Overall the reviews of the *Airborne* Symphony were diverse; some believed it was a major event in American classical music, while others believed there was no substance to the piece.

The reviews did not stop Blitzstein from receiving several awards for the *Airborne* Symphony, including the 1946 Music Critics Circle Award, the Page One Award of the Newspaper Guild of New York, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters Award, but he did not win the Pulitzer Prize. The work also was one of the reasons Blitzstein was appointed to the board of directors of the League of Composers. The success of this piece led to many commissions by many organizations and expanded Blitzstein's career.

The piece also received many other performances, mainly under Leonard Bernstein's baton. The next performance of the *Airborne* Symphony was the General Motors Symphony of the Air broadcast on NBC television on May 26. The soloists and conductor were the same for the performance, but the orchestra was now the NBC Symphony Orchestra and Blitzstein himself replaced Orson Welles (who had prior engagements) as speaker. In May of 1947, RCA released a recording of the *Airborne* Symphony with the premiere performers except Orson Welles, who was replaced by Robert Shaw (the Robert Shaw Collegiate Chorale was credited as the RCA Victor Chorale). The record was on seven disks and was a surprising seller for RCA.

The success of the RCA recording of the symphony encouraged more performances in the United States. The debut of the *Airborne* Symphony in New York City's Carnegie Hall was on May 4, 1953. Skitch Henderson and Schuyler Chapin, both former members of the air force (Henderson was a member of the US Eighth Army Air
Force like Blitzstein) were both employed by NBC and wanted to help out the musicians of the New York Philharmonic. Henderson conducted the work, with Tyrone Power (a marine aviator in the Second World War) as speaker, Rawn Spearman and Norman Clayton as soloists, and the Lehigh University Glee Club combined with the United States Air Force Singing Sergeants for the chorus. Blitzstein did not approve of the performance, both because the piece was edited to remove the section calling for a second front and because he did not like Skitch Henderson.

The symphony was also used as a celebration piece for the fiftieth anniversary of the Wright Brothers' experiments of flight. The performance was not in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, or in Ohio, but in San Antonio, Texas. The piece was performed by the San Antonio Symphony Orchestra, led by Victor Alessandro, with the chorus of the Lackland Air Force Base, Zachary Scott as narrator, Norman Clayton again as baritone soloist and Russell Nype as tenor soloist. They performed the work several times for the anniversary, and there was a delayed broadcast on NBC. This was the last performance that Blitzstein saw before his death in 1964, when he was beaten to death by three Portuguese sailors in response to his sexual advances.

Leonard Bernstein returned to the symphony in 1966, when he was music director of the New York Philharmonic. The work was revived during the Vietnam War. Bernstein recorded this piece again, now with the New York Philharmonic, the Choral Art Society, Orson Welles as narrator, Andrea Velis as tenor soloist, and David Watson as baritone soloist. The performances and recording were not well received by either the crowds or the critics. These are the last significant performances of the *Airborne* Symphony in the United States, but Bernstein was not yet finished with the piece. As
Bernstein was close to retiring, London celebrated his career with a series of performances. Bernstein choose the music for the concerts, including his own music and works by other favorite composers. These included the European premiere of Marc Blitzstein’s *Airborne* Symphony on May 4 at the Barbican Centre. It took forty years for his work, which was originally composed in London, to be performed there. The most notable performers of the group were the conductor, John Mauceri, and actor Terence Stamp as narrator.

Blitzstein used his experience in the theater for the *Airborne* Symphony with the combination of the speaker and vocalists. Each movement tells a part of the story of men and aviation; each movement divides into four parts, which depict different parts of the topic. The first movement of the symphony tells of the history of man with the idea of flight and eventually the creation of the airplane by the Wright brothers. The first part (Theory of Flight) is an introduction to men’s obsession with aviation by the speaker. The second part (Ballad of History and Mythology) tells the story of attempts at flight, by Etana, Phaethon, Icarus and Archytas of Tarentum, sung by the soloists and chorus. At the end of the second part, the speaker talks about the Wright Brothers and their first successful plane in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. This leads to the third part of the first movement (Kitty Hawk), in which the speaker reads a letter by Orville Wright about the first successful flight. The fourth part (The Airborne) is a concluding part, which uses previous themes and texts to end the first movement.

The second movement deals with “...the horrors of aerial attack, and the mindless violence of Nazi fascism” (Jansson). The first part of the movement (“The Enemy”) depicts the Nazi army. While the chorus portrays the army, the speaker intervenes with
narration of historical facts. The movement continues with a purely instrumental section entitled “Threat and Approach”. The movement depicts the advent of the Second World War. The third part (“Ballad of the Cities”) tells the story of the bombed cities by the Axis powers; cities mentioned are Guernica, Warsaw, Manila, Rotterdam, London, Malta and Leningrad. However, Guernica was not a city in the Second World War. According to Eric Gordon, “It was important for Blitzstein to mention Guernica as the ‘starting point’ of the Second World War—even though the bombing of that Basque town was an episode in the Spanish Civil War—in order to underscore the complicity of the Western democracies in the origins of the war” (279-80). For several years, the ‘Allied’ countries had been warned about Hitler and the Nazi regime. Even the United States waited to join the war until the attack on Pearl Harbor occurred in 1941. The speaker reads the cities at the beginning and end (in reverse order) of the third part, while he joins with the vocalists to describe the cities after the bombings. The fourth part of the second movement (“Morning Poem) is a poem in blank verse, which tells the story of a British pilot flight in an airplane enjoying the sky. This part serves as a transition to the theme of the third movement.

The storyline for the third movement is the success of the American forces in the Second World War. The third movement begins with some American soldiers singing about the Air Force and then getting ready for battle. Unfortunately, by the time they put all of their proper gear on, the threat had disappeared, so they have to take everything off again. The speaker describes the American soldiers and also acts as their commander at one point; the chorus is the American soldiers. “Night Music: Ballad of the Bombardier” is the second part of the third movement and depicts a soldier writing to his Emily at
home. This part depicts the sacrifice of the soldier and also, his longing for his return home. A short recitative is attached to the end of this part, which is simply a warning about planes in the sky from the enemy. The next part is the “Chorus of the Rendezvous,” depicting the soldiers close to battle and ready to attack the enemy. The fourth part of the third movement, “The Open Sky,” ends the symphony with a celebration of the victory of the Second World War. While the chorus celebrates the victory, the speaker warns of the problems that will come with men being airborne. This conflict occurs throughout the entire final part of the symphony and ends with that conflict depicted in the orchestra.

Blitzstein uses a three-movement scheme for the symphony, of which there have been several earlier examples, but the fact that he split each movement into four discrete parts makes this symphony different from most symphonies. The parts follow typical classical forms, but sometimes do venture away from traditional ideas. The symphony is programmatic, but most of the story is told through the words of the speaker, soloists and chorus rather than depicted through instrumental music. Blitzstein’s experience with the theatre added another layer to the symphony. The symphony depicts a story that has a purpose, and it begins and ends with consideration of problems by flight. The *Airborne* Symphony blends elements of serious classical tradition with a theatrical, or programmatic, idea.

The first movement is the only movement in which all four parts are clearly connected by the music. The overall form of the movement is a sonata form (see table 4.1); the first part serves as the primary theme, the second as the secondary theme, the third acts as a development and the fourth part as recapitulation and conclusion. The
Table 4.1 – Form of first movement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Music</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P⁴</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“Theory of Flight”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T⁵</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>Last nine measures of “Theory of Flight”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S⁶</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“Ballad of History and Mythology”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K⁷</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>Closing material of “Ballad of History and Mythology”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dev.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“Kitty Hawk”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recap</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“The Airborne”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁴ P=Principal theme  
⁵ T=Transition  
⁶ S=Secondary theme  
⁷ K=Closing theme
third part clearly develops the motive from the beginning of the first movement, and also the fourth part includes melodies from both the first and second parts. Each of the parts has its own formal shape, but the clear connection in this movement gives the listener an idea of sonata form.

The first part of the opening movement is in binary form (AB) with a conclusion. It starts with a nine-measure introduction, which includes a horn call (example 1) and the introduction of the topic by the speaker of the “Age of Flight” in the first two measures. The rest of the introduction is a duet between the French horn and a clarinet. The prominent feature of both parts, especially in measure 3 to 5, is the use of perfect fourths and fifths. The principal theme first occurs at measure 10 (example 2); the theme is a rather simple D to E unison in the chorus on the word “Airborne”. The duet returns and

Example 1 – Horn call, measure 1 of “Theory of Flight,” French horns (in F)

\[\text{Example 1 – Horn call, measure 1 of “Theory of Flight,” French horns (in F)}\]

Example 2 – “Airborne” motive (in treble clef) in the bass section during

Measures 10 to 12 of “Theory of Flight” (in 4/4)

\[\text{Example 2 – “Airborne” motive (in treble clef) in the bass section during Measures 10 to 12 of “Theory of Flight” (in 4/4)}\]

starts with the French horn and bassoon, but leads to the principal theme for a second time at measure 19. The theme is now down a whole step (beginning on C). After the theme ends the clarinets and strings have an augmented version of the opening motive in
measures 21 and 22. This leads to a cadence on A minor in measure 23, which holds for the speaker’s second entrance and continues over the music that follows. The next twelve measures serve as background music for the speaker, focusing on the interval of a fourth/fifth and serves a series of extensions with a cadence similar to that in measure 23, occurring in measures 28, 34, 35, and 36. The speaker states that men have traveled on ground and water, but what about air?

Beginning at measure 37, Blitzstein adds two words to make it, “To be Airborne”, but changes the melody for a secondary theme. He does present the same theme three times (measure 37, 42 and 49) and during the second time he does use the rising whole step on the word “Airborne,” like the principal theme. Blitzstein uses a cadence (in measure 41, 47 and 48) that he used many times in the principal theme. This music builds and adds layers and cadences in measures 57 and 58. The cadence has D major and E major on top of each other, while the piano plays the D major in eighth notes. As in the principal theme, Blitzstein extends the phrase and reuses this cadence in measure 61-62 and 67-68. While he extends the phrase, the speaker says that men have always dreamt of being airborne.

At measure 69, the conclusion of the first part begins with the duet from measure three, now between the English horn and bassoon. The music builds again with the chorus entering, along with entrances by strings and winds, and gradually grows louder until measure 92. The chorus uses the words “To be Airborne”, a new three-note version of the “Airborne” motive, which divides into imitation (by contour) of the tenors by the baritone section beginning in measure 85. The last nine measures of “Theory of Flight”
begins with the layered D and E major chords, but continues with alteration while the speaker invokes the orchestra to “Tell the stories!”.

When the first part of the opening movement begins, the piece emphasizes A minor as the tonal center. By the end of the principal theme, the key has modulated to F major. The secondary theme does have the cadences of stacked D and E major chords, but they serve as a transition back to the key of A minor. The concluding nine measures focus on the stacked D and E major chords again, but this part ends on a C major chord with an added second and sixth. C major is the relative major of A minor, but the C major chord also is used as a transition to the second part of the first movement (as a subdominant of G).

“Ballad of History and Mythology” is the second part of the opening movement and depicts various attempts, by historical and mythological characters, of flight. This section is in a five-part rondo form (ABACA with a coda) and includes the first use of the solo voices. The first five measures are introductory, and the ‘A’ theme begins with the anacrusis for measure 6. The first character introduced by the solo tenor is Etana. Etana was an ancient Sumerian king in Mesopotamia. In the myth he rode on an eagle but fell off and died. This music is repeated, in various forms, four times throughout the piece for each character who experimented with flight. After the first presentation of the ‘A’ material, Blitzstein brings back the three-note “Airborne” motive from the closing of the first movement. The music represents motive heard at measure 85 (ex. 3) in the first part.

The ‘A’ material returns at measure 28 with Phaethon, son of Apollo. Apollo, son of Zeus, was a sun-god and charioteer. Other kids made fun of Phaethon because they
did not believe his father was Apollo. Phaethon wanted to prove the kids wrong and

Example 3 – Three-note “Airborne” motive in the tenor section during measures 25 to 27 in “Ballad of History and Mythology” (in 4/4)

went to Apollo to take his chariot. Before Phaethon said what he wanted, Apollo promised him anything he wanted. Phaethon asked for the chariot and Apollo was obligated because he had promised Phaethon. Phaethon lost control of the chariot and went too high to make the earth colder and too low to make Africa a desert and turn the people black. Eventually Zeus had to throw a lightning bolt at the chariot to stop it and he killed Phaethon. The music is the exact same as the first time.

The ‘B’ material starts in measure 49, which takes the setting of last four words (“Wings on the brain”) of the ‘A’ material and expands it. The chorus sings about men’s obsession with the idea of flight. The music is in sharp contrast to the opening section. The ‘A’ material is now in cut time in faster rhythm, but the ‘B’ material switches to 3/4 and nothing faster than quarter notes. At measure 60, Blitzstein adds the arpeggios that introduced the ‘A’ material underneath the cadence of the ‘B’ material.

The return of ‘A’ material occurs at measure 62 with the tale of Icarus. Icarus and his father, Daedalus, were imprisoned by King Minos, and wanted to escape the island of Crete. Daedalus made wax wings for both him and his son, but warned him about getting too close to the sea and the sun. Icarus flew too close to the sun, which caused his wax wings to melt and he fell to his death. The music for the ‘A’ is almost entirely the same,
but measure 77 is slightly different because of the lyrics. Blitzstein merges the end of
return of 'A' with a small phase of the 'B' music, but this serves as a transition, not as a
return of the entire section.

The 'C' material is new music for another story, which is a combination of
multiple stories. This section includes stories of Archytas of Tarentum, Leonardo da
Vinci, a flying bicycle, rocket ship and balloons. This section is the first of the
symphony in which the solo tenor and chorus pass music back and forth. The tenor has
the same music each time, but the first two times the music is imitated by the chorus.
The 'A' material returns once more at measure 123 and continues to mention various
models for flight in a brief way. In order for Blitzstein to accommodate all of the
different models for flight, he adds fourteen measures (many of them just repeated on one
note, G) and the rest of the music is the same. In this version of 'A', the full orchestra
and chorus present the material, in sharp contrast to the tenor soloist, strings and
woodwinds used previously.

