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Music of the Divine: Interweaving Threads Connecting Contemporary Chant-Based Piano Repertoire

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MUSIC OF THE DIVINE: INTERWEAVING THREADS CONNECTING CONTEMPORARY CHANT-BASED PIANO REPERTOIRE

by

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MUSIC OF THE DIVINE: INTERWEAVING THREADS

CONNECTING CONTEMPORARY CHANT-BASED PIANO REPERTOIRE

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The purpose of this document is to prove chant remains an important source of inspiration among living composers, and, despite the number of piano works already incorporating chant, composers today are still finding unique ways to include chant in their music. To achieve this objective, representative works have been selected for research and analysis for four of the major chant traditions. Connor Chee's *The Navajo Piano*, Victoria Bond's *Illuminations on Byzantine Chant*, and Hayes Biggs' *E.M. am Flügel: Poem-Étude for Piano Solo*, though the chants from which they are inspired are diverse in concept and style, they share many similarities, even in each composer's pursuit of different goals. As such, this document will also be presenting connections in these works' style characteristics and compositional techniques within this diverse corner of the chant-based piano literature.

This paper will begin by defining the scope of music which is considered for this document's purposes to be chant-based, placing it in the context of composers inspired by music of the past. Then, there will be an overview of some of the composers whose music has already been discussed in the literature. The following chapters will each discuss the three works, giving some theoretical and historical information on that particular chant tradition with the exception of Gregorian chant as it is already studied

within the music degree, analyzing how each composer utilized the chant in their music, and comparing each work with the previous works discussed. The concluding chapter includes a brief summary of the previous chapters and then mentions a number of chant-based pieces that have been discussed very little, if at all, in the literature. It is the hope of the author to, in addition to contributing to the knowledge of chant-based piano literature, inspire students, teachers, performers, and researchers to take an interest in this underplayed music.

DEDICATION

To my professors, without whose time, expertise, patience, and support, these years and this project would not be a reality for me.

To my parents, who have supported me throughout this long process in invaluable ways.

To my partner, for putting up with the endless hours of work and for being a consistent source of joy and calmness.

To the composers, for their kind messages, helpful conversations, and the music which has made for such an interesting journey.

To my employers, without whom this dream would have been much more difficult to achieve, financially and emotionally.

To my friends, for their daily words of encouragement and assurance.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Composers often find the past a source of inspiration for their music. This can take on many different forms, some of which are more audible than others. Sometimes composers simply enjoy a style or a sound from the past. For instance, Johannes Brahms, though his life is firmly within the bounds of the Romantic Era, a musical period that was moving away from the formality of the Classical Era, still composed several sonatas, symphonies, and string chamber works. Some composers were directly influenced by ideas in past music. Consider the case of Beethoven. Though he is considered the bridge between the Classical and Romantic eras of music, his Piano Sonata in A-flat major, Op. 110 contains two fugues, which were of course popular during the Baroque Era.

Another example of composers finding inspiration in music of the past include Chopin's mazurkas, a type of dance that originated in Poland, where Chopin was born. Yet another work of Chopin's that looks to the past is his theme and variations on "Là ci darem la mano," a duet originally from Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni*. Indeed, composers often use the theme and variation model when using music they did not originally compose. Both Ravel and Debussy composed suites that look back to the Baroque Era—*Le Tombeau de Couperin* in the former's case and *Pour le Piano* and *Suite Bergamesque* in the latter's case. Also, Hindemith's *Ludus Tonalis*, with its construction consisting of a prelude followed by fugues and interludes before concluding with a postlude, looks directly back to The Well-Tempered Clavier by Johann

