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A CHANT FROM THE GREAT PLAINS: AN ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR A CRITICAL EDITION

by

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A CHANT FROM THE GREAT PLAINS: AN ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR A CRITICAL EDITION

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University of Nebraska, 2013

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This document explores *A Chant from the Great Plains* by Carl Busch. As the winner of American bandmaster Edwin Franko Goldman's composition contest in 1919, this work helped launch the tradition of commissioning upon which the repertoire of the modern concert band medium relies. Inexplicably, Busch's piece fell into obscurity and has become so rare that the primary researcher on Carl Busch, Dr. Donald Lowe, was not able to view any of the music while compiling his research with the exception of citations and articles. This document provides a rationale for the revival of the work in both scholarship and performances. Its origins were explored, as well as its historical significance and compositional craft. This document also provides a suggested instrumentation for performance, as well as a formal analysis of the work. Recommendations were also made for the creation of a critical edition for the modern wind band.

A Chant from the Great Plains helped begin the trend of accomplished composers viewing the wind band as a musically viable medium in the twentieth century. The historical and professional importance of this work warrants further study and the potential creation of a new critical edition.

Acknowledgements

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

As the winner of American bandmaster Edwin Franko Goldman's composition contest in 1919, *A Chant from the Great Plains* helped launch the tradition of commissioning upon which many staples of the modern concert band repertoire originates. This work was quite popular in the 1920s and was selected as the required work for the 1929 National Band Contest. Inexplicably, this work fell into obscurity and has become so rare that the primary researcher on Carl Busch, Dr. Donald Lowe, was not able to view any of the music while compiling his research with the exception of citations and articles.

Carl Busch was a well-respected musician in his time. The following chapter will detail many of his accomplishments and it should be emphasized that he was an important figure in the history of the wind band. Mr. Busch's contributions to the wind band, with regard to both this work and his service is vast and has had long lasting effects which are still present.

Although *A Chant from the Great Plains* has not been performed in the past 60 years, the composition warrants study due to its historical significance. This document will present an informed perspective on this work and its composer with the intent of assisting future performances of the work.

CHAPTER TWO
CARL BUSCH: BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Biographical Information

Carl Busch (1862-1943) was born in Bjerre, Denmark to Ida Sophie Feller Busch (1826-1886) and George Ludwig Busch (1826-1886), a lawyer who maintained a private practice and also served as a district attorney with the county court in Bjerre.[1] Although Carl studied piano, flute, violin, and cello in his youth, he was encouraged by his father to gain employment in an area that would lead him toward a career in the law profession. At the age of fourteen, he finished his schooling in Horsens (a town in Denmark) and worked as a clerk in the county and police courts of Bjerre.[2] After working for four years, he was admitted to the University of Copenhagen to study law, but withdrew from school that year to work at a bank in Aarhus, Denmark. He became dissatisfied with that career and eventually persuaded his father to allow him to return to Copenhagen to formally study music at the Royal Conservatory in 1882.

Busch studied piano and violin extensively while enrolled in the Royal Conservatory, and participated as a performer in musical ensembles such as the Philharmonic Orchestra, the Royal Opera House Orchestra, Tivoli Orchestra, and the Musikverein. However, due to a wrist injury he was forced to stop playing and was encouraged to focus on composition. It was in composing that Busch found his true calling. He stated that " . . .I realized that I could never be a virtuoso. A boy younger than myself came to play at the school and when I heard the brilliancy of his performance, I

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[1] Lowe, Donald L. "Sir Carl Busch: His Life and Work as a Teacher, Conductor, and Composer." DMA diss., University of Missouri-Kansas City, 1972

[2] Mildred Howard Barney, notes of personal interview with Carl Busch, April 19, 1942, in "Sir Carl Busch," manuscript, University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) Library, Snyder Collection of Americana, 10.

knew that great violinists were especially gifted and must begin very early to master the technique of the instruments. Anyway, I loved composing better."[3]

After graduating from the Royal Conservatory of Copenhagen in 1885, Busch attended the Brussels Conservatory for a year and then migrated to Paris, France where he earned his living by playing in orchestras and working as a copyist. While performing in Paris, he found lodging in the home of an Alsatian woman who was an acquaintance of the well-known French composer and conductor Benjamin Goddard (1849-1895).[4] He became a student of Goddard and was invited to play in his orchestra, allowing Busch to meet popular musicians such as Anton Rubenstein, Camille Saint-Säens, and Charles Gounod. [5]

It was during this time that Busch became interested in the wind band. He worked as a copyist to La Musique de la Garde Républicaine (Band of the Republican Guard) and arranged music for amateur bands in France.[6] This is where he first had the opportunity to listen to bands, as well as to hear instruments that were unconventional to the traditional orchestra, such as bass clarinet, alto clarinet, and various kinds of saxophones. Busch would later reconcile his experiences with the French bands with those of the American bands, specifically those involving Patrick Gilmore. Combining these two styles provided a template that Busch would use to write his wind band compositions.

When he returned to Copenhagen, he learned that Thyge Søggard, a former Copenhagen music publisher and the Danish Vice Consul in Kansas City, Missouri, was interested in acquiring an artistic ensemble for Kansas City. Busch had inherited this

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[3] Carl Busch interview published in the Kansas City Times, March 29, 1937
[4] Barney, 11
[5] Lowe, "Sir Carl Busch", 7
[6] Carl Busch, "A Chant from the Great Plains—A Symphonic Episode," Etude XLVII (February, 1929), 105

opportunity when it was passed over by Søggard's nephew, a former musician who had performed with Busch. Busch, along with three other members of the Royal Opera Orchestra, formed the Gade Quartet, named in honor of their teacher Niels Gade.[7]

The Gade Quartet arrived in Kansas City in 1887 and found a city that hungered for a more enriched arts culture. The quartet initially received many opportunities to perform, but because of lack of pay and their reluctance to assimilate to American culture, they eventually disbanded at Busch's request. This freedom forced him to adapt to the culture of his new country.[8] This also gave him the opportunity to focus on teaching, composing, and conducting in Kansas City. He developed a very skilled class of string and music theory students, eventually forming a string orchestra known as the High School Orchestra.[9] It was also at this time that he met Sallie Smith, who he married in 1888. He served as conductor of the Kansas City Orchestral and Choral Societies from 1891 to 1894, and the Apollo Club Male Chorus from 1893 to 1895.[10]

Busch's reputation as a teacher grew immensely and attracted numerous musicians throughout the Midwest. Some of his notable students were renowned chorale composer William Dawson, sought after composer Leith Stevens, and Broadway legend Robert Russell Bennett, all of whom studied privately with him. These three students each enjoyed success in their own right in composition and orchestration (the subjects Busch taught). Robert Russell Bennett, who was a well-known composer and orchestrator in a variety of media (including band), credits Busch as a solid fundamental teacher, stating that "as a teacher Sir Carl was very thorough and preached the gospel of the old

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[7] Personal papers of Carl Busch, The Royal Library, Copenhagen, Denmark, Busch Collection, as cited in Lowe "Sir Carl Busch", 8
[8] Barney, 13-14
[9] Lowe, "Sir Carl Busch", 18
[10] Ibid, 20

fundamental rules. When you studied with him, you could say you had studied harmony, counterpoint, and fugue without blushing."[11]

After a brief sabbatical to study in Europe with composer Englbert Humperdinck from late 1905 to early 1906, he returned to Kansas City. Upon his return, rumors were circulating about the creation of a new orchestra in Kansas City with Busch leading it. Although this did not materialize until 1911, Busch devoted much of his time to promote his future group by organizing and conducting several ad hoc concerts that featured his orchestral compositions.[12]

Although it would seem that the people of Kansas City created a symphony orchestra for altruistic reasons, it was primarily due to a fear among Kansas City's musical leaders that Busch would emigrate to Berlin. To prevent this, a cohort of musicians and businesspeople raised the necessary funds, securing a permanent and stable orchestra for Kansas City. This was the last permanent conductorship that Busch held—the upcoming war (World War I) and its effects on the economy forced the organization to dissolve at the end of the 1917-1918 season.[13]

Although the dissolution of the orchestra was unfortunate, it provided an opportunity for Busch to focus on composing and guest conducting. He completed several works during this time period, including *A Chant from the Great Plains*. He spent the summer months in other locations, which included Cape Cod, the Ozarks, and Michigan. On these sojourns, he would relax and compose. In Michigan, he had his own

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[11] Ibid, 271
[12] Ibid, 32
[13] Ibid, 43

room in Battle Creek at the residence of former violin student (nèe Phebe Brooks), where he had ample opportunity to focus on composition or other hobbies.[14]

In 1924, Busch began a career in college teaching, which lasted for the next fourteen years. He served on the faculty of the Chicago Musical College Summer Master School from 1924 to 1926, and joined the faculty of Brigham Young University (BYU) and the University of Notre Dame in 1927. He continued to teach at BYU every summer until 1938. During the winter months from 1927 through 1935, he taught at the Kansas City-Horner Conservatory and served a joint appointment at The University of Kansas City from 1933 to 1935. [15]

Busch had a great influence on public school music education. For example, he was a member of the original cohort of musicians who donated their time to help the National Music Camp at Interlochen, Michigan.[16] Many of his compositions were performed at the National Music Camp. Busch believed that the work in this camp was extremely important in the improvement of the quality of music in America, stating that the influence "their work has upon our educational system and upon the communities from whence they come is the thing which will be more lasting."[17] He also served as an adjudicator for many school music festivals, most notably the 1929 National Band Contest in Denver, Colorado. His assigned division was the Class A Band for whom the required work was his first band composition, *A Chant for the Great Plains*. The finale of

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[14] Ibid, 45
[15] Ibid, 53
[16] Ibid, 53
[17] The Overture, 1930, 43.

the contest involved a massed band comprising nearly 500 musicians conducted by Busch.[18]

Despite earlier successes, the later part of his life was not pleasant. Due to his declining health and the Great Depression, he and his wife could not maintain their house, nor could they sell it without taking a great loss on the property. After his wife's death in 1939, their assets were sold off and he moved briefly to Battle Creek, Michigan for a six-month retreat. He moved back to Kansas City, and resided in an apartment complex until his death in 1943. Due to his health failures, he was no longer able to play large instruments, and instead composed and played the recorder. He spent his remaining time doing arts and crafts, including flower pressing and compiling scrapbooks about the upcoming war (World War II). He still collaborated with many musicians, although it was more in the manner of a consultant. After an attack of influenza, Busch died on December 19, 1943. Three flags were presented at his funeral (Norway, Denmark, and the United States). In honor of Busch, the Kansas City Philharmonic performed three of his works as a memoriam on December 28, 1943.