The coda starts with the 'B' material that has been expanded. After two phrases
of the 'B' material, the tenor soloist replaces the top tenor voice of the chorus and sings a
new text, while the chorus hums, summarizing the second part of the first movement.
Over the several phrases of the closing material the voices of the orchestra build and at
measure 178, the entire orchestra and chorus ends this section. Blitzstein adds a six-
measure closing section, which includes the three-note 'Airborne' motive (to the words
of 'To be Airborne') used earlier in the "Ballad of History and Mythology" and the end
of the "Theory of Flight". After the three-note motive, the strings continue as the speaker
talks about the first airplane to take flight.
“Ballad of History and Mythology” creates a conflict in key in the ‘A’ section. While the basses emphasize F, the key of the ‘A’ material is actually G major. Blitzstein follows traditional practice of a rondo and returns to G major every time the ‘A’ material returns. The ‘B’ material, while slightly more chromatic, has an emphasis on C major at the beginning of each phrase with a progression of mostly major chords, but ends with G major by the end of the section. ‘C’ is the only section that clearly has a different key and maintains it. A short version of the ‘B’ material leads to D major, which continues throughout the entire ‘C’ section until the return of ‘A’ in measure 123.

According to Eric Gordon in this part, “The light, playful, minstrel music is tinged with jazz. This is a happy song, showing the pioneer inventor’s joy of tinkering... To disguise the essentially didactic nature of this episode, Blitzstein doused it in slang, jokes, poor puns, strained rhymes, and Gertrude Stein-like wordage” (278). While the connection between historical and mythological characters are not clearly evident, minstrel music was popular during the early twentieth century in which Blitzstein grew up.

The third section of the first movement of the symphony (“Kitty Hawk”) is an instrumental movement in binary form; it develops the horn call motive from the beginning. The ‘A’ section is divided into two sections (m.1-2 and m.3-10), developing the motive several times (ex. 4). The ‘A’ section is expanded during measures 11 to 24 (divided m.11-13, m.14-24); this leads to a transition that also develops the same motive. The ‘B’ section is a repeated D major chord in the strings and flutes, with a
chromatic English horn solo. The English horn solo is only three measures, the melody then moves to the bass clarinet. The main idea of the solo is descending fourths/fifths.

Example 4 – Development of horn call in measure 1 and 2 by solo flute

in “Kitty Hawk”

(the prominent intervals of the horn call), but it also includes skips of diminished octaves and major ninths. The main function of this passage is to provide background music to the speaker, who reads a letter from Orville Wright to the Reverend Milton Wright, his father, about the brothers’ success.

“Kitty Hawk” is the part of the first movement that serves as a development, but it still maintains a tonal center. While it begins and ends in D major, the ‘A’ section is more chromatic and also features the contrast of triplets and duplets for the first time in the symphony. While the tempo for “Kitty Hawk” is slow, Blitzstein explores rhythm to a greater extent in this part while he develops a single motive. He also switches the orchestration in the beginning of the two ‘A’ sections; the first is scored for the woodwinds and the second for brass. The ‘B’ section repeats the inverted tonic triad (first inversion) as a static element; there is no harmonic motion during the entire section.

The fourth part, “The Airborne”, serves as a recapitulation for the entire first movement. This conclusion begins with a highly energetic build (from m.1-17) to a combination of two themes from the first and second parts of this movement. The principal theme of “Theory of Flight” and the secondary theme of “Ballad of History and
Mythology” are combined during measures 18 to 35 to constitute the principal theme of the finale. At the end of the principal theme, the orchestra has a simple section of repeated A major-seventh chords in an ascending and descending pattern of groups of one to four. The ‘B’ section takes the “Airborne” theme and expands it (ex. 5) several times by adding the D and C-sharp above, but emphasize the whole step (A to B) of the original theme. After four different uses of the motive, the opening movement is concluded by the orchestra in D major. D major remains the key of the entire movement with some emphasis on A, the dominant.

Example 5 – Development of “Airborne” motive in tenor section (treble clef)

during measures 47 and 48 of “The Airborne”

The first movement shows many principles of the sonata form over the four parts. The free use of previous music in all parts of the first movement leads to a direct connection between them. The third part, “Kitty Hawk”, does act as a development, but develops the introductory horn call rather than one of main themes of either the first or second part. “The Airborne” serves as a condensed recapitulation with phrases from the first and second parts. The key scheme of the first movement does not follow a typical path. The first, third and fourth parts remain in D major, but the second movement moves to the subdominant of G major. The first movement gives a good example of Blitzstein observing traditional ideas, but adapting those principles to fit a symphony that has a story.
The second movement switches topic from men’s obsession with flight to the threats from the Nazis and Adolf Hitler during the Second World War. Blitzstein opens the movement with “The Enemy”, which is a representation of the Nazi army and Germany’s promotion of the Aryan race. Blitzstein uses binary form again (see table 4.2), but uses it in an inventive way. The movement begins with a two-measure introduction, which leads to the speaker warning about the threat of the airborne. After the speaker finishes, the orchestra plays the Nazi march written for this symphony. The chorus enters at measure 14 with a monotone chant with a text in support and admiration of Hitler. At measure 33, the first two measures reappear as a transition to the secondary theme.

The ‘B’ section contains two main lines, the clarinet and bassoon. The bassoon part is comprised of an ostinato of D-E-A-Bb in eighth notes followed an eighth note rest. At measure 41, the bassoon line is passed between the bassoons and bass clarinet, while the clarinets and flutes are in canon at the major seventh above. During the third time through the music (beginning at m.52), the ostinato in the bass line is dropped and the full orchestra has the clarinet line in parallel half steps (or major sevenths), accompanying the chorus’s monotone chant.

Small portions of both the ‘A’ and ‘B’ sections appear starting at measure 58. Blitzstein writes four measures of the chorus with orchestra, but departs from the rest of ‘A’ in the next five measures. The five measures are comprised of arpeggios (m.61-62) and the monotone chorus by itself (m.63-65). At measure 66, the cadence of the ‘A’ material returns and leads to the Aryan message presented by the speaker. The shortened
Table 4.2 – Form of "The Enemy"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Music</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O⁸</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Two-measure orchestra introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nazi March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>O used as transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Includes a canon at the major seventh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P'</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Shortened ‘P’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S'</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>Shortened ‘S’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>Includes smaller segments of ‘P’ and ‘S’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁸ 0=Introductory material
‘B’ material starts at measure 69 with the two lines, but in opposite score order (the clarinets have the ostinato and the bassoons have the melody). The full orchestra has the melody in chordal unison starting in measure 73 and the section is expanded with the repetition of measure 75 (an arpeggio), with the chorus in between. Eventually the woodwinds fade out and the chorus continues its salute to Hitler.

Blitzstein writes an even shorter version of the ‘A’ and ‘B’ sections in the closing material starting at measure 87. Only three measures of the ‘A’ section return (m.87-89) and five measures of the ‘B’ section (m.92-96). Between these two sections, a ratchet has a solo with the same rhythm as the chant. The speaker closes the movement with the announcement that the enemy is now approaching for attack. The binary form that Blitzstein used for this part is a piece that contains two parts, but gradually gets smaller the two times the music is repeated.

Blitzstein writes most of “The Enemy” with an ambiguity in key. The ‘A’ material has a conflict between the low and high voices. The basses, bassoons and tubas play a line that emphasize A-flat as the tonal center, but the oboes and clarinets play all white notes. The duality in keys remains throughout the entire ‘A’ section, but the section clearly ends on an A-flat major chord. The ‘B’ section has a similar tonal character. The strings hold out a diminished triad on A (A-C-Eb), but the other parts are highly chromatic. The basses emphasis Eb (the dominant of the home key), but the canon at the ninth (m.41-46) and music together a half step away (m.52-57), cause more confusion in the key for this section. “The Enemy” ends with the ‘B’ material, including its confusion in key. The piece abruptly ends with no clear sense of key before the speaker introduces the next part.
The idea of having a stark Nazi march had been used before by several composers who felt the effect of the Nazi regime; examples include Shostakovich's *Leningrad* Symphony (Symphony No. 7, op. 60, 1941), Arnold Schönberg’s *A Survival From Warsaw*, op. 46 (1947) and Bela Bartok's String Quartet No. 6 (1939). Both Bartok and Schönberg dealt with the pressures of the Nazi government and were forced to leave their country. Bartok’s Sixth String Quartet was the last work he composed in his home country of Hungary. Shostakovich did not participate in the Second World War, but was one of the Soviet Union’s lead composers. Shostakovich had to deal with the pressure that the other two did, but still wrote of the deep loss in Leningrad. All three composers mocked the stuffiness and unification (willingness to follow Hitler) with a similar type of march.

“Threat and Approach” is the second part of the middle movement (see table 4.3) and is another instrumental movement. The part begins with two repetitions of the ‘A’ material (m.1-17, m.18-35) with the only difference being the orchestration of the two sections. The ‘B’ section (m.46) contains a disjunct, chromatic melody, comprised of many fourths/fifths. Rather than returning to earlier music, Blitzstein concludes this part with a slow ‘C’ section, perhaps a transition to the “Ballad of Cities” which follows. The section is sharp in contrast to the previous two sections, but does have an emphasis on chromatic steps and large leaps like the previous sections.

“Threat and Approach” is another section with a clear conflict of key. The first entrance of the entire orchestra emphasizes the tritone E-Bb. During the rest of the piece, several of the parts treat the notes freely, alternating between flats, sharps and naturals, and cadences on several different chords. The fast sections end on a tritone also (F#-C
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Music</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Two times through the section (m.18 is 2\textsuperscript{nd} time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Transition to ‘B’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Disjunct melody in strings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Transition that ends the fast section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Slow theme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
with a Bb). The slow section ends the piece with an emphasis on A, but the rest of the section has no clear pitch center. This tonal uncertainty seems to be part of Blitzstein’s portrayal of the “Threat and Approach”.

This movement is another movement that is very similar to Dmitri Shostakovich’s music, especially his *Leningrad* Symphony. According to Eric Gordon:

Touches of Shostakovich characterize the “Threat and Approach” orchestral passage denoting the Nazis’ air war on civilization; appropriately so, because it recalls the Soviet composer’s *Leningrad* Symphony (the Seventh), devoted to the city under German siege for nine hundred days. In the entire *Airborne* Symphony, this is the music that most resembles a typical 1940s movie score. (279)

The similarity between the situation in this movement and the story referred to in Shostakovich’s symphony has an influence on Blitzstein, who mentioned the work to his superiors to get the *Airborne* Symphony approved.

“Ballad of the Cities” refers to the bombings of several Allied cities in the Second World War. While the previous parts of the second movement dealt with the Nazis, this part deals with the effects of the airborne attacks on cities and people. Blitzstein returns to the simple writing seen in the first movement. As the orchestra plays a nine-measure introduction, the speaker reads the names of seven cities that have been bombed by Nazis. The principal theme (m.10) has an ABA form (see table 4.4) and starts with the phrase “Wounded cities” on a repeated pitch. The ‘B’ material of the principal theme deals with mostly stepwise motion and some repeated pitches. The chorus is describing the citizens covered in dust and rubble because the buildings have collapsed around them.

The secondary theme (m.30) is a combination of the solo tenor and solo baritone alternating descriptions of the buildings. In measure 55, a third theme, only instrumental,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Music</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Opening music with bombed cities listed by speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>“Wounded cities”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Solo tenor and solo baritone, plus chorus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Orchestra only section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Transition back to ‘A’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A’</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>Return of “Wounded cities”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>The closing section, which includes the theme of ‘B’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
begins and is different from the previous two themes. The theme is comprised of more
leaps and switches between duplets and triplets. This is clearly emphasized in measures
58 to 60, which is a clear hemiola against the beat. Blitzstein uses similar music starting
at measure 61 to transition back to the principal theme. While the transition occurs, the
speaker says he is walking through the city, looking at the rubble and thinks he hears a
survivor, but the sound disappears.

The principal theme returns at measure 69, but the music is in reverse order (now
BA). The ‘B’ material is changed to fit the text, but contains the same idea. The ‘A’
section returns in measure 74, but its music is also changed. This section eventually
leads to the closing material, so Blitzstein extends the section by repeating the last two
words, “Hold out”, on repeated chords. The closing section opens with “Hold out” used
in a new way. Starting in measure 90, the music switches to 6/8 (first time in this
movement) and uses stepwise motion like the introduction and first two themes. The
secondary theme is brought back in measure 109, but only four measures of it. At the
end of those four measures, the music repeats “Call the names” on a repeated pitch. The
speaker at this time repeats the names in reverse order, as the orchestra fades away.

The third part of the second movement, “Ballad of the Cities” provides contrast to
the previous two parts. The key is clear through this section, beginning and ending on D
minor. The cadences of both the principal and secondary theme have Picardy thirds,
making a D major chord. The third theme and beginning of the closing material switches
to A minor, but both modulate back to D minor. The third part is mostly stepwise motion
and tonal, where the first and second parts of the second movement are disjunct and
chromatic. Blitzstein provides a contrast in character between the Nazi and Allied cities.
The mood of the damage brought from the airborne causes the mournful tone of this part of the symphony.

The final part of the second movement is called "Morning Poem"; this is the only movement for speaker alone and provides a sharp contrast to the rest of the previous three. The blank verse poem is about a British pilot who takes his plane out to fly. Escaping from the troubles on the ground and soaring through the sky, the soldier gets to relax and return. Blitzstein, who was surrounded by British soldiers during his time in London, depicts the peacefulness of the British pilot during the chaos of the Second World War. This is depicted by how Blitzstein chooses to score it also, with no instruments or chorus, the speaker simply reading a poem in the middle of a musical composition.

The second movement begins in a different style compared to the first, but returns to the original style Blitzstein used in the third part. While the first movement was about men's obsession with airborne and their experiments, the second deals with the problems with the airborne. The contrast in style mirrors the situation with Blitzstein's story and clearly shows the difference between the topics of each independent part. Like the first movement, the topics of the four parts in the second movement are connected, but not connected by music as in the first. The topic in the second movement is more serious, but Blitzstein still treats the theme lightheartedly with jokes and playful music.

The last movement emphasizes the entrance of the United States and their success during the Second World War. The first part of the third movement, "Ballad of Hurry-Up", introduces the American Air Force with ample doses of humor. The form of the first part is ABCA with a large introduction (see table 4.5). The introduction (m.1-42)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Music</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Large instrumental introduction, comprised of two ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Male quartet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Chorus becomes Air Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>Soldiers put on clothes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>Return of male quartet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B/K</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>Return of ‘B’, ends piece</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
contrasts chords in the wind sections (m.1, 5, 14, 35) with running eighths in the
woodwinds and strings (m.2-4, 6-13, 15-18, 31-34 and 36-42). The ‘B’ material in the
introduction (m.19-30) shows another influence of jazz and is very Gershwin-esque.

After the introduction, the ‘A’ theme of the entire “Ballad of Hurry-Up” is an a
capella section for quartet (two tenors and two baritones). The section introduces the
American soldiers with slang and is only six measures long. In measure 49, the ‘B’
section enters with the main melody in the chorus about the unpredictability of the life in
the Air Force. The ‘B’ contains an aba form with the entire section built from similar
motives. The two main ideas of the entire section are the alternation between a third and
the motive of “Hurry up, Hurry up, Hurry up and stop.” When the principal theme
returns (‘a’, m.83), Blitzstein changes the music that comes after the “Hurry up” motive
to lead the end of the section.