Sebastian Bach. The Well-Tempered Clavier also likely has precursors and inspired several pieces afterwards. The set of preludes and fugues work their way through all 24 major and minor keys. Before that work, a few composers had already composed works accomplishing the same feat. Giacomo Gorzanis is perhaps the earliest known example in about 1567. This early composer composed 12 settings of the *passamezzo antico* and the *passamezzo moderno*, with intermittent *saltarelli*, in each of the 24 keys.[1] Bach's mammoth work was even modeled after Johann Caspar Ferdinand Fischer's *Ariadne musica*, a set of preludes and fugues for organ that are composed in different tonalities and modalities, though not actually in all 24 major and minor keys.[2] Since Bach's work, also, there have been several composers who have chosen to write sets of pieces in all 12 major and/or minor keys. Some of the more well-known works include Chopin's op. 28 set of preludes, Alkan's op. 35 and op. 39 sets of piano etudes, Alkan's op. 63 set of Esquisses, the combination of Liszt's and Lyapunov's Transcendental Etudes, Rachmaninoff's preludes (op. 3/2, op. 23, and op. 32), and Shostakovich's op. 34 preludes as well as his op. 87 set of preludes and fugues.

Even composers still alive today are finding sources of inspiration in the music of past composers. Augusta Read Thomas wrote each of her *Six Piano Etudes* in homage to a different 20th or 21st century composer. In addition, each etude is intended to have characteristics of each of these composers' styles. For instance, the second etude in the

[1] Michele Carreca, "Giacomo Gorzanis: Solo Lute Music," Early Music Review, July 2, 2018, accessed October 18, 2022, https://earlymusicreview.com/giacomo-gorzanis-solo-lute-music/.
[2] This set can be found at: http://vmirror.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/2/22/IMSLP284770-PMLP45354-Fischer,_J.C._Preludes_and_Fugues_-Ariadne_Musica_organaedum-.pdf.

set, “Fire Waltz,” is in homage to Bartok, a composer who was previously inspired by the folk music of his own native country of Hungary.[3] In the etude, she makes brief allusions to the octatonic scale and the whole tone scale and uses pitch class sets not unlike how Bartok would use his X, Y, and Z cells.

A subset of these works inspired by the past, then, are works that are inspired by chant. While that is quite a niche subject, there is no shortage of music that this describes, especially considering the multitude of ways this can be defined. For this document’s purposes, chant-based music is any work in which a composer used a pre-composed chant as source material. It is well-established that chant has inspired some of the music of past composers. Often, musical ideas will move in and out of style. Concepts such as the fugue and dodecaphony, for instance, have seen varying degrees of use since their conception, but neither musical concept is seen in the music of living composers as much as in the past. As this document intends to prove, chant remains an important well-spring of musical material from which living composers find inspiration for their new works, and it’s not showing signs of letting up. Following an overview of chant-based piano music written by past composers, this document is going to analyze and compare works that each use a different chant tradition to show the diversity that can be found among these works, even by composers still composing at the time of writing this document. Connor Chee’s *The Navajo Piano* uses Native American chant, Victoria Bond’s *Illuminations on Byzantine Chant* will serve as a work that uses both

[3] Augusta Read Thomas, *Six Piano Etudes* (New York City: G. Schirmer, 2006), Composer’s Notes.

Orthodox and Jewish chant, and Hayes Biggs' *E.M. am Flügel: Poem-Étude for Piano Solo* employs Roman Catholic chant. Connor Chee's and Victoria Bond's works also include characteristics of their respective chant traditions, particularly when pre-composed chant is not being employed at the time. Hayes Biggs, however, wrote his work in such a way so that the resulting music does not sound like or resemble the original chant.

Despite each of these pieces coming from a different chant tradition, they have interweaving threads that connect them. The Byzantine, Jewish, and Gregorian chants all share a rich and divergent history, accounting for some of their respective pieces' similarities. Connor was largely seeking to preserve the historical musical traditions of his ancestors, so much of his music is largely harmonized and accompanied chants that were sung to him by his father and grandfather. All three pieces use cyclic elements, but none as much as Victoria Bond, whose treatment of the chants she uses is much like how classical era composers wrote development sections in their sonatas and symphonies. Hayes Biggs was seeking to reconcile musical extremes, though a theme of reconciliation can also be seen in Bond's music. This discussion will shed light on these connections while also highlighting important differences. It is also among the goals of this document to encourage performers to learn these works as well as to motivate teachers to branch outside of the traditional repertoire and find an interest in underplayed music with unique sources of inspiration.