His reputation as a conductor, musician, and teacher led to several honors. He was inducted as an honorary member of the national music fraternity Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, designated a Knight of the Order of Dannebrog by King Christian X of Denmark[19], and was immortalized in a life-sized sculpture that was displayed at the J. W. Jenkins Music Company. He was awarded the Order of St. Olaf for his exceptional merit as a person "who by their life, endeavors and achievements, have contributed to the greatness of

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[18] Carl Busch, letter to Mrs. B. S. Eppes, May 26, 1929, Eppes Collection

[19] In 1912, this Danish order was originally designated for exceptional service. King Frederick VI later amended it in 1812 to include those that have achieved prominence in arts and science.

Norway."[20] He was elected, along with Percy Grainger, an honorary life member of the American Bandmasters Association. At the time of this honor, only John Philip Sousa had achieved such recognition.

Compositional Output for Band

Carl Busch did not write for the band medium in the beginning of his career. His band experience was initiated by his participation as an arranger while studying with Goddard in Paris in his younger years, and saturating himself in the rich band culture that existed in Paris in the late 1800s. This opportunity to arrange for the bands of Paris gave him the opportunity to learn the intricacies of writing for winds, which he eventually came to use in the latter part of his compositional career.

This immersion was just one part of the equation that led to his interest in writing for bands. The opportunity to arrange for bands (such as the *Republican Guard Band* of Paris) helped Busch develop a skill for orchestration and the ability to score skillfully for winds. The other part of it was the observation of Patrick Gilmore's band while living in Kansas City. Gilmore remained in Kansas City for an extended period, allowing Busch ample time to repeatedly listen to his ensemble. Busch learned a great deal about the American wind band from observing these concerts, including possibilities and practices related to instrumentation. He stated that "as I listened daily to Gilmore's concerts, it dawned on me that the concert band could be raised to a position where it would leave a truly artistic impression, granting certain eliminations in program making, stronger

[20] Dr. E. Lie Heidenreich, letter of Olaf Bernts, Royal Norwegian Consulate, Chicago, Illinois, February 24, 1924, Boorse Collection. Quoted in Lowe, "Sir Carl Busch", 50

representation of the various choirs, more refinement in instrumentation, together with worth-while original band compositions."[21]

The initial sketches of *A Chant from the Great Plains* were developed ten years prior to its completion in 1919. A fire destroyed the original version, and what exists is a remembering of the material that was lost. It is unclear whether these sketches were originally written for band or if they were preliminary harmonic and melodic sketches not yet assigned to a medium. All that is known is that he developed the idea for an outdoor pageant illustrating early life in the American west, and sought to collect material that would serve as source material for the work.[22]

A Chant from the Great Plains enjoyed much success with public school bands, and was chosen as the required selection for the Class A division of the 1929 National Band Contest in Denver, Colorado. Busch adjudicated this contest, and was intrigued by the high school band experience. In 1928, he was a member of the original group of musicians who donated their time and services to assist Joseph Maddy in the National Music Camp at Interlochen, Michigan. The National Music Camp at Interlochen is still in existence today (known as the Interlochen Center for the Arts) and continues to be popular in attracting young musicians from around the world to engage in an intensive study of the arts. This camp was created as a means to foster interest in school music by providing an environment that would allow a large group of high school students from across the country to play together[23]. This also gave Busch ample opportunity to have a regular ensemble play his compositions. He assisted in the camp every summer from

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[21] Carl Busch, "My Impression of the Concert Band as a Medium for Artistic Expression, Etude, L (July, 1932), 478
[22] Ibid, 478
[23] Keene, James A. *A History of Music Education in the United States, 2d ed*. (Centennial, CO: Glenridge Publishing, Ltd.), 312

1928 to 1932 and again in 1934.[24] This camp was integral in the formalization of instrumental music in the public school curriculum, and Busch's compositions were part of the repertoire being performed.

The rise in the school band movement following the end of World War I originated in part from the need to employ bandsmen who had been in the service.[25] The explosion of public school music necessitated that more music be written to meet this growing need. This necessity was the reason Busch composed exclusively for winds until his death in 1943. It is also possible that winning the first Edwin Goldman Composition contest for original wind band works in 1920 motivated him to continue to write for band, which led to numerous compositions in his later years (1930-1943). [26]

His association with the American Bandmasters Association (ABA) was also a vital resource that allowed his music to be performed at annual conventions and provided great exposure to the wind band community.[27] He was inducted as an honorary life member with Percy Grainger in 1932, and was invited numerous times to conventions to hear his works performed. Even when he financially was unable to afford traveling to the conventions, the ABA was willing to fund his travel to participate in the festivities, which often meant conducting his works in the performances.[28]

Busch completed nearly 30 works for winds, although five could be classified appropriately as band works[29]. In 1930, he composed *Suite for Band* in four movements

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[24] Lowe, "Sir Carl Busch", 56
[25] *A History of the Wind Band by* Dr. Stephen L. Rhodes. <http://www.lipscomb.edu/windbandhistory/RhodesWindBand_09_AmericanSchoolBand.htm>
[26] Ibid, 250
[27] Ibid, 254
[28] Ibid, 59
[29] Although the sources note some of these as wind ensemble works, it is not based on the wind ensemble model as conceived by Frederick Fennell. Much of the works noted as wind works are actually small chamber works such as trumpet trios and solo instrument works.

("Rustic", "Chippewa Lament", "A Tale", and "Festive"), which was dedicated to Joseph Maddy and performed at the National Music Camp on August 10, 1930. In 1932, "Rustic" and "Chippewa Lament" were extracted and published as two separate compositions. He composed a march for the music camp in 1930 entitled *Spirit of Interlochen*, and earlier that year in April, premiered *Prelude for Band*. He also wrote a work for band and chorus entitled *Hymn and Processional*, which included themes taken from his cantata *Liberty Memorial Ode*.[30]

It should be noted that many of Busch's compositions were intended as pedagogical pieces for private students or as works to be performed by the student organizations, such as Interlochen or public schools.[31] Many of Busch's compositions were composed with the intent of musically sustaining the increasing number of music students (in both choral, orchestral, band, and solo/chamber area) in the 1920s and 1930s. Many of his small ensemble works were performed regularly throughout the country, and in 1939 he was notified that four of his works had been selected for the 1940 contest list published by the National School Band Association.[32] The evidence is clear that Carl Busch contributed not only pedagogically but musically to the growth of music education in its earlier forms.

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[30] Ibid, 256
[31] Lowe, Donald. "Carl Busch: Danish-American Music Educator". *Journal of Research in Music Education* 31:2 (Summer 1983). 89
[32] Ibid, 91

CHAPTER THREE

INVESTIGATION OF THE SOURCE MATERIAL OF *A CHANT FROM THE GREAT PLAINS*

Source Material- Alice Fletcher's *A Study of Omaha Indian Music*

The source material for "A Chant from the Great Plains" originates from a tune in Alice Cunningham Fletcher's *A Study of Omaha Indian Music*. Alice Fletcher (1838-1923) was a noted American ethnologist who spent thirty years in Nebraska with the Omaha Indians and was the first person in history to make a sound recording of the folk music of an Indian tribe. She resided on the reservation and her knowledge of the Indian culture made her a natural intermediary between the tribes and United States government agencies. Fletcher's ability to work between the United States government and the Omaha Indians helped broker many land deals and gave her enough influence to develop social programs to help the Indian culture.[33]

Fletcher's interest in the Omaha Indians began in 1879 at a Boston literacy society meeting when she met Francis La Flesche, an Omaha Indian singer. This lifelong friendship proved to be valuable as Fletcher researched the tribe. She began visiting the Omahas in 1881, and the eventual strength of the forged relationship was evident after they cared for Fletcher after a nearly fatal illness.[34] After her recovery, they celebrated with the Wa-wa*n* ceremony, and she is recognized as the first white person to observe the tradition.[35] Her inclusion in the ceremony indicates the level of trust that she attained from the Omahas. Over a period of thirty years, she managed to document the music and ceremonies that were native to the Omahas.