The soldiers get ready to go to battle during the ‘B’ section, but by the end, they
learn that their mission was cancelled. The soldiers take off their battle gear to a
repetition of the music to which they put it on. The speaker acts as the commander of the
soldiers between the repetitions of the music, telling the soldiers that they have put on all
their clothes for no reason. The a cappella quartet (the ‘A’ section) returns in measure
132 with the same six measures. The only difference between the two sections is the
addition of a spoken part at random by the one of the singers. A couple of the words are
vulgar military acronyms, which Blitzstein knew himself. At measure 138, the ‘B’
section returns, but this turns out to be a closing section. Compared to the first time
through the ‘B’ section, Blitzstein only used the return of ‘a’ (from m.83), with a new
ending.
“Ballad of Hurry-Up” maintains the same key, like the other non-Nazi movements. The majority of the piece remains in G-flat major, but the ‘B’ and ‘C’ sections do emphasize a different pitch. The ‘B’ section maintains the key of G-flat, but emphasizes E-flat several times. The “Hurry up” theme (m.52-55, 65-68) ends on E-flat and repeats that emphasis several times in phrase extensions (m.56, 57, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73 and 74). The ‘C’ section also starts with an emphasis on G-flat, but the piece does hint at D-flat during measures 105 to 110. The key of G-flat major is farther away from any of the previously used keys by Blitzstein.

The second part of the last movement, “Night Music - Ballad of the Bombardier”, is similar to the style that many people knew of Blitzstein. This part is compared to a 1940s showtune or a crooning song, and has a simple binary (AB) form (see table 4.6). The piece begins with a clarinet solo with string accompaniment. The solo baritone enters in measure 18. The singer portrays an American soldier who is homesick and missing his love, Emily. The ‘A’ section introduces the situation of the soldier writing the letter at night. Blitzstein writes a simple accompaniment of strings and occasional use of woodwinds. The ‘B’ section is the letter the soldier writes and is a song for voice and piano with some use of muted trombone and clarinets. Blitzstein uses a shortened ‘A’ section for the closing material. After the second part of the third movement, Blitzstein includes a recitative, which is a warning about the planes in the sky. While he follows the traditional idea for recitative (limited motive and emphasis on text), the solo tenor and baritone combined are highly dissonant, returning to the style seen in the beginning of the second movement.
Table 4.6 -- Form of “Night Music”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Music</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Instrumental introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Entrance of baritone soloist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>The soloist becomes the soldier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A/K</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>Return of ‘A’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recit</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>Attached recitative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Night Music” begins with a slightly chromatic melody in A major, but modulates to E major for the song. The entire song by the bombardier remains in E major with some use of chromaticism. However, the recitative has two voices that emphasize two different keys. The recitative has A and B against each other in measures 95 to 98, and the major second is held out to the fermata in measure 99. During the section of 100 to 104, the two voices emphasize a major seventh (A to G#) in each measure, but there is a resolution to B and G# to end the recitative. The recitative is a separate section by itself and does not relate to the key of either the second or third part of the finale. However, it does lead from the mood of the song to the following movement.

“Chorus of the Rendezvous” is the second part of the last movement and is in ternary (ABA) form (see table 4.7). The ten-measure introduction includes a two-measure segment of the principal theme passed through the orchestra three times. The principal theme arrives at measure 11 with a rather simple melody. The second part of the phrase (m.20-26), “Open up that second front,” (ex. 6) is set to another repeated-note melody that is used several times in this movement. The secondary theme of ‘A’ begins

Example 6 – “Open up that second front” motive in the chorus during measures 20 and 21 in the chorus

![Music notation](image)

O - pen up that sec - ond front

at measure 47 and is slower in rhythm which contrasts with the principal theme.

Blitzstein uses the “Open up that second front” motive as the conclusion to the secondary
Table 4.7 – Form of “Chorus of the Rendezvous”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Music</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ten-measure introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Unison chorus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>Slower melody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A’</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>Return of ‘A’ (shortened)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>Four-measure coda</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
theme and returns to the principal theme in measure 67, which becomes the closing material of the ‘A’ section.

The ‘B’ section in measure 81 also moves at a slower pace, like the secondary theme of ‘A’. The ‘B’ section is a simply repetition of the same phrase repeated twice and modified at the end. Blitzstein replaces the last four measures (m.92-95) with a repetition on “We will bomb him” and moves to a closing of the ‘B’ section. In measure 121, the ‘A’ sections returns, but is condensed like several other of the earlier parts. The principal theme of this section is only nine measures and goes directly into the secondary theme in measure 130. The second part of the ‘B’ section, the “Open up the second front” motive, is repeated more than the previous two times and leads to the closing section of the second part. The closing material is only six measures of a chord progression on the words “The Threat is Now”.

The third part of the final movement is in A minor. The secondary theme of the ‘A’ moves to the dominant (E) minor, but modulates back for the return of the music of ‘A’. The ‘B’ section focus on D minor in the chorus, but the bass instruments focus on C. Eventually the chorus’s focuses on G (m.89), while the basses remain on C. The chorus emphasis two different tones, but both are part of C major and fit within the key of the rest of the orchestra. The ‘B’ section begins to modulate back to the home key starting measure 119. The piece remains in A minor through the rest of the movement.

“The Open Sky” is the conclusion to the entire Airborne Symphony and recalls the conclusion to the first movement. The fourth part is in binary (AB) form (see table 4.8) with a large introduction. The movement begins as a jubilant celebration of the “open sky”, and of the victory of the airborne forces. The introduction (m.1-13) is the
Table 4.8 – Form of “The Open Sky”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Music</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Celebration of open sky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>False entry of “The Airborne”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>“Open Sky”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>Return of entire “The Airborne”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recit</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>Return of recitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A/K</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>Return of ‘A’ and conclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
beginning of the celebration that repeats the word, “Glory”. After the first part of the introduction, the speaker claims victory, but not without grief. This leads to a solemn slow section in 6/8, which opens with the flutes and string quartet. This section has a binary form with a conclusion based on the first section. During the second section, the speaker enters again, but warns of the threat of the airborne in the sky. The ‘A’ material returns to conclude the introduction at measure 46. At the end of the introduction, the three-note “Airborne” motive returns m.(50-51). This leads to the beginning of the conclusion of the first movement, but is only a part of it. The music does not change until measure 67, which is where the “Airborne” motive appeared in the original, but the chorus is left out.

The ‘A’ section (m.73) returns to the theme of the celebration of the open skies. The section is only nineteen measures and focuses on the “Open Sky” motive. This leads into the ‘B’ section, which is the music of the conclusion of the first movement with only one change (m.148-49, Blitzstein changes the word from “at last” to “again”). The recitative about “the planes” from the end of “Night Music – The Ballad of the Bombardier” returns (m.167-175), but the music is changed. The recitative has the conflict of the major ninth, like before, but is not emphasized as much. The interval alternates with a perfect fourth, unlike the major seventh in the previous recitative. At the end of the recitative, the speaker returns with his problem, “Not without grief! Not without warning!”.

The ‘A’ section returns in measure 176 as the closing material of the final movement. While the celebration continues within the chorus and orchestra, the speaker yells over the orchestra about his warning of the airborne. By the time the orchestra
reaches the end, the final chord becomes more dissonant (an A minor chord with an added sixth and seventh) after the speakers final warning.

In this final part of the symphony the tonality is more complex than in previous parts. The opening celebration starts in F major, but the second section of the introduction is clearly in Eb major. During the measures of 30 to 45, there is a return to F, but the music shifts back to Eb major for the 6/8 section. The return of first movement finale is at the pitch level of the first movement, D major, which remains the key until measure 179. Beginning at measure 179, the music modulates to finish on an A minor chord with an added sixth and seventh. This is an untraditional key scheme. While most of the binary form is in D major, the piece ends on A.

The Airborne Symphony is a combination of traditional classical, folk and jazz music, which sounds like many 1940s film scores. Blitzstein writes in traditional keys with free use of chromaticism, which is mundane for most composers during that time. He does use stacked chords and added-tone chords to create the sound of film scores. Very few cadences in the entire symphony have just the traditional triad at the cadence. The theatrical nature of the symphony lends itself to the style of film music. One of his first pitches for this symphony was his music set to a film of airplanes.

The symphony is a combination of a cantata and theatrical piece. The theatrical elements are the text of the singers and speaker. Blitzstein uses a solo, recitative, and full chorus parts of the symphony. While purely instrumental movements and speakers are not normally used in cantatas, many twentieth-century compositions combine a number of genres. While the first movement does have a sonata form, the rest of the parts have very little connection with traditional forms (until the finale). All three movements are
not in same the key, and the latter two do not maintain one key throughout the entire movement. Composers used tonality very freely in the twentieth century and this is one example of that.

Blitzstein’s melodies are predominately stepwise with occasional leaps (mostly fourths and fifths). The majority of the symphony is also homophonic. There is very little imitation during the entire symphony. Blitzstein does imitate between the sections of the chorus and, the chorus and soloists (usually no longer than two or three measures), but rarely uses a period of long imitation. The only use of canon is in “The Enemy” during measures 41 to 47. The secondary theme is first presented in the clarinets and then flutes have the material one beat later and up a major seventh. The other clear use of imitation is in “Ballad of the Cities”. The principal theme is passed back and forth between the tenor and baritone sections of the chorus in measures 10 to 16 (also m.26-29, 42-45, 74-77).

While Blitzstein was radical in his works for musical theatre, he was rather timid in his orchestral writing. This symphony is not an example of an experimental piece, or one with excessive sound. However, according to Blitzstein, “The music here is what I call “idiot music,” very martial, very bare, rather Teutonic in orchestration, lots of brass...” (Gordon 282). If Blitzstein believed this about his symphony, there are several other works during his time and before, that go far beyond what he did in this work. His work in the theatre may account for his views of the orchestra to call his music “Teutonic in orchestration.”

Most of the text in the symphony is written in blank verse with one main exception. The ‘B’ section of “Night Music – Ballad of the Bombardier” has a rhyme
scheme. During this section, Blitzstein includes rhymes that occur every two measures in the music. The scheme of the ballad is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Rhyme</th>
<th>Music</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I take my pen in hand,</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily,</td>
<td>b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to make you understand,</td>
<td>a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>what you are to me.</td>
<td>b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I write as far as “Dear Emily”</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And cannot make it clear</td>
<td>c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>what you are to me.</td>
<td>b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are my heart’s one cry.</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foolish words that I</td>
<td>d</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wish to say, and try</td>
<td>d</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So terribly.</td>
<td>b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The words are like a wall,</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily.</td>
<td>b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I cannot write at all</td>
<td>e</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>what you are to me.</td>
<td>b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are my heart’s one cry.</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you were nearby,</td>
<td>d</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You could tell me why,</td>
<td>d</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>so easily.</td>
<td>b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write me you will be true,</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily.</td>
<td>b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write me I am to you.</td>
<td>f</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What you are to me.</td>
<td>b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first four sections (AABA) follow the form of traditional Tin Pan Alley (also called thirty-two-bar form) songs and has remained a very popular song form. Blitzstein avoids any other scheme in his texts, for both speaker and singers, in the entire symphony.

The “Airborne” motive is the one motive that is present in a later movement of the symphony. The first movement serves as a large sonata form and the “Airborne” returns in both the “Ballad of History and Mythology” and “The Airborne”. “Kitty
Hawk” is the development of the sonata form, and develops the opening horn call. The theme reappears twice (m.25-27, 185-90) in the “Ballad of History and Mythology” because it recalls the passion for men to be airborne. Blitzstein uses the three-note motive, originally seen in the ending of “The Theory of Flight”. “The Airborne” serves as a recapitulation for the entire movement and includes the original two-note motive and the three-note version. This part augments the rhythm of the motive, starting in measure 47, and adds notes between the rising whole step from A to B. Blitzstein adds a sixteenth-note D before the B, twice (m.48, 55), and D and C# in descending sixteenth-notes twice (m.60, 62). Blitzstein includes one more development of the “Airborne” motive that surrounds the E to F# whole step in the tenor section.

The entire music of “The Airborne” comes back for the finale of the symphony, “The Open Sky”. The music is almost entirely the same, with the main exception being the change of the ending (m.166) because it is not the last section of the piece. Blitzstein uses the “Airborne” motive two more times in the finale. In measures 50 and 51, he writes the three-note “Airborne” motive to bring the return of the finale of the first movement, but this is only a hint, not the actually return. When the “Open Sky” theme appears, it includes the word “Airborne” (m.76, 79, 91). Blitzstein writes the original two-note motive in the chorus. Blitzstein uses the “Airborne” throughout the entire symphony because it is the theme, and obviously, the title of the symphony.

The chorus in the symphony is used in eight of the twelve parts (not in “Kitty Hawk”, “Threat and Approach”, “Morning Poem” and “Night Music – Ballad of the Bombardier”). The choral writing ranges from unison/octaves to four voices (splits the tenor and baritone sections into two). In fact, unison/octave writing dominates six of the
parts the chorus sings (four-part writing has a bigger part in “Ballad of History and Mythology” and “Ballad of the Cities”). Blitzstein only uses the four-part chorus during the ‘B’ section (“Wings on the Brain”) and the opening and closing of “The Open Sky”. Blitzstein writes within normal range for tenor and baritone voices with nothing difficult for the singers to perform. Typically, the chorus is not doubled within the orchestra unless the section is scored for full orchestra.

The tenor and baritone soloists play a small role in the symphony. The solo tenor only sings in the “Ballad of History and Mythology” and the “Ballad of the Cities”, while the solo baritone sings in the “Ballad of the Cities” also and “Night Music – Ballad of the Bombardier”. Each time one of the soloists sings it represents an individual during the story with the exception of the “Ballad of the History and Mythology”. The tenor during that ballad tells the first two stories of exploration of flight. During the “Ballad of the Cities”, each soloist depicts a separate story of the destroyed builds and during “Night Music”, the soloist represents a soldier writing a letter to his Emily. The soloists are typically alone with the orchestra (and lightly orchestrated) with the exception in the “Ballad of the History and Mythology”, when the tenor soloist sings over a humming choir and brass at mf (m.167-174).

The speaker portrays the drama of the story during the Airborne Symphony. He introduces the topic during the “Theory of Flight” and also introduces the theme of all the movements. Typically, Blitzstein writes the text either in an empty space or other music that has very little thematic importance to the symphony. One example of the latter is in “Kitty Hawk”. The speaker talks over the orchestra, which is playing a repeated D major chord with English horn solo. This is a typical example of how Blitzstein writes the
speaker if used with music. He often keeps the instrumentation as minimal as possible and at a low dynamic, pianissimo during this example.