CHAPTER 2: OVERVIEW OF THE OEUVRE OF CHANT-BASED PIANO MUSIC

A fair amount of the chant-based piano repertoire can be easily summed up as using the infamous Dies Irae theme for its dark, brooding sound and its recollection of death, a topic on which many composers have spent a sizeable amount of time thinking and writing. Perhaps the two most famous examples of this are Franz Liszt's *Totentanz*, S. 126[4] and Sergei Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, Op. 43,[5] both of which are written for piano solo and orchestra. Liszt's use of the theme was so effective that Mussorgsky wrote in a letter: "That mystical music picture, the 'Danse Macabre,' in the form of variations on the theme of 'Dies Irae,' could only have come from the brain of a daring European like Liszt—in it he has shown the true artistic relations between the piano and the orchestra. The conception is so simple: it is a set of variations and (apparently) nothing more, but I would compare it to Repin's picture 'Bourlaky'—that, too is a group of portraits, and at first sight, nothing more." Indeed, Liszt's use of the 'Dies Irae' theme inspired Mussorgsky to include the same theme in his own *Songs and Dances of Death*.[6] Figure 2.1 shows the original Dies Irae chant and figure 2.2 shows Liszt's theme derived from the plainchant, which is then used for a number of variations.

[4] Robin Gregory, "Dies Irae." *Music & Letters* 34, no. 2 (April 1953): 136, accessed September 28, 2022, https://www.jstor.org/stable/730837.
[5] Ibid., 138.
[6] Ibid., 136.

Figure 2.1. Dies Irae Plainchant[7]

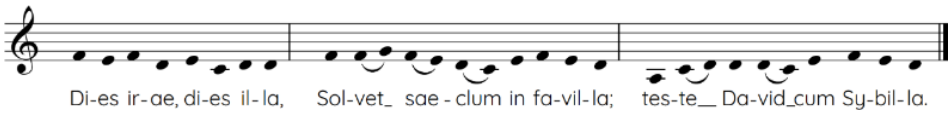
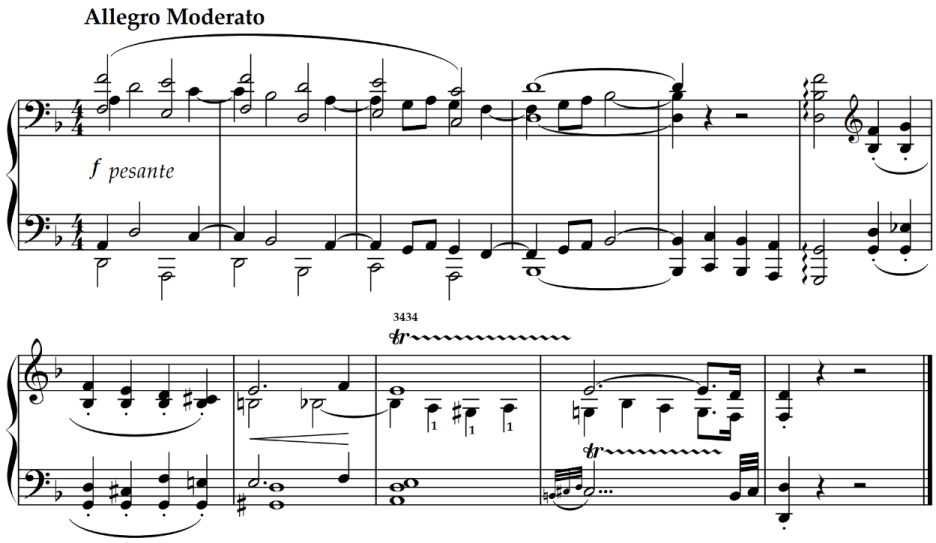


Figure 2.2. Liszt Totentanz Solo Piano Theme[8]



Concerning Rachmaninoff's Paganini variations, the composer wrote that the 'Dies Irae' theme is meant to represent an evil spirit; and the work, as a whole, is intended to conjure up the legend of Paganini, who was said to have sold his soul to the devil in exchange for great technical prowess on the violin. Indeed, Rachmaninoff enjoyed this theme so much that he included it in his Tone Poem (Op. 29), his Third Symphony, and in his Symphonic Dances (Op. 45).[9] Another work for piano that includes the theme is Ronald Stevenson's *Passacaglia on DSCH*, a work which first displays the theme in the 275th variation.[10] The piece culminates in a fugue, in which the DSCH