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[33] Omaha Indian Music. http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/omhhtml/omhoim2.html
[34] Fletcher, xi
[35] Ibid, x

Fletcher's research is important because it places the Omaha Indian music in cultural context and details the importance of music in the everyday lives of tribal members. Singing was part of every event of the day—including ceremonies honoring horticulture, social gatherings, war preparation, personal crises, and communal decision-making.[36] The music also transmitted the history of the tribe and was passed down through generations. The performances reflected the feeling of the composer, but also told of past experiences that needed to be shared through generations. Accuracy was important because the tribe did not have external aids to record their music, such as written language.[37]

The Omahas originated from a group of Indians who spoke the Siouan language and who once lived along the Ohio River before migrating westward early in their history. The Omahas were primarily villagers and farmers; however, when the Spanish introduced horses to North America, the Omahas expanded their territory and assimilated with other western Plains tribes. The Omahas had a complex social structure with many rules governing behavior. They also had many tribal societies, some of which were secret.[38]

The fact that Fletcher was able to observe, participate in, and record these cultural rituals is significant. Although other composers were known for using Indian folksongs as source material, many of those settings were inauthentic and based on inaccurate perceptions of Indian music, such as medicine and side shows.[39] Although Fletcher was not the first person to collect Indian folksongs (Theodore Baker had started a decade prior

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[36] Ibid, viii
[37] Fletcher, 10
[38] Waldman, Carl. *Encyclopedia of Native American Tribes*. (New York: Facts on File Publications), 157-168
[39] Browner, Tara, "Breathing Indian Spirit", 264

to Fletcher's work), she was the first to record the music. As a result of Fletcher participating in the music making, she was able to experience the cultural ritual that was native to each work. She stated that, " . . .among the Indians, music envelops like an atmosphere every religious, tribal and social ceremony as well as every personal experience. There is not a phase of life that does not find expressions in a song . . .Music is also the medium through which man holds communion with his soul, and with the unseen powers which control his destiny."[40]

There were vast differences between the Western classical tradition and the Indian music that Fletcher researched. She was able to distinguish the disparate characteristics of these two traditions. The most prominent features unique to the Indian song performance practice are the noticeable change of intervals, continuity of melodic contour of music, vibration of the voice to create various inflections, and the alteration of normal words to not interrupt the musical flow.

Although this list is general, it clearly suggests that the Omaha Indians believed that the melodic flow of music was more important than the text. The Omahas would superimpose syllables on portions of text to preserve the musical line if the words disturbed it.[41] Fletcher described this as striving "toward poetic expression in measured language."[42]

The ritual songs may be divided into three categories. The first category is "class songs", which are religious or ritualistic and sung only by those in charge of religious ceremonies. The second category is "social songs", often sung en masse. These types of songs were either for entertainment or other ceremonial proceedings. Songs of the third

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[40] Fletcher, 10
[41] Ibid, 12
[42] Ibid, 13

category are actually solos belonging to one of seven subgroups (war songs, mystery songs, songs of thanks, myth songs, women songs, love songs, and flageolet[43]songs). [44] These songs were transcribed by Alice Fletcher and later harmonized by John C. Fillmore.

The Chant from the Great Plains is constructed from source material taken from "Funeral Song, no. 57". This song from the second category (social song) was originally sung in mass. Only one funeral song exists in the repertoire of the Omahas, and it is sung for only those that held great respect in the tribe. An accompanying ceremony was held in accordance with the death of such an honored tribe member. As Fletcher describes:

> "Upon the death of such an one [respected man or woman], the men in the prime of early manhood meet together near the lodge of the deceased, divest themselves of all clothing but the breech-cloth, make two incisions in the left arm, and under the loop of flesh thus made, thrust the blood dripping upon the green branches hanging from their arms, the men move silently to the lodge where the dead lies; there ranging themselves in a line, shoulder to shoulder, and marking the rhythm of the tune by beating together two willow sticks, they sing in unison the funeral song No. 57. [45]

The purpose of the funeral was to show reverence to deceased and cheer up the departing spirit. It was presumed that the departing spirit would hear the "glad cadences" as he left his family. The Omaha believed that the spirit was blind to the grieving of loved ones, but it could see the blood being spilt in his honor as the final statement of his tribe's affection. Although seemingly barbaric from an outside perspective, the ceremony itself is filled with tender unselfishness and a strong belief in the continuation of life after death.[46]

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[43] The flageolet is a transverse flute that is related to the flipple flute.
[44] Ibid, 44-54
[45] Ibid, 42
[46] Ibid, 42

Although Fletcher admits that harmony was not a consideration in the songs, she does give credence to its inevitable presence. The occurrence of simultaneous singing would inevitably create harmony. Common practice in western harmony usually indicates that the type of quality of modality that is present in music can reflect a type of mood.[47] John C. Fillmore, a music teacher in Wisconsin, harmonized the songs using traditional western harmony and the result was seen favorably by the Omahas.[48] Fillmore stated that the Omahas were fond of five-note scales with inconsistent rules in regard to the omission of certain pitches.[49] However, their overall concept of melodic organization was very consistent with western music common practice. The theme of the funeral song itself comprises only five pitches C, D, E, G, A-which in traditional Western harmony is referred to as a C major anhemitonic Pentatonic Scale. The use of the anhemitonic pentatonic scale to construct the theme is not a practice that is only native to the American Indians as it is present in Chinese and African music. The lack of half-step intervals is seen as a universal construct for music as it is present in various cultures.[50] Harmonically, the analysis shows that the Fillmore's chord progression revolves around tonic, subdominant, and dominant chords. There is no variance of mode, making the tune harmonically simple and repetitive.

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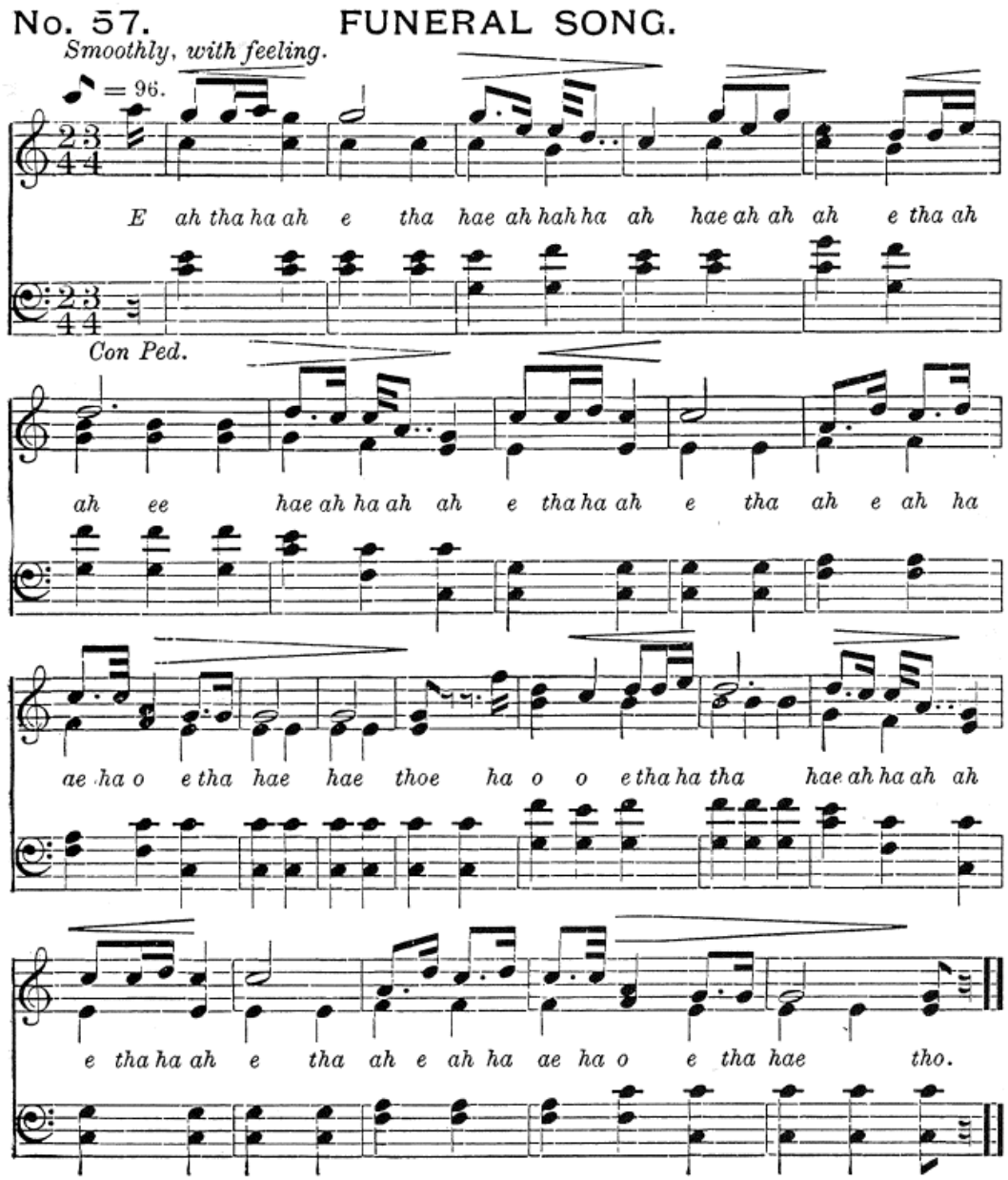
[47] x, Patrik and Vastfjall, Daniel, "Emotional responses to music: The need to consider underlying mechanisms. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 31 (2008), 564
[48] Fletcher, 61
[49] Ibid, 60
[50] Day-O'Connell, Jeremy. "Pentatonic" *Groves Online*. Internet. Available from http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.library.unl.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/21263?q=pentatonic&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit

Figure 1-"Funeral Song" form *A Study of Omaha Indian Music*



Busch, being an Indianist, was fond of using Fletcher's work as source material. The theme above appears in two of Fletcher's books, with different labels. In *Story & Song from North America*, she lists it as the "Funeral Song No. 57", and in *A Study of*

Omaha Indian Music, it is listed as "The Song of Spirit."[51] After comparing both entries, it is certain that both songs are identical. Busch also uses the phrase "beating two willow sticks," which is quoted from Fletcher's article on the funeral song". This strengthens the evidence of its origin.

Regardless of the title, the source material is intact and completely identical. The function of the song was consistent in both entries, and both state that there is only one funeral song of the Omahas. *Indian Story & Song from North America,* the second book by Fletcher, presents the text of the funeral song, which illuminates some aspects of the tune. The text does not have any meaning, and are non-lexical vocables. These vocables are used to drive and accentuate the melody rather than have any pertinent meaning of their own.[52]

An inscription written by Busch in the score, shows that he believed the thematic material was fitting for modern harmony.[53] In order for Busch to make the work more interesting, he only strictly adhered to these harmonizations when he was presenting the theme in its complete form.