The music fits the time period when Blitzstein wrote the symphony; it is music that is clearly from the 1940s. While the early performances were a success, the piece eventually does not hold a place in the repertoire. Blitzstein felt that the piece could have been better. Blitzstein said:

I have taken a risk in the ending of the Airborne. Most symphonics, you know, end on a single note, maybe triumph, maybe tragedy. But a symphony about our times cannot have that luxury - you cannot do that and be honest with yourself. No victory is unqualified victory, no glory is unqualified glory. So the Airborne ends in conflict. There is a great paean of triumph over the enemy, sung by the chorus, but a single voice - the narrator - begins to jab in the note of warning! Warning! (Jansson)

This symphony enjoyed success after the Second World War because the piece was propaganda for the United States.

While the piece is unknown by the American public, it is one of the significant orchestral works by Marc Blitzstein. Many critics admit that there are major problems with Blitzstein’s only attempt at a symphony. According to John Jansson:

The Airborne Symphony falls into that dubious category of flawed masterpiece. At its best it is splendidly moving and powerful. But it has moments that are very difficult for a contemporary audience to accept, and Blitzstein's poetry sometimes falls short of the targets he sets for himself. It is unlikely that the work will ever be more than a very rare visitor to the concert hall. Yet its qualities are such that it deserves to be considered as more than just an interesting document of its time. With committed vocalists, a sympathetic conductor, and a charismatic Monitor, a performance would indeed be a thrilling experience.

The topic of the symphony is very important, but the style is clearly from the mid-twentieth century and its popularity has been hard to maintain.
V. Peter Mennin’s Symphony No. 4 (*Cycle*)

Peter Mennin (1923-1983) has remained a popular American composer in certain genres. His symphonies are often overlooked, but he wrote nine symphonies during his life. Shortly after arriving in New York to teach at Juilliard, Mennin was commissioned by Robert Shaw and his choir, the Collegiate Chorale, to write a choral symphony. Mennin was a young composer at the time, only in his mid-twenties, but the work was already his fourth symphony. While Mennin had composed choral works before, he was as an instrumentalist and did not have a lot of experience with writing for voices.

When Mennin started the symphony, he contacted many poets about the text of the symphony. He first contacted one of his favorite poets, Robinson Jeffers, but the examples that Mennin received were not what he wanted. Mennin decided to write his own text for the symphony. He wrote three short philosophical texts, one for each movement, dealing with the cycles of time and the earth. Many of the critics believed that the text of the symphony was less than adequate. According to Robert Sabin, “Mr. Mennin has written his own text, which begins (rather dishearteningly): ‘The dark sea is a tide of flowing waters, and in its vastly depth we view eternity.’ Fortunately, he is a far better composer than poet…” (36). Most of the text is rather simple and often repeated to provide length to the symphony. The title of the work comes from the text of the last movement of the symphony:
“Time passing, water flowing,
The great cycle begins once more,
Washing stains away.
With dark and tragic destiny
Do all things return to dust.”

These sentiments permeate the three movements which are also made uniform by
the borrowing of themes and an almost unrelieved contrapuntal style. The
tendency to the monotone is the greatest weakness of the work, but another is the
grandiose utterance of both choir and orchestra; one does not need great words for
choral settings, but many of these express commonplaces in portentous,
bombastic terms and the music takes its colour from them. (Ayers 39)

Since Mennin was an instrumentalist, the parts for the orchestra came first and the chorus
came second. The orchestral parts are much more idiomatic and difficult than the choral
writing.

Mennin wrote the symphony in three movements with a fast-slow-fast scheme for
the movements. Mennin employed a sonata-like form frequently used by Finnish
composer Jean Sibelius for the first movement (see table 5.1). The movement alternates
between instrumental and choral sections. The overall form of the first movement is:
The first movement carries many principles of the sonata form, but does not include a full
recapitulation. Mennin only reprises one phrase (in canon) at the end of the movement.

Mennin opens the first movement with an eight-measure introduction, but the
music of measures 1 to 5 (ex. 7) returns and the first four notes serve as a motive
throughout the entire movement. The second half of the introduction (m. 5-8) introduces

Example 7 – Melody first half of introduction (flute part, measure 1 to 5 of mvt. 1)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Instrumentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Orchestra only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Orchestra only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Chorus and Orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P/Dev</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>Orchestra only from m.178-236, and chorus after</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S/K</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>Chorus and Orchestra</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the ostinato and offbeat brass chords that are also prevalent throughout this movement also. The principal theme of the first movement has an overall ternary (ABA) form. The ‘A’ section (ex. 8 top) starts in measure 9 with the continuing ostinato (ex. 8 bottom) in the basses and the offbeat chords in the brass section. This section leads back to ‘O’ material in the upper voices (flutes, oboes, clarinets, French horns, trumpets, violins and violas) imitated one measure later by the lower voices (bassoons, trombones, tuba, violoncellos and contrabasses). The line, which was on D (with the melody starting on an A), is down a whole step. The ‘O’ becomes the concluding phrase of the ‘A’ section.

Example 8 – ‘A’ theme (top, m.9-11, mvt. 1, oboes)
and ostinato (bottom, m.10-12, mvt. 1, contrabasses)

The ‘B’ section continues the basso ostinato, but introduces a different theme. The ‘A’ section was an energetic theme that emphasized the offbeats, but this section is slower in rhythm and legato in style. Within the melody, the first four notes of the motive are used twice (example 10b). This ‘B’ section (ex. 9) becomes the predominant theme of the entire movement because it becomes the main theme of the chorus. The offbeat chords in the brass return in measure 33. The music transitions back to the ‘A’ section, but the ending (the ‘O’ material) returns to the original pitch level. As the ‘A’ section concludes, this continues with imitation of the sixteenth-note patterns in the ‘O’
material to serve as a transition. While the sixteenth-notes are played in the strings and woodwinds, the brass section plays three measures of the ‘A’ theme. The ostinato, which has been the background for most of the principal theme (‘P’), is used to close it and transition to the secondary theme (‘S’).

Example 9 – First four measures of the ‘B’ theme (m.24-27, oboes), emphasizes tritone “The dark sea...” theme

The secondary theme is also in a ternary form. The theme begins in measure 66 with three measures of preparation by the strings with the ostinato. The ‘A’ section of this theme comes from the ‘B’ section of the previous theme (example 10a, m.24-35). The melody is a minor sixth down from its original pitch level. At measure 81, Mennin writes a theme that includes, in the altos and basses, a line that has the same contour as the principal theme. The soprano and tenor sections have a simple stepwise motion against it. During the transition (m.88-91) back to first theme of the ‘A’ section (“The dark sea...”), Mennin brings back ideas from the first theme (m.14-15) of the ‘P’ section.

The second time the first theme of ‘A’ (m.42) is almost exactly the same, including the ostinato and offbeat chords (now spread throughout the orchestra). The one difference is the inclusion of the opening four-note motive in eighth-notes by the upper woodwinds during measures 101 to 103. In measure 105, Mennin presents another section that includes the motive from ‘A’, seen in example 9, twice (example 10). Both times Mennin adds a D in between the pitches of the tritone. This leads to a four-measure
transition to the ‘B’ section of the secondary theme (‘S’). This transition material is comprised of music from the ‘A’ section.

Example 10 – ‘A’ theme included within section (m.105-114, chorus)

“Look where” theme

The ‘B’ section starts at measure 119 and does not contain any motivic connection to the previous sections, but does continue to use the ostinato in the basses. The section is scored for the entire orchestra and chorus and has predominantly stepwise motion in the melodies. The chorus does include contrary motion at different rhythm during the entire section. In measures 119 to 124, the sopranos moves up by step, while the altos moves down by step. When the basses enter in measure 125, the soprano and altos moves together (beginning down then up), at a perfect fourth, in contrary motion, to the tenors and basses, also at a perfect fourth (beginning up then down). The sections also group together in different ways (altos and tenors in measures 137-39 is one example). The entire ‘B’ section is a constant flow to expand on the words, “...suppliant yet."

The ‘A’ section returns in measure 147, but begins with the last section (starts in m.105, “Look where...”). Mennin only uses four measures of that music and leads into a canon of the first theme (“The dark seas...”) by the lower three voices, while the sopranos have the melody of the “Look where...” music used just before the canon. The canon begins in the tenor section in measure 150, the altos one measure later and the basses one measure after that. The “Look where...” theme begins in measure 154 (three
beats after the entrance by the basses) and has been augmented in length by one quarter note. Both themes contain the four-note motive from ‘O’, which places emphasis on that music again. This leads to a three-voice canon in the altos, tenors and basses based on “The dark sea…” theme, while the sopranos enter four measures later with the “Look where…” theme. The canon ends at P (m.167), but Mennin presents the motive once more in the sopranos, while the other voices move in stepwise motion. The orchestra builds and ends the ‘A’ section and secondary theme (‘S’) in measure 178.

Beginning at measure 178, the chorus drops out and a new section begins that brings back the principal themes, but also serves as a development. The section begins with the ostinato reappearing in the basses, which also includes a viola line (m.181) that has been recurring with it at times. The ‘A’ music of the principal theme (‘P’) is used beginning in measure 189 at the original pitch level. The ‘B’ music begins in measure 202 starting on E, while the woodwinds playing the middle (m.193-94) of the ‘A’ music multiple times. In measure 215, the wind sections plays the ‘O’ music (starting on E) in the same style present in measures 18 to 23. The music at measure 219 is changed from the end of the principal theme (m.52), but contains the same sixteenth-note idea. This time the sixteenth-notes are based on the viola theme that has been played multiple times during the symphony (including the beginning of this section).

The development continues, unlike the principal theme, with another presentation of the ‘A’ music (from ‘P’) starting on C in measure 241. Mennin brings this idea back in measure 249, but this time in canon by inversion, at the lower fourth, in the soprano and alto sections. At measure 261, Mennin writes another canon (at the octave) between the men’s and women’s voices with the two short motives that he has presented twice
before (m.237-40, 245-48). While the canon continues in the choral parts, the upper woodwinds and strings present the ‘A’ theme, starting on C, which ends the return of the principal theme/development section.

Beginning in measure 276, the ‘A’ section returns, but this section leads into the conclusion of the first movement. Mennin begins with a canon at the ninth, starting with the male voices and the women entering eight bars later, of the “The dark sea…” theme. The ostinato in the basses appears again at the beginning of the section, but the upper woodwinds have the ‘O’ music twice, starting in measure 278. Mennin modifies the ending to transition to the material seen in measures 219 to 235. He changes the music that the brass section had over it. Now, the brass section plays motives from the bass ostinato (like the original version in the ‘P’ section) until measure 316. This leads to a conclusion, which has stepwise motion in the lower three voices and the sopranos repeating an F, but eventually joins the others. During the last chord of the first movement, the orchestra plays the ‘O’ music to end the piece.

The first movement begins with an emphasis on D. The scale hints at the Phrygian mode, but does have free use of accidentals until measure 17. The key shifts down to an emphasis on C for the ‘B’ section, but shifts back to D for the return of ‘A’.

By the end of the principal theme, the piece modulates to E. The secondary theme begins in E Phrygian mode, but moves to B Phrygian in measure 119 (the ‘B’ section). The section modulates back to E and remains until the end of the secondary theme. The return of the principal theme/development hints at several pitch emphasis, including D

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9 This section does have some fugal properties, but the second voice (the women) starts on E, not the traditional dominant.
(m.189), A (m.202), and C (m.241). The secondary theme returns up a minor third (on G) in measure 276. The conclusion hints at several tonal centers, including F# (m.296), and ends on Ab major triad. The tritone is a main feature of this movement; this hints at the relationship of the tonal centers at the beginning and ending of the entire symphony.

The second movement is a fugue on three different subjects (see table 5.2). The piece begins with the both the subject line (begins on E) in the first violin (ex. 11) and the countersubject line in the viola (ex.12, only first two measures are consistent). This subject emphasis the tritone, like the previous movement, and is present throughout the entire movement. The subject starts in measure 9, down a fifth (on A), in the second violin, and follows the intervals precisely. The countersubject moves to the first violin, while the viola has music that contains some motives from the subject, but is not consistent through the entries. In measure 15, the subject returns a fourth below the original (begins on B) in both the violoncello and contrabass lines, and the countersubject is played in the first violin.

Example 11 – The first subject of the second subject (m.1-6, first violin)

![Example 11 – The first subject of the second subject](image)

Example 12 – The countersubject (m.1-6, viola)

![Example 12 – The countersubject](image)

74
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Fugue on 1st Subject (Strings only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>Episode 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Exposition on 2nd Subject (with 1st Subject as background)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Canon on inverted 2nd Subject (Chorus only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Canon of 1st Subject in Augmentation (Strings only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>Closing music with both 1st and 2nd Subjects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After the subject ends in measure 21, an episode begins for the string section.

The episode contains many false entries of both the subject (m.25 in first violin, m.29 in violoncellos and contrabasses, m.30 and 33 in the altos, and m.34 in the violoncellos and contrabasses) and the countersubject (m.25-28, 31-32, 38-41 in tenors and basses, ex. 13).

Example 13 – Part of the countersubject used in the chorus (m.25-28, chorus)

The countersubject is also mirrored by the basses during these entries. The fugue\textsuperscript{10} on the second subject begins in measure 46 (ex.14). The subject, sung by the sopranos, contains the same first four notes seen in measures 9 and 10 of the first movement and becomes an important motive throughout the rest of the movement. The first subject is used as background music during this section, including 46-49, 54-57 and 63-68. The altos have the real answer (the subject down a fourth) measure 50, the tenors have the subject in measure 57 and the basses have the answer in measure 61.

Example 14 – The second subject (m.46-49, sopranos)

\textsuperscript{10} This fugue follows traditional practices of the subject on Bb and the answer on the dominant F, but with some vagueness of key.
As this fugue fades away, the music elides with a double canon on the inverted second subject beginning in measure 70, starting in the sopranos for a cappella choir. Also, the basses and tenors also have a canon (at the upper fourth), but only part of the subject, in diminution. The men join the canon of the theme in its original rhythm in measure 76. This canon follows the same pattern through the chorus as the previous one (soprano-alto-tenor-bass), but presents the subject in stretto. The altos have the music down a major third on G, the tenors have it a whole step down (a ninth, on A) and the basses, which have a shortened version of it, start a fifth below (on B).