[7] Malcolm Boyd, "'Dies Irae': Some Recent Manifestations." *Music & Letters* 49, no. 4 (Oct. 1968): 347, accessed October 1, 2022, https://www.jstor.org/stable/732291.
[8] Franz Liszt, *Totentanz, Sz. 126*, (Leipzig: C.F.W. Siegel, n.d. [1901]), IMSLP. IMSLP669858-PMLP35285-Liszt_Totentanz.pdf, pg 5.
[9] Gregory, 138.
[10] Boyd, 352.

theme, the 'Dies Irae' theme, and the BACH theme occur simultaneously.[11] Additionally, Kaikhosru Sorabji, who is known for his lengthy and horrendously difficult piano music, composed at least two works using the theme—his *Variations upon 'Dies Irae'* and his *Sequentia cyclica*. In many works, also, there appears the opening four notes of the chant; however, in those cases, it is almost always impossible to tell whether the melodic association was deliberate or just coincidence, such as in Medtner's Piano Quintet.[12]

From the remaining chant-based piano repertoire, there are two broad ways of dividing up the works based on its use of chant. On the one hand, the music can be divided up by the tradition from which the chant comes. Much, if not most, of the major chant-based piano repertoire comes from four chant traditions—Native American, Greek or Russian Orthodox, Jewish, and Roman Catholic. In addition to the tradition from which the chant is sourced, there are a couple of different ways this chant is generally used. A composer may use a pre-composed chant directly in their music, such as the ones briefly discussed above. A composer may also choose not to use a chant directly, but instead to employ stylistic characteristics of a chant tradition, which may or may not actually sound chant-like in the finished product.

For instance, Shostakovich makes use of Jewish chant characteristics in some of his works. The most obvious examples of this come from his song cycle *From Jewish Folk Poetry*, Op. 79. This is a work of similar construction to Brahms's *Liebeslieder Waltzes* or

[11] Ibid., 353.
[12] Ibid., 356.

Ned Rorem's *Evidence of Things Not Seen*. Shostakovich composed the work for soprano, contralto, tenor, and piano (a later version for orchestra also exists).

Shostakovich first encountered Jewish music when one of his pupils, Venyamin Fleishman, was working on an orchestration of the opera *Rothschild's Violin*. Around the same time, Shostakovich also wrote his Piano Trio in E Minor, Op. 67, which also contains examples of Jewish chant characteristics.[13] The elements that manifest themselves in Shostakovich's music come from the Jewish modes, particularly the Freigish mode, also know as Ahava Rabbah (described by Joachim Braun as the Phrygian mode with a raised third degree) and the Ukrainian Dorian mode (the Dorian mode, but with a raised fourth degree), the descending *iambic prime* motif (a type of sequential series of two-note slurs), and the klezmer um-pa style accompaniment over a pedal point in the bass.[14]

In the case of the Russian composer's op. 79 song cycle, most of these elements are evident from the very beginning. The cycle opens with a duet for soprano, contralto, and piano entitled "Lament for a Dead Infant." The introduction in the piano (shown in figure 2.3) features the augmented second and descending half step resolution that is characteristic of the Freigish mode. It also features the um-pa style accompaniment over an F-sharp pedal point in the first two measures.