Busch had prior experience using Indian folksongs in his compositions. Around 1900, Busch became interested in using Indian folksongs as source material for serious compositions.[54] Compositions that also revolved around Indians were *Songs of Hiawatha*, *Indian Legend*, and *Indian Suite*, in five movements, *The Four Winds, Minnehaha's Vision*, *The Song of Chibabos, Four Indian Tribal Melodies for String Orchestra*, and *A*

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[51] Fletcher, Alice. *Indian Story & Song from North America*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press. 1995. 58-59
[52] Ibid, xiv
[53] This was taken from the title page of Busch's owned cover page of *A Chant from the Great Plains.* This title page is available in the Carl Busch collection at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Library
[54] Lowe, 220

Chant from the Great Plains.[55] Many of these works were inspired by poetry or books about Indian subjects and were further authenticated by visits to Indian tribes.[56] The use of Indian influences range from harmonic settings of authentic Indian themes to original music that employed modalities, rhythmic tendencies, and intervals that would be associated with Indian music. In keeping with the Romantic tradition, Busch never strayed away from the fascination of Indian lore and love of outdoors and Indian life. These practices, although evident in other cultural histories, were the same practices adhered to by composers such as Edward MacDowell and Antonín Dvořák in their similar culturally oriented compositions. This was the same ideal that led to the creation of *A Chant from the Great Plains*.

Figure 2- Front Page of *A Chant from the Great Plains*

[55] Ibid, 225
[56] Ibid, 222

CARL BUSCH

A CHANT FROM THE GREAT PLAINS

SYMPHONIC EPISODE

Awarded a prize of $250.–offered by Edwin Franko Goldman, Conductor of Goldman's Concert Band, New York City, for the best original composition for Military Band, the judges in the competition having been the Messrs. Victor Herbert and Percy Grainger. First performance July 5th 1920, in the Stadium of Columbia University, New York City.

DESCRIPTIVE NOTE

This symphonic Episode has been inspired by an Indian scene from an out-door pageant, illustrating early life in the West. The opening measures recall a quiet summer's day in the village with the children engaged in playful pastime and the old men as interested, amused spectators.

Suddenly the chanting of victorious braves, returning from war and bringing with them their dead and wounded, is wafted into the village from a-far. Their gradual approach to the village takes place in form of a solemn procession in the course of which they pass on to the burial ground. Then the pastoral life, interrupted and brought to a halt by the procession, is once more taken up.

The principal motive employed for the gradual development of this symphonic Episode, is an idealization of a theme from Alice C. Fletcher's *A Study of Omaha Indian Music.*

Two measures part 7 "The Song of the Spirit"
The departing spirit must hear no sounds of lamentation,
no words, merely sighing (vocables or vocal sounds) Their accompaniment - beating two willow sticks

The Theme-message makes possible fitting modern Harmony.
The latter enhances the former
all music is the same

21997-68

57

[57] This cover page was taken from Busch's score. The written notes are in Busch's handwriting and provide more information for his train of thought in the compositional process of *A Chant from the Great Plains*. (Courtesy of Donald Lowe)

Instrumentation of *A Chant from the Great Plains*

The instrumentation of the work is flexible, however the parts for which Busch wrote were common to the symphonic band of that era.

Figure 3- Instrumentation of *A Chant from the Great Plains*

Instrumentation	
Flute in C	E-flat Baritone Saxophone
Piccolo in D-flat	Solo B-flat Cornet
1st Oboe	1st & 2nd B-flat Cornet
2nd Oboe & English Horn	1st & 2nd B-flat Trumpets
Bassoons (1st and 2nd)	1st & 2nd Horns in E-flat
E-flat Clarinet	3rd & 4th Horns in E-flat
Solo and 1st B-flat Clarinets	1st & 2nd Trombones
2nd B-flat Clarinet	3rd Trombones
3rd B-flat Clarinet	Baritones
E-flat Alto Clarinet	Basses
B-flat Bass Clarinet	Timpani in F & B-flat
B-flat Soprano Saxophone	Snare Drum, Bass Drum, Cymbal and Triangle
E-flat Alto Saxophone	Harp
B-flat Tenor Saxophone	

The instrumentation of this group is flexible for a variety of reasons. In Lowe's research, he discovered that Busch conducted this work with a massed band of over 500 musicians.[58] Also, in his own writing, he states that certain instruments may be omitted if not available.[59] During this era, flexible instrumentation was more of a consequence of varied personnel availability than artistic conception. Busch, in his article, clearly states that the decision to use flexible instrumentation was to provide for practical performances of this work.

[58] Carl Busch, letter to Mrs. B. S. Eppes, May 26, 1929, Eppes Collection at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Library

[59] Carl Busch, "A Chant from the Great Plains—A Symphonic Episode," Etude XLVII (February, 1929), 105

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS OF *A CHANT FROM THE GREAT PLAINS*

In preparation for the 1929 National Band Contest in Denver, Colorado, Busch prepared an article for the February 1929 edition of *Etude* Magazine. What he provided was more of an interpretive analysis rather than a strictly theoretical or formal summary. However, it provided some illuminating information regarding to the performance of the work that is not always evident in the original score. A reprint of Busch's article is located in the appendix of this document.

The music does not represent a specific event that occurred in Omaha Indian history; however, it renders an extra-musical narrative (as stated by Busch in the article). In order to help develop this setting musically, Busch uses orchestration to create the desired setting. Busch also manages to intersperse various motives within the work (without them becoming separate formal sections) to suggest various Western elements within the program.

The overall form of the work is an arch form (ABA) that is monothematic, using only the theme from *The Song of Spirit*. Busch's analysis states that the first 75 measures are an introduction, which causes the proportions of the work to seem unbalanced. However, upon closer examination, the introduction relates functionally rather than formally. Since the introductory material cycles back towards the end, the introduction itself is not independent and therefore it is actually the A section of the overall arch form.

Figure 4-Formal delineation of *A Chant from the Great Plains*

Section	Measures
A	1-75
B	75-222
A'	222-240
coda	240-254

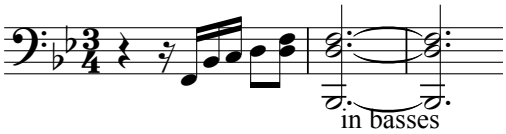
The formal organization of *A Chant from the Great Plains* is unusual in that the complete presentation of the theme does not occur until m.75. The entire A section (mm.1-75) utilizes fragments of the theme (the first six pitches) through various tonal centers. The importance of the A section is not in the theme, but the setting. Busch uses this lengthy introduction to set a background that paints for the listener an image of a western scene. This is accomplished by various compositional techniques, including quartal and quintal harmonic structures, sparse orchestration, and familial grouping of tone colors. This allows Busch to prolong the necessity for thematic presentation while providing ample opportunity to explore changes in texture, harmony, and economy of thematic material.

The use of quartal and quintal harmony is a common technique used by composers to convey the western pastoral scene. The most notable instances of this practice may be found in the music of Aaron Copland (1900-1990). It created an "open" sonority that is the hallmark of compositions such as *Fanfare for the Common Man* (1942-43).[60] This open sonority is created by intervallic space, which has been associated with the wide open spaces of the American West. The opening motive initially presented by the bassoons in mm.2-4 of *A Chant from the Great Plains* opens with an interval of a

[60] Ha, Young Mi. *Characteristics of Aaron Copland's American Style in Four Dance Episodes from Rodeo*. PhD, diss., New York University, 2000, 74

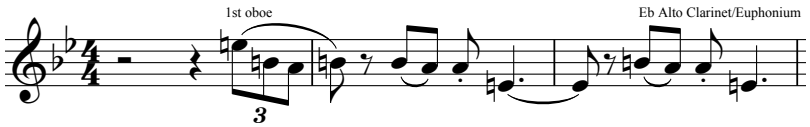
fourth and closes on a fifth, while the pedal bass of B-flat creates a space of a perfect fifth.

Figure 5- Opening motive in bassoons from mm.2-4



Busch creates the open space immediately, however he does not abandon tertian harmony as he closes every presentation of the opening motive with a third to give the chord its modality. This entire A section is built off the fourth and fifth interval. The motives introduced at m.12 and presented in the style of hocket is a clear example of the prevalence of the fourth and fifth interval. Busch not only uses the open interval vertically, but also horizontally. This is seen in the motives presented at mm.12-14. The emphasized pitches are E-natural and B-natural with A-natural serving as a non-chord tone.

Figure 6- Motives presented at m.12

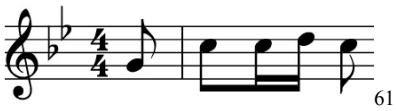


With this simple compositional device, Busch allows for the music to develop by utilizing the orchestration rather than relying on the strength of the theme or melodic content. The texture is not *tutti* during this section of the composition (mm.1-75); however, Busch is methodical in the choices of instruments to create diversity amongst the orchestrational landscape. The woodwinds are used as the primary instruments

throughout this section with the brass interjecting to either highlight a melodic idea or introduce a timbre that was not evident before.

The A section uses the pitches in the pentatonic scale that is present in the source material from "Funeral Song No. 57". The familiarity of this theme within the A section is a vital component to allow Busch to use a variety of compositional techniques to create interest throughout the work. Examples include thematic fragmentation and harmonic modulation. Because there is not a continuing flow of thematic and melodic material, the work is able to provide the audience with familiarity even as it moves through various soundscapes. This use of this single theme or fragments of the theme plays a role throughout the remainder of the work, even as it is developing in later sections.