After the end of the canon on the inverted second subject, Mennin writes another canon on the first subject in augmentation. The first violin starts the canon in measure 80 and the violoncello is four beats behind and one octave below. During this canon, the second violin and viola have imitative material. The canon leads into a transition section to the coda. The coda, starting at measure 92, contains the first and second subject at the same time, but no imitation. The sopranos and tenors start the second subject, but after the first four notes it is passed to the altos and basses (m.93). The violoncellos and contrabasses have the first seven notes of the first subject at the original pitch level in measure 93 and 94. Mennin does change the Bb to B-natural during both presentations of the segment of the first subject. The violins and violas also have the first seven notes of the second subject starting on the second beat of measure 92. Starting in measure 94, the first four notes of the first subject (a diminished triad followed by a descending half step) pass through the wind section. The motive is present in measure 94, 96, 97, 99 (twice) and 100.
During measures 101 to 105, the short four-note segments of both subjects are combined. The second subject is in the altos, basses, upper strings and woodwinds twice (starting in m.101 and 103). The first subject is present by the low strings and brass in measures 102 and 103, but only the tubas, violoncellos and contrabasses in measure 105. Mennin writes an arpeggio of the diminished triad, which includes the tritone, (starting on E) during measures 106 and 107, while the French horn plays the second theme (also on E). This leads to a return of the countersubject in the chorus beginning in measure 109. The first seven notes of the first subject in measures 116 and 117, and the first four notes (m.120-24), in augmentation, end the piece.

This movement serves as an example of a modern fugue, but is influenced by the Renaissance motet. The motet had been around for a few centuries, but had changed over time. In the Renaissance, the motet was constructed as a series of points of imitations, each on a different line of text. However, Mennin uses the themes that he imitates previously in this movement. While Mennin does use a similar pattern to the Renaissance motet, he added elements to make the movement more connected.

The second movement, like the first, focuses on the tritone. The outline of the first three notes of the first subject is a tritone (E to Bb) and this is prominent throughout the movement. While the piece starts on a perfect fifth (A and E), the key is ambiguous, until the chorus entrance in measure 25. The chorus hints at an emphasis on D, but when the fugue on the second subject arrives (m.46) the key has shifted to an emphasis on Bb. This change is short-lived and E in the pitch center for the a capella section in measure 70. The return of the countersubject in the chorus, in measure 109, is the return of D as
the tonal center and it remains for the rest of the piece. The movement does end on a D minor chord with an added sixth and seventh (D-F-A-B-C).

The third movement follows a typical sonata form and is the fastest part of the symphony (see table 7.3). The chorus begins the piece with a ten-measure introduction that introduces the theme of the movement and the symphony. The theme is “Time passing, waters flowing. The great cycle begins once more, washing stains away” (ex.15). The words are repeating during measures 11 to 25, serving as the ‘A’ section of the principal theme. This theme is reminiscent of the countersubject in the second movement. After this first theme, Mennin shifts the tempo to an even faster rate (Allegro deciso). During the transition from the ‘A’ to the ‘B’ sections of the principal theme (m.26-36), Mennin writes a short fragment of the music from the ‘B’ section (m.32-34). Themes from both the ‘A’ and ‘B’ sections are almost identical, but do contain minor differences. He also uses a new ostinato in the low strings (violoncellos and contrabasses), which like the one in the first movement, is present throughout most of this movement. While this ostinato is not the same as the one in the first movement (this is
Table 5.3 – Form of Third Movement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>115</td>
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<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dev</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recap</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
mostly stepwise motion with a leap back to the starting pitch), it serves the same purpose.

This leads to a double canon\(^\text{11}\) in the chorus (ex.16). The sopranos begin with the first theme in measure 37, while the tenors have the second theme and low strings have the ostinato. The second theme contains the outline of the first theme, but eventually becomes its own musical line beginning in measure 40. The altos enter with the first theme, down a fourth, and the sopranos have the second theme, up a fifth, in measure 44. The tenors continue with new music, but this music is not a consistent countersubject to the two themes. At measure 49, the tenors have the first theme, down a sixth, and the altos have the second theme, up a third. The basses enter in measure 55 with the second theme (down a seventh), while the sopranos have the first theme, up a whole step, and the other two voices have filler material\(^\text{12}\). The fugue ends in measure 61.

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\(^{11}\) Both themes are four different times on four different pitches. While all voices do not have both themes, this section does allow the complete statement of both themes before moving to a different pitch.

\(^{12}\) The other two voices have music that is unimportant to the overall scheme of the second movement.
The ‘A’ section returns in measure 62, with the ostinato still occurring in the basses. This music elides back to the ‘B’ section in measure 74. However, the material is shortened and only imitates one theme. This section is not a fugue, but does include imitation. The basses start with the first theme, while the tenors have the second theme, both down a third from the original. The sopranos enter in measure 80, with the first theme up a third. In the next measure, the altos enter with the first theme down a half step from the original. This leads to a closing of the principal theme with the first words of the piece, based on the opening material.

The transition to the secondary theme begins in measure 93 with a melody (in the upper strings and woodwinds) that becomes the new theme. This melody lasts only three measures before the upper strings and woodwinds have an eighth-note pattern. During this pattern, the brass section has a motive that comes from the background music of the wind section during the ‘B’ section (specifically oboes and clarinets in measure 28-29, 34-35 and trumpets in measure 47-48). Mennin expands on this motive until measure 110 and spends the next four measures setting the background music for the secondary theme.

The secondary theme is another fugue in the chorus and begins with the same six notes of the melody of the transition (in different rhythm, ex.17). The fugue begins in measure 115 in the altos on Bb (a half step below the transition version). The tenors enter in measure 123 with the theme down a fifth (on Eb), but the basses, down a fifth, enter in stretto in measure 127 (before the last two notes of the theme is sung). The

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13 The theme in this section is presented completely by all four sections of the chorus on different pitch levels.
sopranos have the last entrance of the theme in measure 135, but after the opening
interval (perfect fifth) to a tritone. While the fugue is occurring, the bass has music that
is similar in style to the ostinato from the principal theme.

Example 17 – “Stirring…” theme (m.115-119, altos)

The ‘B’ section of the secondary theme begins in measure 143 with music that
begins in imitation, but only for a short time. The altos begin the section with a theme
that begins descending passage G-F-E. When the sopranos enter the next measure, the
music begins the opposite way, ascending A-B-C. This is the only connection between
the two themes. On top of that, the basses imitate the altos. They begin with the same
three notes, but add an addition repetition of a note in measures 146 and 149, and alter
the exact intervals, while following the contour of the theme. The tenor’s imitation of the
sopranos is much clearer. The tenors have exact imitation, at the same pitch level one
measure behind, until measure 152, then each line becomes independent.

When the imitation stops, the basses (and low strings) enter with the theme, on D,
from the ‘A’ section (m.115) and this is passed through the chorus. The tenors (and
French horns) enter with the theme in measure 156 (on C), and the altos (second violins
and French horns) in measure 161 (on G). This section ends in measure 164, when a
section of imitation begins with the basses playing the theme of the ‘A’ section and the
tenors have the soprano theme of the ‘B’ section (m.144). The altos imitate the bass in
measure 166 and the sopranos imitate the tenor in measure 167, both at the same pitch
level. The basses, in measure 169, and tenors, in measure 171, start the same theme over again to end this canon.

The closing material of the exposition begins in measure 176 with the part of the ‘A’ section of the principal theme. Mennin eliminates the first eight measures and only brings back the second half of the section (m.19-25) and extends it by one measure. During this section, the original version of the ostinato in the low strings reappears. Mennin ends the exposition with two canons, including a double canon. Beginning in measure 183, the first canon starts with the sopranos with the ‘B’ melody of the principal theme (“With dark theme...”) and the altos have the ‘A’ melody of the secondary section (“Stirring...”) two beats later. The tenors imitate the sopranos in measure 187 at the same pitch level. The basses imitate the altos in measure 191 and again in measure 195, down a fifth, but do not go through the entire theme. This canon concludes in measure 198.

In the second canon, Mennin begins with only the “With dark...” theme, beginning in the sopranos in measure 198, moving to the altos in measure 199, the basses in measure 203, the tenors in measure 199 and again, the altos in measure 205. The voices alternate entrances on E and B. In measure 208, Mennin brings back the “Stirring...” theme in the sopranos, but only the first six notes. The sopranos enter with the theme a second time in measure 214. While the sopranos have that theme, the other three voices have more entries of the “With dark...” theme, including the tenors in

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14 This double canon has the two themes enter at two different times, and both their pitch level and length are different.
measure 208, the altos in measure 213 and 220. This leads to a concluding phrase, beginning in measure 225, based on the ‘A’ section of the principal theme.

The development section begins in measure 229 and contains many of the previous themes. The first theme develops the eighth-note pattern found in the transition of the exposition, first in the viola and then the violins. First in measure 240 and the second in measure 277, Mennin develops the “Stirring...” theme in the upper strings. The most used theme in this development is the “With dark...” melody. The first appearance of the theme is in measure 257 with the French horns. This begins a canon of the theme. The theme is passed to the upper woodwinds in measure 264, and the trombones in measure 270. In measure 264, the French horns have the theme that was originally placed against the “With dark...” back in measure 37. Starting in measure 278, the music from the transition comes back and is developed. The “With dark...” theme returns to conclude the development, beginning in measure 295.

The recapitulation begins in measure 314 and is very different from the exposition. Mennin begins with a reduced version of the opening material (‘O’). The second section of the recapitulation is based on the “…cancel the part...” motive in measure 144, but set to different words. However, the melody only uses the first three notes. In measure 351, the opening material returns again, but in the rhythm of the ‘A’ section of the principal theme. The three-note motive from “…cancel the part...” returns in measure 372, but this time as a canon. The canon\textsuperscript{15} begins in the sopranos, moves to the tenors (at the same pitch level) in measure 374, returns to the sopranos (to different words) on beat three of measure 377, one measure later in the altos and another measure

\textsuperscript{15} This canon brings in all four voices in decreasing time-intervals between entrances.
later in the tenors. Mennin follows the cascading effect through the chorus once more starting in the sopranos in measure 385 and continuing to the bass in measure 388.

The end of the canon leads to the return of the transition section from the exposition up a whole step (on C#). The section changes beginning in measure 420 and shifts to the coda of the third movement, which arrives in measure 440. The music at measure 440 is a passage of chordal homophony while the strings and other low instruments have the ostinato. In measure 454, the altos and basses have the first four-notes of the “Stirring…” melody” that leads into the “With dark…” melody by the sopranos and tenors in measure 459. This phrase concludes with the concluding theme of the exposition (m.225-29). The last section of the third movement is a simple chordal texture in the chorus with the “Stirring…” motive in the orchestra, beginning in measure 471 to end the piece.

The third movement begins with an emphasis on Eb, but this shifts to G by measure 11. The key moves to E by the end of the first time through the ‘B’ section in measure 61. The transition begins with an emphasis on B, but this only lasts until the secondary theme begins on Bb. The secondary theme has a continuous imitation at multiple pitch levels, so the key is unclear during most of this section. The piece does cadence on F# in measures 164 and 175, but moves to D beginning in measure 183 and E in measure 198. By the end of the secondary theme, the music has moved back to B. The development hints at multiple keys, but ends with an emphasis on Bb. The pitch emphasis does not shift again until measure 339 to A, but returns back to Bb in measure 372. The transition (m.401) appears up a whole step, beginning on C#, but when the music changes the emphasis shifts to A, which remains for the rest of the piece.
Mennin, whose training was more classical, focuses on many traditional and modern classical music ideas in his Fourth Symphony. He used traditional orchestration, motivic development and canons and fugues mixed with a modern kind of tonality. This symphony was early in Mennin’s career and was a direct reflection of his classical training. While he was a young composer, he was already respected as a teacher as well.

This work has many similarities to another choral symphony written in 1930, Igor Stravinsky’s Symphony of Psalms. These two pieces are examples of the neoclassic style that emerged after the First World War. There are several differences between the symphonies. First, Stravinsky uses psalms as the basis of composition, but Mennin wrote his own philosophical texts. Stravinsky also wrote for an untraditional orchestra, omitting the violins, violas and clarinets, while Mennin wrote for the common twentieth-century orchestra. The works also have several similarities. Both composers use traditional forms, use of imitation and motivic development, but include modern melodic and harmonic structure. Stravinsky uses modal scales and the octatonic scale in his symphony; Mennin does place emphasis on modes occasionally and the interval of a minor second, but avoids the complete octatonic scale. Both works are in three movements and contain a high level of counterpoint (both fugues and canons), a combination of classical and modern traits.

Mennin does not follow any traditional key scheme within the symphony. At times, he emphasizes a certain pitch for a long period of time, but overall his tonalities are more fluid than in common-practice styles. Mennin does use added-tone chords frequently, and also traditional triads in unfamiliar ways. For example, most of the cadences in the symphony involve every voice moving down or up by step (mostly half
steps). Mennin uses this in the first cadence (movement 1, measure 5) and last cadence (movement 3, measure 476) of the symphony. This often makes it unclear whether the pitch arrived at is to be heard as a tonic.

Mennin's style of writing focuses on development of motives. While he does not explicitly unify the entire symphony with one motive, he does carry common ideas, including a second (mostly minor) and jumps of fourths and fifths, especially in the first and third movements. Many themes, especially in the first and third movements, have multiple melodies that follow this pattern. Those intervals dominate most melodies; some of the melodies do include use of thirds, but still have lots of use of stepwise motion and leaps of fourths and fifths.

During the first movement, Mennin takes the opening material and uses it several times. This includes at the end of the 'A' sections (m.18-23, 47-51) and the development (m.215-218). Also, Mennin takes the first four melodic notes and uses them in a variety of ways. He uses the motive as part of the melody of the 'B' section (m.28-32, 73-77, 96-100), which returns multiple times in the movement because it is the main chorus theme. During the transition from the 'A' and 'B' sections of the principal theme, Mennin writes the four notes in diminution in the basses within the staccato second violin and violoncello line.

Mennin also uses the 'A' section of principal theme (m.9) throughout the entire symphony. The first four notes are used by the chorus as a transition (m.115-17) from the 'A' and 'B' sections of the principal theme. Mennin also uses this theme in the development, first in measure 189 and as a new choral melody in measure 240. In measure 249, the new choral melody is used for a canon by inversion. Mennin uses the
theme once more in the development, starting in measure 265, with the entire melody present, but down a step.

During the second movement, Mennin uses the themes multiples times, but mostly in this original forms because of the fugal and canonic procedures. Mennin uses two different subjects and a countersubject throughout the entire movement, but sometimes limits them to fragments. The first four notes of the first subject are often used as a false entry; measure 29 is one example of this. The countersubject is also reduced to a four-note fragment in the chorus, as in measures 25 to 28. The second subject remains fully intact throughout the movement, but combined with the other two, dominates the second movement.

The third movement follows principles similar to those of the first movement; themes are broken down and return in different forms. However, there are some differences in use of motives. Both the ‘A’ and ‘B’ sections have similar melodies. The ‘B’ section has moved to 3/4 and an extra beat added (beat one of measure 88) compared to ‘A’. Also, the theme sung by the tenors in the ‘B’ section (m.87) is based on the soprano line. If the first two notes are removed from the soprano line, it is the exact same as the tenor line in different rhythm. In the recapitulation, Mennin brings back the opening material, but in reduced orchestration. He also develops the first three notes of the “…cancel the part…” motive starting in measure 339 and again, in measure 372. The common scheme throughout all three movements is to extract shorter motives from melodies and reuse them.

Mennin uses several canons and fugues during all three movements. Often in the first and third movement, Mennin presents the melody by itself first and then writes a
canon or fugue at a later time. For example, "The dark sea..." theme is sung by the chorus, starting in measure 69 and 92. The third time the theme is presented by the chorus the theme is presented in a three-voice canon, starting with the tenors in measure 150. This canon is also an example of another device that Mennin uses during his canons; he presents a different melody in the top voice, this time "Look where...".

Mennin also uses double canons during the final movement. The first example is found starting in measure 37. The soprano and tenors start with two lines, which are imitated by the altos (m.44) and the basses (m.55), respectively. Another example of a double canon begins in measure 183, when the sopranos begin with the "With dark..." theme and the altos have the "Stirring..." theme. They are imitated by the tenors and altos respectively.

Mennin also uses several fugues during this symphony. The most obvious example is the second movement, which can be characterized as a double fugue. The third movement also contains a fugato starting at measure 115. The "Stirring..." theme is passed through the chorus, starting with the altos on Bb, then tenors on Eb (m.123), basses on F (m.127) and sopranos on B (m.135). The fugato is short and is not a traditional fugue that follows subject and answer, but is a modern fugue. Mennin uses the fugue freely compared to traditional practices, but imitation remains the most important part of the second movement. This, along with the several instances that Mennin uses counterpoint devices, is evidence of Mennin’s emphasis on classical devices.

All movements feature contrasts of orchestral and choral writing. Mennin includes several instrumental sections, including the introduction to the first movement,
and the developments of the first and third movements, among others. These sections are more energetic and idiomatic for instrumentalists. Whenever the choir is singing, they are the primary focus of the music and Mennin writes very little for the orchestra unless it is an ending or a cadence. Often the woodwinds and brass are doubling the chorus when they are singing. When Mennin writes for the chorus, the rhythm is simple. His orchestral writing, however, often includes multimetric groupings. For example, the ostinatos of the first and third movements are against the time signature. Mennin also includes some brief a cappella choral passages, the main one being measures 70 to 79 of the second movement. The difference between the orchestral and the choral music is evident in each section.

The chorus is used in multiple ways, including monophonically, homophonically and polyphonically. Mennin presents several of the melodies with one section of the chorus singing it, or the voices in unison, but very little use of unison choir. Mennin uses several chordal passages in the music to provide contrast to his use of monophony and polyphony within the chorus. The use of various canons and fugues shows the heavy use of polyphony, but he also likes to use two themes that he has already used together. The orchestra, especially the woodwinds, doubles the chorus and the rest are either resting or have simple patterns against the chorus.

Some critics did not like the fact that the instruments and voices seem to be on two different planes. According to Ivor Keyes:

Mennin has not written a symphony. What he has done is to compose a continuity in the orchestra, of more or less symphonic character—expounding, developing and summing up his themes in orderly orthodox fashion. Upon this virtually unceasing orchestral commentary, he has superposed choral passages most of the time, nearly always giving them their own thematic material, and
letting the orchestra serve as a running accompaniment to the voices, which characteristically sing in much longer and simpler note values than those allotted to the instruments. As a result, he does not achieve a unity; he merely has two things going on simultaneously. (Ayers 39)

However, some critics disagreed about the success of Fourth Symphony. According to Robert Sabin:

Mr. Mennin’s symphony is not only the most ambitious but also the most impressive large-scale work he has yet produced. The first movement is a restless allegro in two-four with ingenious syncopations and crossings of the bar...the slow movement is contrapuntally interesting. Mr. Mennin has used suspensions in the vocal writing with notable skill, and he has divided the voices ingeniously to obtain special tone colorings. The finale is massively and broadly conceived without becoming pompous. (36)
VI. Leonard Bernstein's Symphony No. 3 (Kaddish)

Leonard Bernstein was one of the most prominent musicians in the United States during the mid-twentieth century. Although he was more famous for his conducting and Broadway scores, he did write several award-winning classical compositions. Many of his works are still performed by modern professional and collegiate orchestras, choruses and bands. Shortly after his biggest Broadway musicals, Bernstein was named music director of New York Philharmonic and his compositions decreased in quantity, but many of his significant classical pieces were nonetheless written during his tenure, from 1957 to 1969.

His three symphonies are dissimilar. Bernstein’s Symphony No. 1 (Jeremiah) was written for solo soprano and large orchestra in 1942, and entered into a composition contest at the New England Conservatory. He did not win the contest, but the symphony did win the New York Music Critics’ Circle Award for the most outstanding new orchestral work. His Symphony No. 2, The Age of Anxiety (1949), was commissioned by the Koussevitzky Music Foundation, Serge Koussevitzky was his teacher at Tanglewood and a substitute father-figure. Bernstein was inspired by the W.H. Auden poem of the same title, which had won the Pulitzer Prize in 1948.

In 1955, Bernstein was commissioned to write a Third Symphony by the Koussevitzky Music Foundation to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Since Bernstein’s career was skyrocketing with the popularity of
his musicals and the success of his conducting career, this left little time for Bernstein to work on this symphony. He started writing the symphony in the summer of 1961 in his Connecticut home and completed the music on August 19, 1963. The process of composing this symphony was hard for Bernstein. It took him six years to begin writing the piece, and he found it equally hard to finish. When Bernstein did finish the piece, it was about one week before the New York Philharmonic went on tour. Since it took such a long period of time for Bernstein to complete it, the Boston Symphony Orchestra did not premiere the piece.

The symphony was nicknamed the *Kaddish* Symphony because Bernstein used three different settings of the Kaddish. According to Jack Gottlieb:

To the Jews of the world, the word *Kaddish* ("Sancification") has a highly emotional connotation, for it is the name of the prayer chanted for the dead, at the graveside, on memorial occasions and, in fact, at all synagogue services. Yet strangely enough, there is not a single mention of death in the entire prayer. On the contrary, it uses the word *chaye* (life) three times. Far from being a threnody, *Kaddish* is a series of paeans in praise of God, and as such, it has basic functions in the liturgy that have nothing to do with mourning. (*Symphony No. 3*)

Bernstein uses both Hebrew and Aramaic for his Kaddishes. The work was written for speaker, soprano soloist, mixed chorus, boys' chorus, and large orchestra.

Bernstein found it difficult to find an adequate text for this symphony. He contacted a few poets, but none of them supplied what Bernstein wanted for the symphony. Bernstein decided to write the text himself. He was a highly educated man, earning a degree from Harvard University. He did not compromise the text for the symphony because he wrote several books and lyrics. While Bernstein wanted to use the kaddish prayers in Hebrew, he needed text in English for the speaker to convey the message he wanted to express. In a letter to his sister, Shirley, Bernstein wrote:
On August 1st, I made the great decision to go forward with Kaddish, to try to finish it, score it, rehearse, prepare, revise, translate, into Hebrew...It's a monstrous task: I've been copying it out legibly for the copyists, night and day and now it's ready, except for a rather copious finale that remains to be written...I'm terribly excited about the new piece, even about the Speaker's text, which I finally decided has to be done by me. Collaboration with a poet is impossible on so personal a work, so I've found after a distressful year of trying with [Robert] Lowell and [Frederick] Seidel; so I'm elected, poet or no poet. But the reactions of various people to whom I've read it have been so moving (and moved) that I was encouraged to keep at it. I think you'll be surprised by its power. (Burton 336)

Bernstein remained unhappy with the text and rewrote the speaker's part several times.

The inspiration for Bernstein's Symphony No. 3 came from his performances of other pieces. In 1958, Bernstein conducted a performance of Arthur Honegger's Joan of Arc and this gave him the original inspiration for a piece for speaker and orchestra. The narrative part of Joan of Arc was performed by his wife, actress Felicia Montealegre.

Bernstein also absorbed influences from other similar works. According to Humphrey Burton, "The exciting theatricality of Kaddish undoubtedly owes something to the Honegger St. Joan, and to Marc Blitzstein's The Airborne Symphony" (340). Blitzstein and Bernstein had been very close friends. Bernstein loved the music of the Airborne Symphony and performed it several times during his life. The fact that Bernstein wrote a work for speaker, chorus and orchestra, which is similar orchestration to Blitzstein's symphony. Copland's Lincoln Portrait is another similar work for speaker and large orchestra that is similar to Bernstein's piece. Copland was one influence on Leonard Bernstein and Bernstein knew Lincoln Portrait well. Bernstein explored the relationship between God and man in several of his works, and he frequently performed pieces with a similar topic. One of these pieces, Claude Debussy's Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien, was another influence on Bernstein for this piece.
Shortly before the premiere of the symphony, the assassination of President John F. Kennedy occurred. Bernstein decided to dedicate this symphony to the memory of the slain President. The dedication of the work made the text take a different tone. The premiere of the piece, which was originally intended for Boston, moved to Israel. Bernstein had a long relationship with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and felt it was appropriate to premiere it there. The speaker’s text had to be translated to Hebrew for the Israelis and was delivered by Hannah Rovina, Israel’s most famous classical actress. “At the first rehearsal Bernstein fell to his knees when Rovina began the narration. It was, he exclaimed, exactly the sound he had imagined...Hannah Rovina had trouble reading the speaker’s text in rhythm but eventually Bernstein coached and coaxed her through it” (Burton 388). Jennie Tourel sang the solo soprano, although she was a mezzo-soprano who begged Bernstein for the part. The choruses were under the direction of Abraham Kaplan. The premiere took place on December 10, 1963 in Tel Aviv.

The Boston Symphony Orchestra performed the American premiere of the symphony. Charles Munch, the conductor who commissioned the piece, was no longer director of the orchestra, but returned for the premiere to conduct. The other performers were Jennie Tourel, the New England Conservatory Chorus, Columbus Boychoir, and Felicia Montealegre. The premiere occurred on January 31, 1964. While Bernstein went ahead with the premieres, he felt unsatisfied with the text and some details of the orchestral parts.

The symphony does not deal with a specific God, but examines the relationship between any religious person and his or her own supreme being. While this is a tradition
in Judaism, some have also come up with another motive behind the conflicting relationship in the symphony:

The Hebrew tradition of disputing with God goes back to Old Testament heroes like Moses, Job and Jacob. It was renewed in eighteenth-century Russia by rabbis of the Hasidic sect to which Bernstein’s own family originally belonged. “I intended no sacrilege,” Bernstein told a reporter in Israel. “The argument with God has its origin in love; this is the great conflict in man’s soul.” On the psychological level Kaddish is also concerned with the struggle between father and son, discussed openly by Bernstein at his father’s seventieth birthday. (Burton 340)

Bernstein had many conflicts in his life that might serve as the basis of this composition. Bernstein revised the Third Symphony in 1977. The changes were small: there were a few cuts, some re-writing of passages, including re-scoring, and a new text for the speaker. In this version of the symphony, Bernstein allowed the text to be performed by either a male or female. The tone of the speaker is slightly changed. According to Jack Gottlieb, “The Speaker mourns in advance humanity’s possible imminent suicide. At the same time, it was Bernstein’s conviction that human beings as creators, as artists, as dreamers—as, therefore divine manifestations—could be immortal”. The published version of the symphony is the revised version from 1977.

The three-movement symphony is divided into seven parts, two parts in the first and second movements, three in the finale movement. The symphony starts with an “Invocation”, which is often used as a prayer at the beginning of the service to call for help. This part serves as an introduction to the Kaddish I and is in binary form (see table 6.1). “Invocation” begins with humming as background to the invocation by the speaker. The speaker begins with several names of God and eventually, “I want to say Kaddish.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Music</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>First presentation of three-note motive and sevenths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Two-measure transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Alto saxophone theme, prevalent in rest of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Based on three-note motive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The orchestra begins in measure 2 in the harp and vibraphone. The 1st and 2nd flute, and harp (top hand) have the main motive of the ‘A’ section. This motive, half-step and leap (augmented fifth/minor sixth), serves as the basis of many ideas throughout the entire symphony (see example 18). The alto flute and vibraphone have the same three pitches,

Example 18 – Three-note motive from m.2 and 3 (top hand of harp)

but in augmentation. The bottom hand of the harp (fourth flute has inversion) starts with a major sixth, also important in this symphony, followed by another augmented fifth/minor sixth. Bernstein attaches three minor sevenths to the end of the three-note motive played in the muted first violin in measure 3. This leads to the brass and percussion (with oboes and bassoons) in three tone clusters (m.5-6) and is followed by the motive being passed from the low strings (contrabasses, violoncellos) to the violas and finally the first violins (the harp plays doubles each of the instruments).

Beginning in measure 9, the string section passes the motive back and forth again. This section is very short, only four measures, but turns in a transition, in measure 13, to the ‘B’ section. The ‘B’ section begins in measure 15 with a melody in the alto saxophone (example 19), while the voices return with humming. As in the beginning, the speaker talks over the humming, to say he is prepared to say Kaddish. The ‘B’ section is comprised of three four-measure segments. All three contain the same first measure, but the second and third (which are almost identical) extend the leap used to the second

Example 19 – The first two measures of the first section of ‘B’ (m.15-18, alto saxophone)
measure to a diminished octave (or major seventh). The second measure is only changed in starting pitch, but contains the similar descending stepwise motion. However, the third and fourth measures of both the second and third are not similar to the first. The third time is scored for the clarinets, violins and violas.

During all three sections of ‘B’, the three-note motive is used by the surrounding instruments. The ‘B’ section is abruptly cut off in measure 26, while the chorus continues humming. The “Invocation” ends with the speaker, again saying he wants to pray. The orchestra enters with the three-note motive played in two different ways. The strings have the motive in two long notes and an eighth note, with each note punctuated by brass and woodwinds. After the short eighth-note downbeat of measure 28 by all instruments, the speaker says the first line of the Kaddish in Aramaic.

The “Invocation” has no defined pitch center. It begins on an unison A, but the three-note motive causes tonal uncertainty right away. The first violin enters, on beat five of measure three, on F#, which remains as the emphasis for most of the “Invocation”. The music during measures 8 to 14 does not follow the emphasis of F#, but it returns for the ‘B’ section strating in measure 15. The theme of ‘B’ is chromatic, but still begins on F# each time. The ‘B’ section is cut off and the “Invocation” ends with a tone cluster whose outer pitches are the tritone C-F#.