Figure 7- Source motive of *A Chant from the Great Plains*



[61]

Overall, the A Section starts and ends in B-flat Major. Busch explores other modulations within this area, often with a 3rd relationship. When he diverts from this relationship, it usually signals the start of something evolving formally within the work.

Figure 8-Tonal progression of the introduction

Measures	1-4	5-10	11-16	17-22
Harmony	B-flat major	G major	E major	C major
Relationship		Down 3rd	Down 3rd	Down 3rd

Measures	23-28	28-30	30-34	34-37
Harmony	A-flat major	F major	C major	g minor
Relationship	Down 3rd	Down 3rd	Down 4th	Down 4th

[61] The line indicates that after these first five notes, changes occur to give each presentation a different ending.

The harmonic relationships of the beginning of the A section are chromatic mediants until m.30 when it modulates down a fourth to C major. In the composition, this is an English horn solo with no accompaniment, which would support the assertion that this change in harmony signals that there is a change in the music from what was occurring prior to that section. Prior to this change, the brass was used as an accompaniment while the woodwinds led the melodic content. After this change, the tendency starts to make a shift, which allows for the brass to have a melodic role, which shows an evolution of the work as more instruments and timbres are being utilized in a variety of different ways.

Formally, the A section is not a single structure; rather it is an example of formal nesting. Numerous subsections occur within it. The divisions could best be parsed as follows:

Figure 9-Sub-structures of the introduction

Section	**Measures**
a	1-12
b	12-24
c	24-37
d	37-44
e	44-50
e'	50-57
f (1st part of trans)	57-63
(2nd part of trans)	63-67
g (Brave motive)	67-75

These divisions separate the section into discreet events so that the listener is able to identify changes within an essentially theme-less section. Busch, writing in the Romantic style, uses fragments of the upcoming theme with the harmonic and orchestrational background to create a clearly pastoral scene that highlights his intended

program. Like the compositions of Romantic composer Antonín Dvořák, the work is not encumbered by chromatic elaboration and uses the orchestration and simple melodic fragments to highlight an extra musical narrative.[62] Since *A Chant from the Great Plains* came slightly after the Romantic time period (ca. 1810-1910), the fact that it is in the Romantic style offers young band members an opportunity to experience music that is authentic to an era in which comparatively few original band compositions exist.

Measures 1-44 rely on orchestration and harmony to progress musically. It is not until m.44 where there is a recognizable statement of the theme that is derived from the source material. This is a false presentation, however, as it does not finish the expected consequent phrase from the source material. The first introductory presentation re-establishes B-flat Major; however the scalar pattern that comprises the consequent phrase tonicizes D-flat Major through the common tone of F. The material at mm.52-57 is completely identical to that of mm. 45-50 with the exception of a change in orchestration and tonal center (modulating to D-flat). A similar element in each of the false presentations is the *ritardando*, which slows down the half cadence before each section, clearly denoting the transition to a new section.

The percussion parts in *A Chant from the Great Plains* are used to provide color. The instruments chosen would be idiomatic to the 20th century military band, which did not use keyboard instruments. While vital to the work, they do not have any exposed sections. They are often used to highlight the harmony and other events in the composition. The timpani (only requiring two drums pitched in B-flat and F respectively) and the snare drum only perform rolls and rudimentary figures. The triangle is used as a

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[62] Platingna, Leon. *Romatnic Music: A History of Musical Style in Nineteenth-Century Europe.* (New York: W.W. Norton), 357

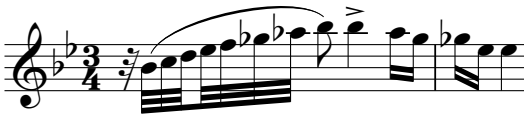
tool to help highlight the Western atmosphere, as it was a tool used as a signal for meals on the trail. The first time the timpani play is m.3 to highlight the harmony. The snare first rolls at m.24, signaling a new section. This coloristic use of percussion becomes increasingly important in the central developmental section of the work in which Busch uses the percussion heavily to navigate through to the arrival of the restatement of the theme. Throughout the work, the bass drum is used to highlight arrivals of climatic points. The crash cymbals also serve the function of adding emphasis to the climactic or intense moments.

Measure 57 marks the beginning of a new section (f) that functions as a transition to m.63. This section is unstable due to the harmony and rhythmic construction. The clarinets present a highly syncopated figure comprised of a series of diminished seventh and minor chords that transition to B-flat on the downbeat of m.63. The clarinets' figures are completely syncopated, as are the horns in their fanfare accompaniment (there are only emphases on beats two and four when the figures land on a downbeat).

Measures 63-67 are the second part of this transition. This does not reappear later in the work and utilizes the source motive through a variety of harmonies to lead into the upcoming subsection of the introduction. Dynamically, this is soft (*p*), and is highlighted by various swells in each presentation of the figure. This section is imitative, ascending by thirds in the cornets. The lower voices have a pedal B-flat, maintaining the initial tonality of the work. It elides into the upcoming "brave motive" section, using that second eighth note of the B-flat Major chord set to the tempo, which is an abrupt change from what occurred before.

Measure 67 is a motive so recognizable as to be cliché. In popular culture of the early 20th century it was commonly associated with the chanting of various Indian tribes. The ascending slur resembles a non-lexible vocable, heard in many chants by a variety of different cultures, and is also a component of the "Funeral Song No. 57". By way of syncopation and an Aeolian scale with a raised third, Busch creates the "Brave" motive. This is set apart by abrupt change in tempo, moving from a rapid *accelerando* to the sudden *Maestoso*. The motive (Figure 10) resembles a Native American chant, and is a continuation of the overall ethos of which Busch is trying to portray. By calling upon only the upper woodwinds (piccolo, flute, clarinets, soprano saxophone and alto saxophone) to play this motive, the reeds project a sound that is scored higher in the tessitura and relates to the vocables used by the Native American tribes. Because there is a lack of bass voice in this motive, it does not have a full sound that would be expected in a *tutti* section. In the following measures (mm.68-69), the lower voices (woodwinds and brass) join, suggesting a more stereotypically masculine presentation of the vocables.

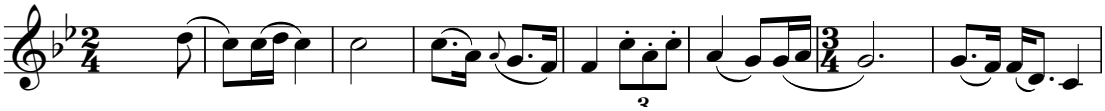
Figure 10- Brave motive from introduction



The transition continues to employ syncopation throughout this section with a final statement of the source motive in the solo B-flat cornet at m.71. The harp and cornet at mm.71-72 imply B-flat major, through arpeggiation and resolution to the tonic pitch respectively. The *ritardando* at m.71 also signals the end of a section and resolves the harmony to the intended tonic of e-flat minor (starting on the fifth scale degree).

The B section begins at m.75 with the theme presented at the anacrusis of m.75 in the English horn. Although this is the first instance that the source material is heard in its entirety, the material itself develops from the A section. Because of the preparation Busch has done through harmony and orchestration, the theme appears in context as a completely organic element, as opposed to a new element of music. The theme is already familiar prior to the first time it is performed.

Figure 11-Theme to *A Chant from the Great Plains*



The orchestration is thin and consists of only a few instruments. The horns and basses provide sustained harmonies while the timpani play single pitches on the downbeats (mm.75-80) to provide a structural framework for the organization of harmony. Busch follows the same harmonic progress that was evident in Fillmore's harmonizations of the Funeral Song. This area does not deviate from the source material until m.82. The clarinets and English horn engage in a call and response at mm.82-87, with the flutes joining at m.88. This dialogue is the only music occurring at this time, usually only existing within a few instruments. Busch's economical use of instruments at this point in the work signals an impending change of events. He again uses the woodwinds primarily with only sparse help from the brass (horns, baritones, and basses).

The area from mm.84-100 has no background setting and uses fragments of the theme (much like the A section) to create melodic content. Another figure here that is prevalent is the dotted eighth-sixteenth note, which upon review of other songs in *A Study of Omaha Indian Music,* is a very common rhythmic figure. This links the relationship of

the music to the Indian program, and while some figures (specifically the English horn and piccolo material from mm.86-69 and again at mm.98-100) do not have a presence in the theme, it does have a presence in the larger context of Omaha Indian music.

The end of the first presentation of the A section elides the end of the conversation with one last statement of the theme, transposed up to the dominant at m.102. The basses sustain a pedal B-flat, however, since the theme is presented in the dominant, this entire section works as an extended half cadence that leads into the next large formal section. It eventually settles on a deceptive cadence on the downbeat of m.109, resolving on a g-minor chord (the relative minor of B-flat Major, again keeping with the third relationship present in the A section).

Measure 109 is what Busch cited as the "development" of *A Chant from the Great Plains*.[63] From a formal perspective, it should not be considered a development in the way a development section functions in a work that is in Sonata-Allegro form. This area is not independent and Busch recognized this fact by not replacing a rehearsal number at m.109. This subsection may be divided further into smaller subsections based on the rapid change of events. There is nothing (other than the theme) in this section that relates to the program of the work, however Busch utilizes interesting techniques to colorize the theme and create a more musically active section. Of the entire composition, this section is the most harmonically active.

The first phrase is six measures long (mm.109-115). The source motive is presented in the key of g-minor. The horns are syncopated in their accompaniment, using metric displacement to create instability in the section. The final two measures of the

[63] Busch, 105

phrase do not use the source motive, but are part of the dotted eighth-sixteenth-note figure that is common in the music of the Omaha Indians.