“Kaddish I”, which uses a ternary (ABA) form, opens with music based on the same three-note motive used in the “Invocation”, but altered (see table 6.2). Bernstein
places a note before the motive and alters the interval of the last note in the first measure (the second measure has the minor sixth). In measures 3 and 4, Bernstein inverts the melody and then (measure 4, beat 6) adds an additional note. The motive is stated three times in two measure segments, first for harp and basses, and then in the chorus. This serves as an introduction to the binary form, starting in measure 8.

Example 20 – Use of three-note motive in m. 1 of “Kaddish I” (top hand of harp)

\[ \text{Example 20} \]

The ‘A’ section starts in measure 8 with a two-measure introduction of the background music. This material is the first use of a tone row (ex. 21) in this symphony. The tone row, similar to the one used in Berg’s Violin Concerto, has an emphasis on G. This tone row is presented every two measures during the ‘A’ section until measure 26,

Example 21 – Tone row in first violin in measures 8 and 9

\[ \text{Example 21} \]

the first five times on G. This section requires fortissimo singing by the choir because of the orchestration and Bernstein doubles the voices at times (sopranos with tenors and altos with basses). The melody in the chorus does not follow the tone row, but is chromatic. The orchestra exits in measure 26, when the chorus has an elaborate “Amen” that is based on the three-note motive (ex. 22).
Table 6.2 – Form of “Kaddish I”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T1'</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Music

- Based on the three-note motive
- First tone row, first chorus entrance
- Uses tone row and rising sevenths
- 8/8 theme
- Shortened return of ‘A’
- Transition music returns
- Includes shortened ‘O’ and ‘B’
Example 22 – First Amen cadence (m.26-28, sopranos)

When the chorus cadences in measure 28, the orchestra enters with the tone row passed through the orchestra to start the transition to the ‘B’ section. The violoncellos and contrabasses start with the tone row on E, and the violas on D on the fourth eighth-note of the measure. On the last eighth note of measure 28, the second violins and horns enter with a tone row on A. Bernstein starts the row on A because that is the third, and current, note of the tone row in the violas. The pattern of starting a row on the current pitch of the last instrument continues. This includes the first violins on Eb on beat two of measure 29, the trumpet in D and clarinet in B-flat on Bb on beat three, the oboes, clarinet in Eb and harp on the second eighth note of measure 30, and the last entry by the flutes (including piccolo) and xylophone on the fourth eighth-note. Beginning in measure 33, the music features rising sevenths, another feature of the “Invocation”. The first section is presented by the brass and string sections, but the second time (m.39) presents the theme in the chorus and strings. This elides into the ‘B’ section.

The ‘B’ section (m.43), like the ‘A’ section, features the contrast between the groupings of two and three eighth notes. In this section, however, Bernstein chooses a consistent meter, 8/8. The background music in the contrabasses and bassoons starting in measure 47 is comprised of descending and ascending scales that do not remain consistent. The melody is passed between the woodwinds and first violin, but is not present in the chorus until measure 52. As in the ‘A’ section, Bernstein uses the altos and
basses together for the melody, while the sopranos and tenors clap on the beats. The orchestra is confined to doubling the voices. The orchestra enters as a pickup to measure 60, which starts the melody over again. The violoncellos, contrabasses and bassoons (in m.64) have the scale patterns, while the altos and basses (with second violins, violas and harp) have a rising half steps with motive at the end (measure 63). This idea is repeated by the altos, basses and French horns. The music is repeated in measure 68 with different orchestration. The majority of the orchestra has the melody, while the sopranos and tenors have the three-note motive in whole notes. The French horns also have the three-note motive, on the beats, against the melody.

Bernstein connects the ‘B’ section with a return of ‘A’. The tone row is in the clarinet and first viola on Bb and present every two measures, like before, until measure 84. Bernstein adds pitches and repetition of a single note before the same “Amen” cadence beginning in measure 84. The tone rows from measure 28 (in m.86) and the rising sevenths (in m.91) reappear, but Bernstein changes the rising sevenths section. At the beginning of the section, he adds a tone row after each sequence of sevenths. When the music moves to the chorus, Bernstein extends the music to close the ‘A’ section with another cadence on “Amen”, but to different music. The speaker enters after the end of ‘A’, with text that challenges God while the chorus hums again.

The coda of “Kaddish I” begins in measure 108 with the return of the introductory music for three measures. This includes two statements of the extended motive starting on A. The music connects to a return of ‘B’ in measure 111 with the melody in the instruments, while the chorus has the long notes on a repeated F#. The material from ‘B’ moves into new closing in alternating 7/8 and 5/8 measures. The background music is
the tone row beginning on G, repeating every two measures, while “Amen” is said once more, on a repeated F# to G (in dotted quarter to quarter note). Bernstein decides to stop the music in measure 138, only to return to the last three notes of the tone row and the new “Amen” for two measures to end “Kaddish I”.

The introduction does not settle into one key, but beginning in measure 8, the emphasis is on G. While the music is based on a tone row, this row begins with the outline of a g minor triad and remains throughout the entire chorus theme of the ‘A’ section. When the chorus cadences in measure 28, the orchestra enters with the tone row on E, but ends on F#. The emphasis on F# remains and is the focus of the ‘B’ section. The pitch center shifts to A by the time chorus enters in measure 52. For the rest of the ‘B’ section the emphasis on A remains, but the return of ‘A’ in measure 76 moves to Bb. During this return of ‘A’, the section modulates back to the original key that the tone rows original had in measure 28, E. By the end of the return of ‘A’, the emphasis has moved to A. The coda begins on A, but moves to D when the ‘B’ music appears in measure 111. When the tone row appears in measure 127, it is at the original pitch level, G, and ends the pitch with repeated emphasis by the chorus and tone row on G.

The second movement begins with the “Din Torah”, in which the speaker challenges God and his relationship with man. The “Din Torah”, also in ternary (ABA) form, starts with a large introduction that features the percussion section (see table 6.3). The opening two measures deal with individual percussion instruments entering imitatively on a short accelerating motion. In the second measure, the chorus enters with the ‘B’ theme from the “Invocation”. The music contains three statements of the theme.
Table 6.3 – Form of “Din Torah”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Music</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Percussion section, ‘B’ theme from “Invocation”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>New tone row and rising sevenths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Percussion music that moves to orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Jazzy section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Based on three-note motive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Return of ‘A’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Choral cadenza</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and an additional statement of the first measure. During the theme, the text challenges God and asks why there must be death.

The conflict of the text leads to much more dissonant music starting in measure 18, the ‘A’ section, with the return of the rising sevenths seen in “Kaddish i”. The percussion returns with same material in measure 19, but the rising sevenths return in the next measure. Starting in measure 21, Bernstein uses a new tone row (ex. 23). This tone row includes elements of the main three-note motive in this symphony, half steps and leaps, this time perfect fourths. Bernstein uses this row often. He uses the theme in inversion (violins on beat 3 in measure 24) and retrograde (violins in measure 23). During this section, Bernstein uses this tone row, sometimes shortened to eight pitches, against the rising sevenths.

Example 23 – Tone row used in “Din Torah”

The percussion comes back in measure 30 before the music from the previous section is over. This serves as the closing of the ‘A’ section and transition to the ‘B’ section. The percussion idea is taken over by the woodwinds in measure 33. This continues while the chorus sings “Amen” to different music again (in m.36-37). The ‘B’ section begins in measure 44 and contrasts the highly dissonant use of tone rows and rising sevenths, with jazzy music. The jazz sound comes from the strings and bassoons, while the chorus and alto saxophone have the three-note motive in longer notes. Bernstein uses another “Amen” cadence starting in measure 57 with the motive in sixteenth notes. Starting in measure 59 is a transition to the return of ‘A’ section.
Bernstein uses the three-note motive in the transition. The motive is stated once, and the last note becomes the starting pitch for the next statement. Some instruments do this twice, while some three times per measure.

The ‘A’ section returns in measure 71, but the row appears in descending retrograde form starting on Bb (on the second pitch). The tone row is the dominant music in measures 71 and 72, but the rising sevenths begin in measure 73. This leads to a section, starting in measure 74, that involves the whole orchestra either playing the rising sevenths or the tone row (sometimes fragmentary). This section is similar to the section seen in measures 25 to 30, but involves the entire orchestra.

As the ‘A’ section ends in measure 80, Bernstein adds a “Choral Cadenza” for a cappella choir on “Amen” that includes lines which are performed at different speeds. Bernstein includes previous ideas in the choral lines. The second sopranos have the tone row used in “Kaddish I” on Ab, while the first tenors have the same row on B. The first altos contain the rising seventh motives, while the second altos have the inversion (minor seconds). The second tenor line takes a six beat motive that is transposed up a half step each time it is played. The first bass line has the jazzy music heard in measure 114, while the other bass line has a sequence of fourths and half steps, which are the intervals of the tone row featured in this movement. This music serves as a background to the speaker. The speaker apologizes to God for his madness, which causes a complete change in music for the second Kaddish.

“Din Torah” is the most ambiguous in tonality of all the movements in this symphony. The first chord emphasizes Bb, but the chorus enters on C# with the first melody. The ‘A’ section uses a tone row which does not have strong tonal associations.
The ‘B’ section has no clear pitch emphasis and this remains for the rest of the “Din Torah.” This movement involves the most conflict between the speaker and God, and so the dissonance in this part musically represents the conflict. However, the other part of the second movement, “Kaddish II”, resolves the conflict resolved and restored tonality.

“Kaddish II” is also in ternary form (see table 6.4), which has a three-measure introduction. This music serves as the accompaniment in the next section. During this introduction, the speaker wants to comfort God, and this kaddish is a lullaby. This leads to Section ‘A’, a soprano solo. During the solo, the orchestra serves as accompaniment. When the first phase ends in measure 17, the chorus extends the phrase with the repeated G on the word “Amen”. The second phrase of ‘A’ includes many grace notes to fit the text. The same cadence is used at the end of the second phrase (m.34-35), but a major seventh down (on A). The transition, beginning in measure 36, develops a motive based on the three-note movement from the beginning of the symphony. The motive is passed through the orchestra and chorus until the beginning of the ‘B’ section.

The ‘B’ sections begins in measure 40 with the motive still being passed through the orchestra, but drops out when the soprano solo arrives in measure 46. Once the entire orchestra enters at measure 63, the winds begin to drop out, leaving the soprano and strings. The orchestra begins to build again until another cadence, tutti, at measure 88. The orchestra plays the pattern of this melody four times and is abruptly cut off in measure 96. After the fermata, the motive is used to transition back to the ‘A’ section.

The return of the ‘A’ section, at measure 105, has minor changes. The main change is in measures 112 and 113, where the solo soprano alternates between A and G (she held onto an A in m.11) and the altos have the line that the alto flute and harp had.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Music</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Three-measure introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Soprano solo with orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Four-measure transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>New melody for soprano solo and orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>Based on ‘B’ theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>Return of ‘A’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>End of second movement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bernstein also changes the music between the first and second phrases. In measures 124 to 126, the theme of the ‘B’ section returns, but leads back to the second phrase of ‘A’.

The coda begins in measure 141, with the solo soprano humming in stepwise motion, the chorus singing “Amen” on an E and G#, and the ‘B’ theme present in the orchestra.

During the last chord, the speaker enters and tells God to dream.

After the dissonant and atonal “Din Torah,” the “Kaddish II” has a clear key scheme. The introduction and the first phrase of the ‘A’ section (m.19) maintain the focus on G Phrygian. The ‘A’ section ends with an A in the soprano, but ends with an emphasis on C (in the orchestra) in measure 35. The ‘B’ section returns to an emphasis on G, but also focuses on the minor second between G and Ab. This conflict concludes the ‘B’ section, starting in measure 88, when the soprano has an Ab and the bass instruments have a G. The ‘A’ section comes back at the original pitch level and the emphasis on C continues to the end. While the beginning of ‘A’ emphasizes G, this can be seen as a dominant of C, where the movement ends.

The third movement is divided into three parts, Scherzo, Kaddish III, and Finale. The scherzo begins the movement in ABAC form with a transition to the Kaddish III attached at the end (see table 6.5). The ‘A’ section (m.1) begins with the three-note motive (ex. 24) in the piccolo and Eb clarinet. This motive is used alongside the tone row from the first movement divided among the string instruments. The line is first presented in measure 3, starting on B (ex. 25); most of the tone rows are alternating within a section of the orchestra. The rising sevenths (now minor, also descending) are also present, starting in the contrabasses in measure 14. Starting at measure 19, Bernstein inverts the tone row, starting on Bb, in the first oboe and answers in canon by the second
Table 6.5 – Form of “Scherzo”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Music</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Includes both three-note motive and tone row from 1st mvt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Short eight-measure transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Material based on sevenths and three-note motive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Includes tone row and motive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>Exact music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>Shortened to two measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>Theme from “Invocation”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K/T3</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>Closing of “Scherzo” and transition to “Kaddish III”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
oboe one beat later, a fifth below. During this canon, the English horn has the original form of the row in augmentation, also starting in Bb. These are the principal ideas of the ‘A’ section.

Example 24 – Three-note motive used in measures 1 and 2 of “Scherzo” (piccolo)

Example 25 - Tone row in measures 3 and 4 of “Scherzo” (2nd Violins)

The transition begins in measure 35 with the three-note motive in running eighth notes. The ‘B’ section starts in measure 43 with a very thin texture. The entire section is comprised of rising and descending sevenths played by the strings sul ponticello (on the bridge) and the three-note motive (original and inverted). Starting in measure 60, the last note of the motive is placed an octave down, which makes the final interval a major third down; it is passed through the French horns (m.60-66) and woodwinds (m.68-76) at different pitch levels.

The transition back to the ‘A’ section begins in measure 78. At the beginning of this section, the tone row reappears, starting on C, while the three-note motive is played in the violoncello and contrabass lines. The transition uses only these two motives, in
simple rhythm, until measure 100. Measures 100 to 113, comprised of the intervals of the motive and the motive ending with a major third down in the violoncellos and contrabasses, lead to the return of ‘A’ in measure 114, which is an exact repeat. The first transition returns in measure 148, but in shortened form.

The theme of the ‘C’ section (in the harp and first violin) comes from the “Invocation” part of the first movement. Bernstein writes descending and ascending minor sevenths against the melody during the first eight measures and the motive in the next eight. The next phrase (m.165) also has the melody, but now against the tone row in a three-voice canon, divided into four-note segments in the strings. The music of the ‘A’ section returns briefly in measure 180 for full orchestra, but here it serves as closing material for the scherzo. Since the scherzo is only a small part of one movement, the closing material merges with the transition to “Kaddish III” in measure 202. The transition to “Kaddish III” introduces the principal theme (with a smaller second interval), which starts in measure 202, passed among the instruments until the arrival of the full orchestra at the beginning of “Kaddish III”.