The next phrase group (mm.115-123) layers an additional decorative element onto the developing theme. In the antecedent phrase, the upper woodwinds play a florid scalar pattern that cadences to the next presentation of the source motive. It may be easily divided into three-measure phrases, each beginning with the quotation of the "Funeral song" and the last using the florid scalar pattern outlining the harmony. The harmony re-establishes a chromatic mediant relationship, similar to that of the introduction. Stating the motive with the tonal center of D Major, it cycles through to B-flat Major and D-flat minor. The florid scalar pattern in the flute, piccolo, clarinet, and bass clarinet is comprised of seventh chords and scales built on an altered minor mode. Busch further highlights this scalar pattern by adding a roll in the snare drum with fluctuating dynamics.

The next phrase group begins at mm.123 and merges with the beginning of the developing source motive at the downbeat of mm.137. This area is extremely active, and as part of the development section, uses the compositional device of *fortspinnung*[64], in which the motive is presented at various pitch levels, rhythmic placements, and tonal centers. It maintains a tonal center of D-flat Major, with clear cadence points until a modulation occurs from mm.133-136. Busch uses secondary dominants and eventually leads to an authentic cadence in F Major at m. 137.

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[64] *Fortspinnung* ("spinning out") is the specific process of development of a musical motive. The motive may be developed into an entire musical structure by using sequences, repetitions, or intervallic alterations. Fischer, Wilhelm (1915), »Zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des Wiener klassischen Stils«, *Studien zur Musikwissenschaft 3*, 24–84

Measures 137-140 constitute an intermediate section that utilizes the scalar motive that was present in the upper woodwinds at mm.116-122 as part of a polyrhythmic texture with triplets against an eighth note-quarter note syncopated figure. This syncopated figure has been present in the horns since m.116, but is made more prevalent with the thickening texture. This advances the motive into a false climax. With the activity occurring, a strong resolution would be expected, however, the texture and dynamics diminish, allowing Busch to continue the evolution process of the development idea. The tonal center is F Major, maintaining the established mediant relationship. The only resolution is the new section starting at m. 141, which has a tonal center of D Major, (a chromatic mediant to F Major). This section (mm.141-146) is different from the previous rapid scalar pattern and has a contour ascending to one last scalar section before the true climax at m.158.

Measures 147-157 are harmonically complex. The harmonic rhythm of the first six bars suggests a different chord every two measures. Busch utilizes modal borrowing, a frequently used convention of the Romantic era. This allows the composer to link the harmonies in order to maintain the chromatic mediant relationship. It resolves in B-flat major, the tonal center from which *A Chant from the Great Plains* originated.

Measure 158 is the clearest statement of the "Song of Spirit" in the work. The harmonies are in the key of B-flat major. Busch reuses textural devices such as the scalar patterns and varied articulations to connect the various statements of A. This section elides with the next statement at m. 180, with a *ritardando* at m. 177. This is the last time in the work that a clear presentation of the theme will be evident, however the remainder of the composition continues to use the source motive.

Measure 180 uses the source motive as a backdrop to the clarinet's quasi-cadenza[65], prolonging the harmonies. This section uses elements from the introduction: thin texture, the same motives, and chromatic-mediant relationships. Originating in B-flat Major, it transitions to D Major at m. 182, followed by D-flat at m. 183 to A-flat at m. 185.

The transition section from mm.193- 222 recycles motives from the previous sections with no clear tonal center until m. 206, where it is clearly in D Major. Busch leads to another section in B-flat Major at m.210, keeping with the mediant relationship. Measures 206-209 utilize a call and response technique to pass around the source motive. This technique will be used until the next tempo change at m. 216. At the anacrusis to m. 216, the English horn restates the music played at the anacrusis of m. 75 with the same tonal center and only slight changes in orchestration. However, only the antecedent phrase is stated; the consequent phrase seen here is a cadential gesture to close the section. There is very little change in harmony, but Busch uses triplet figures (m.220-221) as a means to slow momentum down, signaling the change to a new section. This is identical to the introduction.

The A' section (mm.222-239) begins exactly as the A section until m.233 when there is a change. In the A section earlier in the work, the music needed to evolve to continue the thematic development of the composition. Formally, it needs to do the opposite to close the work. In order to do this, Busch is able to construct a coda that does not evolve, but can progressively close the music without creating completely new music. The third and fourth horns re-state the source motive, which elides into the coda at

[65] This is considered a quasi-cadenza as the solo clarinet does not have the liberty commonly associated with a true cadenza. However, the solo functions with a recitative-like freedom within the measures.

m.240, in the key of B-flat Major where it will finish the work. The coda does not initially use the motives previously presented, but uses passing chords until the final restatement of the source motive, first in the bassoon, followed by the timpani. Busch's symphonic episode ends firmly on a B-flat Major chord, highlighted by dynamic fluctuations to signal the end of the work on a very strong authentic cadence in B-flat Major.

In summary, Busch crafted *A Chant from the Great Plains* in a large arch form. It is tonal and relies frequently on quartal and quintal harmony. Although he employed only a single theme, Busch cleverly manipulated it to its fullest potential. The quality of orchestration is superb, enabling the composer to portray convincingly a program of Omaha Indian life.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NEED FOR A CRITICAL EDITION OF *A CHANT FROM THE GREAT PLAINS*

Historical Significance/Origination

A Chant from the Great Plains is a pivotal work in the wind band repertoire due to its place in history. Although mostly forgotten today, it originally served as a model for skilled composers to see the potential of writing for the wind band.[66] Although the work has not had many performances in the last fifty years, it has the honor of being the initial American commission that started the trend of commissioning for the wind band.[67]

Edwin Franko Goldman (1878-1956), one of the early innovators in the American wind band tradition, noted an absence of original music for the concert band. Goldman believed that "if the band were to survive and be a worthwhile medium for the expression of music, it would have to acquire a repertoire of its own and not depend solely upon transcriptions and arrangements."[68] As a preliminary step to create a body of repertoire, Goldman instituted a wind band composition contest in 1920. The winning composition of this "blind" adjudicated contest was to be awarded $250 and a performance of the work by the Goldman band later in the year. Three judges were chosen for this event: John Phillip Sousa (who later declined due to scheduling issues), Victor Herbert, and Percy Grainger. In May of 1920, it was announced that *A Chant from the Great Plains* had won the contest. In the words of Dr. Donald Lowe, Carl Busch "is representative of a generation of composers who were first to respond to Goldman's challenge and whose

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[66] Goldman, Richard, "Band Music in America" in Paul Henry Lang, *One Hundred Years of Music in America* (New York: G. Shirmer, 1961), 137

[67] Battisti, Frank. *Winds of Change*: *Evolution of the Contemporary Wind Band*. (Galesville, MD: Meredith Music. 2002), 37

[68] Edwin Franko Goldman, letter to Edward N. Waters, September 30, 1946, in Edward N. Waters, *Victor Herbert* (New York: MacMillan Co., 1955), 524-525

pioneering efforts formed a foundation upon which future generations of composers would build."[69]

A Chant from the Great Plains is the only winner of the Goldman contest as it was never repeated. Regardless of the life of this particular competition, this was the initial step in the practice of commissioning from the Goldman band. After *A Chant from the Great Plains*, the Goldman band easily commissioned highly respected composers to write for the wind band, such as Ottorino Respighi (*Huntingtower Ballad*), Arnold Schoenberg (*Theme and Variations for Wind Band, Opus 43a*), and Albert Roussel (*A Glorious Day*).[70] Presently, wind band commissions still continue the practice of commissioning new music.

The decision to name *A Chant from the Great Plains* the winner of the contest was unanimous amongst the adjudicators. Originally submitted anonymously, the quality of the work intrigued both the adjudicators. In a letter to Goldman, Victor Herbert wrote:

> My dear Mr. Goldman,
>
> After having devoted considerable time to looking over the various band compositions submitted to me, I have no hesitation in saying that the work *A Chant from the Great Plains* deserves the prize.
>
> It is the work of a splendid musician, and one who understands artistic band scoring thoroughly. The composer shows originality and ability in regard to form and thematic development
>
> Several other works were quite good and of superior quality.
>
> The contest has proved that a greater interest is being taken in bands and band music than ever before, and also that we are developing a branch of the art that has hitherto been neglected. If a contest of this kind is the means of bringing forth only one composition of real merit and also serves to encourage our American composers, it is doing a real service to the advance of our native music and it should be repeated annually.

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[69] Lowe, Donald. "Carl Busch and the first Goldman Band Composition Contest: A Pivotal Point in the Historical Evolution of Modern Wind Band Repertoire. *Journal of Band Research* 14:1 (Fall 1978). 16

[70] McAnally, J. Kent. "Edwin Franko Goldman, Richard Franko Goldman, and the Goldman Band Professionals and Educators". *Bulletin of Historical Research in Music Education,* 17:1 (September 1995). 37

Yours sincerely,
V. Herbert[71]

Percy Grainger shared a similar opinion in a letter to Goldman:

> After having studied the assemblage of compositions for military band sent in to your prize competition I have no hesitation in considering the work *A chant from the Great Plains* (motto "Dum spiro, spero")[72] as outstandingly deserving of the prize, in my opinion, as this composition not only displays a wider range of creative gifts and a more emotional expressiveness than any of the others, but also treats the subtle tonal palette of the military band with a very sensitive appreciation of its varied possibilities. This seems to me very important, since such a military band as that organized and conducted by you is in many respects the equal, if not the superior, of the best symphonic orchestra for the expression of many phases of modern music and modern emotionality, and it is most desirable that composers shall use their potentialities to the full.
>
> Not that *A Chant from the Great Plains* is the only work of outstanding merit submitted to your contest. The large number of compositions submitted cover, in several cases highly successfully, almost every type and form of music ranging from simple popular march style to complex symphonic poems, and not a few of the composers evince a grasp of military band scoring that is most laudatory.
>
> All that is a most encouraging result of the knowledge that you are spreading of the great and beautiful possibilities of a finely organized modern military band.
>
> Sincerely,
> P. Grainger[73]

Because of the resounding endorsements from such noted composers, *A Chant from the Great Plains* enjoyed success in honor bands and as a staple in the band repertoire in the 1920s. The Goldman Band first performed the work on July 5, 1920 on one of their "On the Green" concerts at Columbia University before an audience of eighteen thousand people.[74] The Sousa Band performed it on their 1922 tour as well.[75] Accomplished music educator Himie Voxman (1912-2011) recalled performing *A Chant*

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[71] Victor Herbert, letter to E.F. Goldman, May 28, 1920, The Royal Library
[72] This is a point of commentary from Grainger and was not included in the score nor is affiliated with the work.
[73] Percy Grainger, letter to E.F. Goldman, [n.d], The Royal Library
[74] Lowe, Goldman contest, 20
[75] Bierley, Paul Edmund. *The Incredible Band of John Philip Sousa*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press. 2006, 335

from the Great Plains in an honor band in Centerville, Iowa while a high school student around 1930.[76]

Although it may be impossible to determine the last date of its performance, colleges and universities have not performed it recently. In an informal survey sent to the general membership of the College Band Directors National Association (CBDNA) on October 22, 2011, two questions were posed:

1.) Have you studied and/or conducted *A Chant from the Great Plains*?

2.) Have you programmed it (and when)?

Of the entire CBDNA constituency, twenty-seven members responded and all stated that they had not seen nor conducted the work. Sixteen members stated that they were not aware of the work, six members replied that while they heard of the work historically, they had not heard it performed. Five members stated that they have not performed the work, but did not state whether they had studied it before.

Fading into Obscurity: What happened?

Although there is no clear definitive answer, various events in band and American history may be examined to surmise possible reasons for its eventual disappearance. The philosophical split between the proponents of the wind ensemble and symphonic band may have had a role in the fading of its popularity. Due to the various changes in nomenclature of the band, certain works may have been excluded due to the creation of new music or because of the traditional practice of transcriptions.[77] *A Chant for the Great Plains* was the product of a search for quality original repertoire, which

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[76] Correspondence with Myron Welch via email, Nov. 20, 2011

[77] Cardany, Brian. *Attitudes Toward Repertoire and the Band Experience Among Participants in Elite University Wind Band Programs*. DMA, diss., Arizona State University. 2006. 2

eventually became the mantra of Frederick Fennell's wind ensemble concept in 1952. Proponents of the symphonic band, however, tended to use repertoire to serve other objectives, such as entertaining an audience or fostering a sense of community.[78] It may be that the work was caught in between these philosophical camps and could not identify itself as a symphonic band work with wind ensemble ideals. The wind ensemble is typically a smaller ensemble with one player per part (with some exceptions) and is focused on the intent of the composer, while the symphonic band tends to be a larger ensemble with multiple players per part and adheres to the will of the conductor in regards to instrumentation. The symphonic band also tends to look toward transcriptions as the bulk of its primary repertoire and the wind ensemble seeks to find new works. Thus, when looking at this new work that was often performed by very large ensembles, it would be clear to see how one would get confused on its intended medium. The expansion of new literature for the wind ensemble medium may have also led to the exclusion of *A Chant from the Great Plains* from frequently performed repertoire.

Instrumentation issues may play a role in the lack of frequency of performances in the contemporary era. Some of the instrument choices Busch used are outdated, including the use of the D-flat piccolo and horn parts in E-flat. It should be noted that it is not because of these changes that the work fell into obscurity, however, it is an authentic look of the instrumentation practices that were in use of that era. There is a vital harp part, which is an instrument that is not readily available in many band programs. These instrumentation choices, while popular in the professional band era of the early 1900s, would most likely deter current conductors from performing the work if those

[78] Goldman, R.F. *The Wind Band*. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1962), 50

instruments were unavailable or the ensemble personnel did not know how to adjust accordingly.

Over time, *A Chant from the Great Plains* was forgotten and relegated to a citation in band history. Although no definitive answer may ever be reached, evidence shows that *A Chant from the Great Plains* was lost to the general wind band community even when the work was still viable. Dr. Lowe stated in an interview that while compiling his doctoral dissertation, he could not locate a score or parts to this work[79]. If the original printing of the piece was limited, the difficulty in obtaining performance materials may have doomed it to obscurity. Considering all the previous evidence, a critical edition of *A Chant of the Great Plains* for the modern wind band is warranted.

The necessity of creating a critical edition of *A Chant from the Great Plains*

Due to the infrequency of performances, the work is permanently out of print. While corresponding with the Carl Fischer publishing company, the company did not have a catalog number assigned in their databases to *A Chant from the Great Plains*. Due to copyright law, it is now considered in public domain.[80]

In keeping with the spirit of the Goldman Band (the original commissioning party), it would be fitting that a new edition of *A Chant from the Great Plains* be created. The Goldman Band, while commissioning new music, was also responsible for the restoration of numerous works that had been long forgotten.[81] It would be appropriate

[79] Interview with Donald Lowe, March 23, 2012
[80] Since the work was published prior to 1923, and Busch had no heirs, this work falls under the category of public domain as it is no longer under copyright protection.
[81] McAnally, 32

that the work that started the commissioning project be treated with the same honor as Goldman would have bestowed upon forgotten works of that era.

A Chant from the Great Plains is an important contribution to the canon of musical literature due to its historical status. Although a professional recording of the work is not available, this should not inhibit the band community from trying to replicate the sounds as intended by Busch. Performing this work may be a useful tool in understanding performance practices and stylistic approaches of band music from this era. The instrumentation choices used by Busch are representative of that time period and most of the instruments are still in use. There will need to be some modifications and adjustments made due to the current practices of ensembles. For example, the critical edition would incorporate the necessary adjustments to reproduce the composer's original intent with the instruments in use today, which will be covered in the following sections.

Suggestions for the Critical Edition

The goal of a critical edition must be to clarify any ambiguity on the part of the composer so that the written music would represent the composer's intent. Considering the time period, major instrument substitutions would not be necessary. However, certain parts should be re-written to accommodate practices of today. These parts are:

1) Piccolo in D-flat should be re-written to Piccolo in C
2) Clarinet parts should be re-labeled to 1st, 2nd and 3rd part with solos noted
3) B-flat Cornet and trumpet parts should be re-labeled to B-flat cornet 1, 2, and 3
4) Horn in E-flat parts should be re-written to Horn in F
5) Baritones should be re-labeled to euphoniums as those are mostly in use
6) Basses should be specified (tuba and string bass part)

Although seemingly minor, these changes would greatly improve the accessibility of the work for modern ensembles. As D-flat piccolos are no longer made, writing the

part in C is essential and the tiny distraction in timbre is not noteworthy. The B-flat cornet parts are labeled as a solo part with two other cornet parts. Since at no time in the work are there more than three lines of music in the cornet part, it would make more sense to create a 1st, 2nd, and 3rd B-flat Cornet part with solo lines noted in text. Busch himself stated that he was not staunch on the exact instrumentation and acquiesced to the needs of the ensemble.[82]

The B-flat clarinet parts in *A Chant from the Great Plains* are labeled Solo B-flat clarinet, 1st B-flat clarinet, 2nd B-flat clarinet, and 3rd B-flat clarinet. There is no difference in the Solo and 1st B-flat clarinet parts with the exception of the sporadic solos throughout the work. It would be more in keeping with modern practice to combine the parts into one sheet and label the solo part to let the performer know of its role in the work. Other alignments with modern practice would include the transposition of E-flat horn parts to F. Although transposing in E-flat is not an uncommon practice for collegiate or professional horn players, it is not common in modern school band repertoire. Thus, not having the parts in F may exclude the work from consideration by secondary school ensembles. It would also be appropriate to change the baritone parts and re-label them as euphonium as that is the most widely used instrument in the modern wind band. Although the timbre of the euphonium is distinct from the baritone horn, the adjustment would be in keeping with Busch's practical philosophy. Baritone horns are few and far between in the United States, whereas euphoniums are ubiquitous. By making these slight accommodations, the work may be more appealing to secondary school ensembles.

Assigning the bass parts will also be necessary. Common practice in early 1900s was to assign a bass part that was nonspecific. It was common to have a tuba in the

[82] Busch, Chant, 105

ensemble, as it extended from the previous brass band tradition. Since there is now a clear distinct notation between brass (tuba) and string bass, the adjustment to the label would be appropriate as to align with modern concert music.

In addition to these changes, formatting of the score layout should be addressed as well. The measures should all be numbered individually to clarify the layout of the score. Since Busch's original rehearsal numbers represent formal division, and these divisions are irregular, measure numbers would provide a secondary option to improve the efficiency of rehearsals.

In Busch's own analysis of *A Chant from the Great Plains* that was printed in *Etude* magazine, he provides recommendations for the performance of the work that are not present in the score.[83] This includes various fluctuations in tempo, dynamics, and balance. It would be helpful if those notes were added to the score to best realize Busch's compositional choices. There are not any misprints in the score, and there does not seem to be any documentation to show that any corrections would need to be made. Any editorial marks that are not based on evidence given by Busch should be notated in the style of the Bärenreiter scores, using a serif font that shows it was done by the editor and not in the original score.

Because of the few resources available, the critical edition should include as much information as possible from every limited resource about the work in its program notes. It should include a reprint of Busch's article *A Chant from the Great Plain-A Symphonic Episode* from the February 1926 edition of *Etude* magazine. It should also include a narrative of the history of the work and the significance it has on the history of the wind band, as well as a biography of Carl Busch. There should be information about the

[83] Ibid, 105

"Funeral Song, No.52" as well, as it would help the conductor understand the phrasing and identify the theme of the work.