The scherzo does emphasis certain pitches, but shifts many times during the piece. The focus of the beginning is on B; the three-note motive ends on B and the tone row starts on B in the beginning. By the second section (m.19), the emphasis shifts to Bb. In the ‘B’ section, there is no clear emphasis because of the rising sevenths. During the transition back to the ‘A’ section, the orchestra focuses on C, but pitch emphasis disappears in measure 100. The return of ‘A’ brings back the same key scheme as before (starting on B, ending on Bb). In the ‘C’ section, the tonal center shifts down one more half step to A until the last phrase of the melody shifts to B for the return of the music of
‘A’. The emphasis on B quickly shifts to Bb in measure 186 and remains until the transition appears in measure 202. The transition presents the melody of the third Kaddish on multiple pitches, but leads to Gb major in measure 229. The scherzo does not follow a traditional scheme, but remains tonal throughout.

“Kaddish III” is in binary form (see table 6.6) and opens with the theme heard first back in measure 202 (of the scherzo, ex.26) in a condensed version, but fully in measure 229. The first phrase is scored for full orchestra and boys’ choir. The opening phrase closes with the tone row of the first movement on Gb, which is part of the cadence (m.15-16). The transition back to the ‘A’ section includes the opening theme of the scherzo and the three-note motive in measures 20 and 21. The melody appears in imitation starting in measure 24, starting with the violoncellos and contrabasses. This leads to presentation of the ‘A’ section set for full orchestra without boys’ choir, up a major sixth. This phrase is shortened by eight measures. The ‘A’ section cadences in measure 38, but the measure is repeated three times.

The transition to the ‘B’ section begins in measure 42, continuing the music used during the ending of the ‘A’ section. After the five-measure transition, the ‘B’ section begins with the first three notes of the ‘A’ theme in faster rhythm. The ‘B’ section is
Table 6.6 – Form of “Kaddish III”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Music</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Theme from end of “Scherzo”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Used music from end of ‘A’ to transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Based on first three notes of ‘A’ theme, only orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Original melody played in staccato notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Canon on a diatonic theme in F major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
only eleven measures long and leads into a transition (m.58) to the closing. This
transition uses the ‘A’ theme in the original rhythm, but is played *staccato* by the bass
clarinet, trombone and piano. The closing section is a canon in the boys’ choir on a new
theme. Bernstein splits the choir into five sections, entering every four measures. During
the canon, the orchestra has a fragment of the melody in measures 70 and 71, but the
orchestra doubles the choir.

“Kaddish III” maintains a tonal style throughout, but begins and ends in different
keys. The opening is clearly in Gb major, but modulates to Eb major for the second
statement of the ‘A’ theme. This phrase cadences on Bb, the dominant, and the key is
vague during the transition. The ‘B’ section at first returns to Eb major, but then
modulates throughout and ends in C major for the transition to the closing. This is the
dominant of F major, which is the key of the concluding canon. While this part includes
many keys, it is the only movement to remain in clear major tonalities.

Bernstein ends the symphony with a finale in ABC form (see table 6.7). Both the
‘A’ and ‘B’ sections include music from earlier parts of the symphony. The piece begins
with the “Din Torah” tone row in the same style that was used in measures 22 to 24 of the
second movement. This section, the first five measures, serves as an introduction to the
‘A’ section. The ‘A’ section starts in measure 6 and uses the intervals from the tone row,
perfect fourths and minor seconds. Bernstein brings back the tone row from “Kaddish I”
in the first violin in measure 9, starting on Eb. At the end of this tone row, the sequence
of fourths and half steps reappears (m.11-12) and leads to the melody from the ‘B’
section of the “Invocation” (m.13-14). Bernstein leaves measures 15 and 16 empty, but
brings back the “Invocation” melody for two full phrases, beginning in measure 17.
Table 6.7 – Form of “Finale”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Music</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tone row material from “Din Torah”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Based on fourths and half step/“B’ section of “Invocation”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>“Kaddish III” theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Fugato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>Varied repetition of Fugato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>Includes the theme of the fugue, “Kaddish III”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Alongside this melody, the three-note motive is passed through the orchestra. The ‘A’ section ends with more development of the combination of fourths and minor seconds. Starting on beat five of measure 25, the oboe begins on a Bb then descends a fourth, a minor second and another fourth. This idea is passed to the Bb clarinet, but Bernstein alters the last two notes.

The ‘B’ section begins in measure 27 and includes the melody of “Kaddish III.” The melody (ex. 27) is performed in the same rhythm, but at a much slower tempo. Bernstein uses failing sevenths in measure 30 and the same sequence of fourths and seconds from the end of ‘A’ (now in violins and violas). The second phrase of ‘B’, begins as the same music, a half step lower, in the brass section. The music is altered to serve as transition to the fugato (‘C’).

Example 27 - Slow kaddish theme presented in Finale (m. 27-31, 1st Violin)

The ‘C’ section is a fugato, but freely constructed. The imitation starts in the women’s voices, celesta and harp, and is passed to the second tenor in measure 41 and the second basses in measure 42, all at the same pitch level (F). The theme (ex. 28) begins with the sequence of fourth-minor second-fourth seen back in measures 24 to 25. The sopranos (both soloist and section in the choir) use the motive (in m.1) to begin the
subject. The altos enter with the subject, beginning in measure 43, on Bb. The second
tenors start the subject back in measure 41, but do not continue it until measure 44.

Example 28 – Fugato subject (m.39-43, soprano solo)

The subject moves to the first basses in measure 44 on Db. The first tenors enter with a
false entry on Gb in measure 46. The boys’ choir has the subject starting in measure 47
and the sopranos, one measure later. During these last two entries in measure 47 and 48,
the basses have a new theme in imitation against the subject. The rest of this section is
comprised of the chorus sections passing the beginning of the subject between the voices
and simple stepwise patterns.

Starting in measure 59, the beginning of the subject is the focus of the boys’ choir
and soprano solo. The mixed chorus enters in imitation, beginning in measure 65 in the
basses and moving up to the sopranos. The boys’ choir enters in measure 74 with the
melody. All three choral sections, doubled in the orchestra, have a diatonic melody in A
major and move in the same rhythm. The solo soprano enters with a melody over the
choir in A, but once the choir drops out, the soprano begins to change key. The idea
repeats beginning in measure 85 on Eb, but the altos have the melody.

This section includes the same subject (now on E), but now the first four notes
follow the original intervals seen in measures 24 and 25. The first basses start the subject
in measure 97. In measure 98, the violoncellos and contrabasses have the subject on E in
quarter notes and continue, starting on A, in measure 102. The altos have the subject on
C in measure 100, and then the second basses have the subject starting on D in measure 101. During measures 112 to 114, the four-note motive is represented in augmentation in the sopranos and orchestra, while the subject is present in the altos and, first and second trumpet.

Beginning in measure 127, the basses have the four-note motive sequenced to different pitches, while the tenors start with the subject inverted on A. The altos imitate the tenors a fifth above in the next measure. The soprano enters on beat three of measure 129 with the original subject in the original rhythm. The tenors switch to the subject on G in original rhythm on beat five of measure 131 and the altos have the subject inverted (in original rhythm) on beat three of the next measure, starting on Eb. The basses have the inverted subject in augmentation starting in measure 132. This leads to a repetition of the same music beginning in 141. This is the end of the fugue and leads to the closing material of the finale.

The closing begins with the music from the opening of “Kaddish III”, while the keyboards have the four-note motive in quarter-note quadruplets in 3/4. Both themes continue when the piece switches time signature in measure 168; the “Kaddish III” theme is in eighth notes, while the four-note motive has three quarter notes and an eighth. The “Kaddish I” version of the three-note motive returns in measure 177 in the chorus and leads to a cadence. The soprano enters on a G by itself, which is followed by the boys’ choir on E and G. This continues through the mixed chorus, while the orchestra enters with an eighth pattern and leads to the end of the symphony in measure 193.

The finale opens with a Cb, but is followed by a tone row. The ambiguity in key remains in the finale until measure 27, when the orchestra lands in F major. The
orchestra entrance in measure 33 moves the key to E major, but by the cadence in measure 39 it moves to F. The emphasis of the fugue is F, but the finale becomes tonally unclear. By the next phrase the piece moves back to E. In measure 74, the music shifts to a diatonic A major, but this is also short-lived. The fugue returns in measure 97 on E, but ends with an emphasis on G. The section at measure 127 begins with no clear pitch emphasis, but leads to the key of Bb major for the closing material. The key is unclear until the end of the symphony, where the emphasis is on G.

Bernstein writes his Third Symphony with a combination of new twentieth-century techniques, Jewish music, jazz, and traditional classical features. Bernstein used tonality and atonality to reflect the different texts during the symphony. According to Jack Gottlieb:

Musically, this dualism is illustrated by the dramatic contrast between intensely chromatic textures—which employ twelve-tone techniques—and simple expressive diatonicism. For example, there is a particular anguished outburst by the Speaker in the middle of the Din-Torah (trial-scene or “Judgment by Law”) in which God is accused of a breach of faith with humanity...This change is manifested by anguished, non-tonal music which collapses into an eight-part choral cadenza of vast complexity. But immediately after this, the Speaker begs God’s forgiveness and tries to be comforting; the ensuing lullaby is explicitly tonal, with gentle modulations. Again, at the climax of the Symphony (in the Scherzo), another painful spoken moment, musicalized in extreme, angular motives, is followed by a gradual clarification and resolution into G-flat major. The critical word of the Speaker at this point is “believe”. Indeed, the composer’s abiding belief was in the enduring value of tonality.

Bernstein had a strong connection with his religion throughout his life, and included Jewish elements frequently in his works. While the use of Hebrew and Aramaic texts is a obvious Jewish element, Bernstein also included many musical themes from traditional Jewish use, in particular; the subject of the fugue in the finale. According to Jack Gottlieb:
An observant Jew would recognize this motive as coming from the Rosh Hashanah liturgy, heard for the first time as part of the prayer section called the Amidah, a compilation of fixed benedictions recited at all services with varying interpolations, and which comprises the second most important set of Jewish prayers after the monotheistic creed of Sh'ma Yisrael... With the finale of Kaddish, Symphony No. 3 (1963), the symbolism of the motive becomes God's image as created in man, and begins to be launched from the pitch of F. (181-82)

The use of traditional keys is most evident in “Kaddish II” and “Kaddish III,” but they are not used in traditional patterns. The majority of the symphony is in simple binary and ternary forms, but the three movements do not have any overlying traditional formal scheme. Bernstein wrote for a fairly large orchestra, which included many percussion instruments, alto saxophone, piano, harp and celesta, plus two choirs, soprano solo and speaker. Bernstein included some jazz elements in this work, mainly the ‘B’ section of the “Din Torah”.

The symphony focuses on a few motives. The three-note motive from the beginning of the symphony can be perceived as the material from which most of the music grows. Many of the themes include the half step followed by a leap, or the reverse. The rising sevenths motive from the “Invocation” is also reused in several parts of the symphony. These recurrences make the work highly integrated in spite of strong contrasts. The symphony features canon and fugue. Whereas the canon at the end of “Kaddish III” is highly diatonic, the fugato in the finale is thoroughly chromatic and presents the subject at a variety of pitch levels and in inversion, augmentation, and stretto.

The chorus dominates the symphony, but the orchestra does have important music. The orchestra accompanies the speaker and presents introductory transitional passages. When the chorus or soloist is singing, the orchestra accompanies or doubles
the voices. The voices sing only in Hebrew and Aramaic, and their music is difficult. The singers have to stomp, clop, yell, hum and sing in both asymmetrical and multiple meters. The language creates another problem for the singers. With the prayers that Bernstein set, many times the singers have to sing grace notes to fit the words. “The choral writing is advanced for its time” (Burton 339).

The speaker represents a person connected to the person who died. He/she opens the symphony ready to say kaddish, but eventually becomes mad at God (“Din Torah”). After the speaker calms down he/she apologizes and comforts God at the end, which leads to a lullaby. The third movement is a celebration of God and his creation of man. In each instance, the text reflects change in the music of the symphony. When it becomes angrier, the music becomes more dissonant. While it becomes happier or content, the music clears and becomes diatonic. For example, the second movement is a prime example. In “Din Torah” the text questions God, while by the end of the movement and into “Kaddish III” the text apologizes and reconciles with God. These emotions are reflected in the music. “Din Torah” is atonal and also has a new tone row, while the “Kaddish III” returns to tonality and is more peaceful. The speaker is often by himself, or with limited orchestra/chorus. The only exception is the choral cadenza at the end of the “Din Torah”. The texts of the speaker let him/her be more emotional. During the finale, the speaker has to speak over the orchestra (m.33-38), which is gradually getting louder, and portrays the emotion of peacefulness with God.
VII. Conclusion

The American choral symphony has never had a prominent example equal to Beethoven’s Ninth or Mahler’s choral symphonies. While there have been several examples written by American composers, they have not gained international fame or stayed in the standard repertoire. Blitzstein, Mennin and Bernstein each wrote a choral symphony, but each used the word ‘symphony’ very differently.

Each of these three symphonies represents a different approach to the choral symphony. While each is in some sense innovative, many of the forms are simple binary, ternary and rondo forms that have been around for centuries. All three are work that is dominated by chorus. They include important passages for the orchestra, but majority of music is for voices. Each symphony has a different take on tonality/atonality, but none was especially innovative for its time.

Unlike the famous European examples, the three American choral symphonies were the total creation of the composer. Previous composers used literature as their basis and often hired poets to alter or translate the text to fit the symphony. All three composers created their own topic and text to write about a topic that to which they were closely connected. Each composer was a highly creative musician and used their knowledge to create a new type of symphony.

The title of ‘choral symphony’ has been attached by the composer, but there are no common threads throughout the history of the genre. Each work, while influenced by
its predecessors, takes a different approach to using a chorus in a symphony. All three symphonies have a three-movement form, but only Mennin follows the traditional scheme. Mennin uses the fast-slow-fast form that is sometimes seen in a symphony.

Mennin uses one form for each movement, but both Bernstein and Blitzstein use the form as a basis. Blitzstein divides the symphony into 12 parts, Bernstein 7 parts. Blitzstein has four parts in each movement that connect to tell a part of the story. The symphony is comprised of recitative, duets, quartets, and can be described as a mixture of a cantata, symphony and theatrical work. Bernstein divides the symphony into two parts in the first two movements and three in the last. He also connects the different parts, but the theme for the entire symphony remains throughout the work. His piece is also a combination of a symphony and theatrical work. Each composer provides a different example of a twentieth-century choral symphony in the United States.
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