For those who wish to undertake a performance of the work using the original materials, the following is a recommendation of the instrumental forces most suitable for a balanced presentation. The recommendation would be:

- two flutes in C and one piccolo in C,
- two oboes and one English horn,
- two bassoons,
- one E-flat clarinet, six B-flat clarinets, one optional alto clarinet, one bass clarinet,
- one soprano saxophone, one alto saxophone, one tenor saxophone, one baritone saxophone,
- five trumpets (three cornet parts and two trumpet parts),
- four horns in F,
- three trombones,
- two euphoniums,
- one tuba, one string bass,
- one pair of timpani (F and B-flat), one snare and bass drum, one pair of crash cymbals, one triangle
- one harp

This instrumentation provides ample personnel to cover every part without a concern as to whether any part will be present at any time during the performance.

While one player on each B-flat clarinet part would work as there are no divisi sections, two or three would create the richer sonority characteristic of the era and Busch's compositional voice. A more appropriate choice would be two 1st B-flat clarinets, three 2nd B-flat clarinets, and four 3rd B-flat clarinets. This would provide a traditional pyramid balance scheme where there are more players on the lower parts than the higher parts. As common practice today, it would be acceptable to utilize the widely used B-flat trumpet on all parts (including cornet) as it is more readily available than cornets. For authenticity purposes, it would acceptable to use the suggested cornets for those timbral choices, as the darker timbre could counterbalance the brighter timbre of the trumpet. The saxophones should not be doubled as their material is of secondary

importance, largely associated with atmosphere. Doubling of the flute part would ensure that they would be audible through any *tutti* texture, and would not be overpowered by the louder instruments. The euphoniums have split parts, so there will need to be two performers. The remainder of the ensemble not mentioned may remain one on a part.

Although Busch stated the instrumentation was flexible, and he was able to conduct the work successfully with over 500 musicians, a more modestly sized ensemble of forty to forty-two musicians is recommended. Based on the details of the score, the recommended instrumentation should result in a clear, balanced and satisfying performance.

Summary

Carl Busch was a well-respected composer whose contribution to the wind band medium was of great value. His contributions to music and music education are evident in *A Chant from the Great Plains*. It is an authentic artifact from the beginning of the public school band era and is a prime example of Romantic compositional conventions which were not readily available for the medium in this time period. This offers young musicians an opportunity to enhance their musicianship and practical experience by actually performing original music rather than a transcription. A critical modern edition would make this work easily accessible to any ensemble eager to embrace a work of musical, cultural, and historical value.

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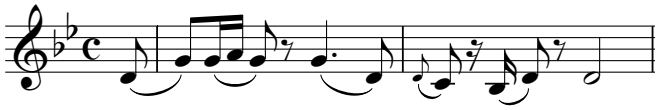
APPENDIX

"*A Chant from the Great Plains* by Carl Busch"

Before attempting an analysis of the work I shall quote verbatim the descriptive notes which appear on the band score: "This Symphonic Episode has been inspired by an Indian scene from an outdoor pageant, illustrating early life in the West. The opening measures recall a quiet summer's day in the village with the children engaged in playful pastime and the old men standing as interested, amused spectators. Suddenly the chanting of victorious braves returning from war bringing with them their dead and wounded is wafted in the village from afar. Their gradual approach to the village takes place in form of a solemn procession in the course of which they pass on the burial ground. Then the pastoral life, interrupted and brought to a halt by the process, is once more taken up. The principal motive employed for this gradual development of this Symphonic Episode is an idealization of a theme from Alice C. Fletcher's *A Study of Omaha Indian Music*."
While the instrumentation is for full band, there are a few instruments [that] may be omitted, if necessary, without seriously impairing the total results—for example, the alto and bass clarinets are not found in every High School band. In case the English horn (which, with its charm of color, is most important) cannot be secured, the part being cued for such purpose.
The lengthy introductory matter extending practically to Figure 6 is the most difficult, involving constant change of time and rhythm. It is meant principally to create atmosphere and, at the same time, to prepare, by fragmentary references, for the complete theme.
Such references occur in horn (measures 5 and 6), in solo cornet:

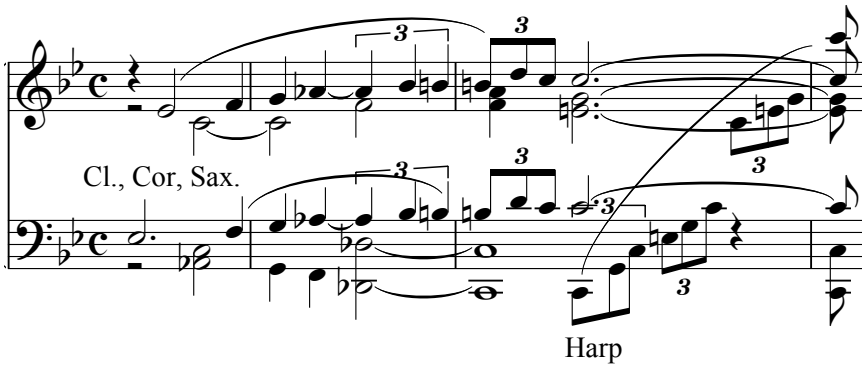
Ex. 1 Solo Cornet



At the seventh measure preceding Figure 3, again in oboe and flute at the second measure after Fig. 3, and the third measures after 4, in cornets and baritones at Figure 5, and finally in solo cornet at the third measure preceding Fig. 6. All these thematic suggestions must be presented with extreme clearness.

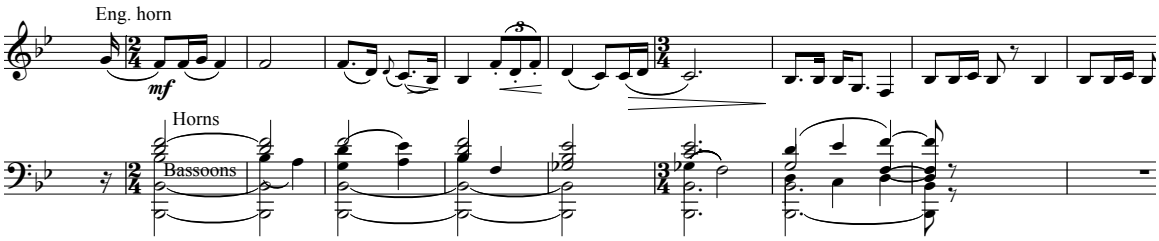
The first section up to Fig. 1 must be kept in strict tempo, but a certain freedom of movement from 1 to 3 would be interesting and would afford individual treatment. Measures such as:

Ex.2



must be given special attention in order to obtain satisfactory ensemble.
At Fig. 3 the movement becomes light and carefree (the introduction of the triangle being important) and this mood may well be continued up to Fig. 5. Here a slight *accelerando* and *crescendo* is in order, concluding with a strong outburst in octaves and followed in turn by a *diminuendo* and *ritardando* in which the solo cornet is heard in the final suggestion of the theme.
Beginning at Fig. 6, the entire theme is now introduced by the English horn, and this solo should be played in a chanting manner. Something of the correct mood will be felt, I think, when noticing the responses in flute and clarinet later on. The supporting harmony must at all times be subdued (*piano*) so as to give the English horn opportunity for full expression.

Ex. 3



Arriving at the 2/4 time (the third measure after Fig. 7) there is an increase in the instrumentation, the theme being taken by the 1st B-flat clarinet, also clarinet and horn in octaves. The development proper begins at the succeeding 2/4 movement (nine measures after Fig. 11. This section will require much study; it contains a liberal use of imitation and moves freely into distant keys, but returns to the principal key of B-flat major at Fig. 11.

The semi-chromatic runs in thirty-second notes by flute, piccolo and clarinets, in the early part of this section, must be practiced slowly at first until they can be performed with certainty and smoothness. This applies to the runs in imitation at Fig. 10. Whenever such rhythms as or occur, it signifies matter of importance which must be brought out clearly.

In the six measures preceding Fig. 10 the inner voices (oboe, 1st clarinet, baritone) must stand out prominently. From Fig. 10 to Fig. 11 a gradual increase from *mf* to *ff* must be worked out carefully, but sufficient reserve power must be retained to enable the band to attain at Fig. 12 a mighty *fff*. If great care is not exercised in the graduation of this crescendo the climax will be reached long before Fig. 12.

From Figs. 11 and 12 the entire band plays in a sustained and stately manner, the downward moving trumpets, answered by the upward moving horns, penetrating through the tonal mass. A slight *ritardando* in the three measures preceding Fig. 12 makes the climax more telling. Beginning at Fig. 12, the trumpets and horns answer each other with force and determination, while the woodwinds announce a theme somewhat similar to the one noted just before and after Fig. 4.

At Fig. 13 (fourth measure) fragments of the theme appear in the baritones, answered by the trumpets, while further on it appears in the woodwinds and is answered by three muted cornets. Two measures for oboe lead to a quiet pastoral passage in D major, in which woodwind and horns take turns in answering each other. Throughout this entire section (from Fig. 13 to seventh measure after 14) the harmonic support must be held down so that the various solo voices may be heard distinctly.

This section is followed by a few measures of the English horn solo leading to Fig. 15, where a return is made to the quiet opening phrase of the introduction. The coda follows at Fig. 16. This is built over an organ point on B-flat, and care must be taken to have all inner voices playing the quarter note figures brought out clearly. This applies also to the bassoons and kettledrums in the fourth and third measures from the close.

While this band composition offers a number of problems in solo and ensemble, they are not too great for a high school band of the proper size to master if patiently rehearsed by a competent conductor. That was my impression after conducting the work with but a few rehearsals at the National High School Orchestra and Band Camp at Interlochen, Michigan, last summer. I experienced a real thrill at hearing my work played so admirably by those enthusiastic young players.[84]

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[84] Busch, Chant, 105