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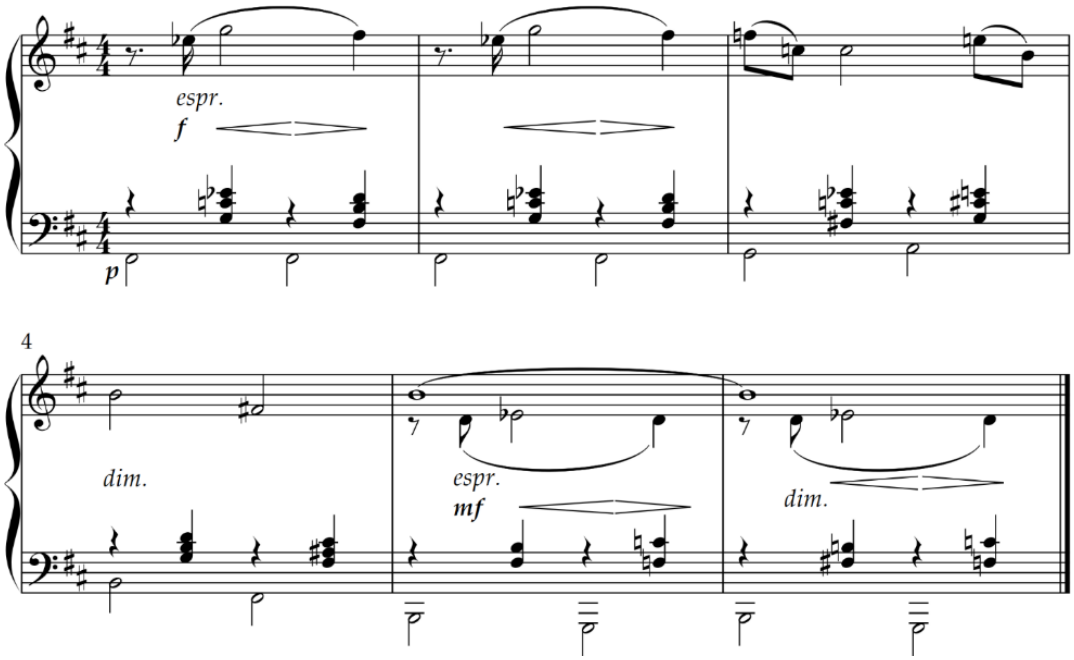
[13] Joachim Braun, "The Double Meaning of Jewish Elements in Dmitri Shostakovich's Music." *The Musical Quarterly* 71, no. 1 (1985): 69, accessed October 1, 2022, https://www.jstor.org/stable/948173.
[14] Ibid., 72.

Figure 2.3. Piano Introduction to Shostakovich's Lament for a Dead Infant[15]



While the *iambic prime* motif is also featured throughout this cycle of songs, it is particularly evident in the prelude from his Prelude and Fugue No. 8 in F-sharp minor, Op. 87 (see figure 2.4). The motif can perhaps be best described as a series of quick two-note slurs, each successively beginning on the final note of the previous two-note slur in a generally descending pattern. Sometimes, the motif is short and repeated multiple times like in measures 240 through 244 in the final movement of the Piano Trio in E Minor, Op. 67. Jewish elements also occur in nos. 14 (E-flat Minor), 16 (B-flat Minor), 17 (A-flat major), 19 (E-flat major), and especially 24 (D Minor). In addition to Jewish chant,

[15] Dmitri Shostakovich, "From Jewish Folk Poetry: Song Cycle for Soprano, Contralto and Tenor with Piano Accompaniment, Op. 79," in *New Collected Works*, IXth Series: Chamber Compositions for Voice and Songs, Vol. 91, Edited by Manashir Iakubov (Moscow: DSCH Publishers, 2010), 7.

Shostakovich also uses characteristics of Russian Orthodox chant in Prelude and Fugue in C Minor of the same op. 87 set.[16]

Figure 2.4. Shostakovich's Prelude in F-sharp Minor, op. 87, mm 19-28[17]

Other works that belong in this vein of chant-based piano repertoire include Sergei Rachmaninoff's Suite for Two Pianos, Op. 5. The final movement uses an Easter chant from the Russian Orthodox tradition.[18] Additionally, it is known that Messiaen found chant from his Catholic tradition to be a great source of inspiration for his music.[19] For instance, the "Theme of the Star and of the Cross" used in nos. 2 and 7 of his *Vingt Regards sur L'Enfant Jésus* is monophonic and very chant-like, even though it is composed in mode seven of his Modes of Limited Transposition.[20] Another instance of Messiaen using chant, this time incorporating pre-composed chant into the same set of pieces is in No. 10, entitled "Regard de l'Esprit de joie." The piece opens with a diminished version of "Haec dies" from the *Liber Usualis*. The original chant is modal;

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[16] Denis B. Plutanov, "Dmitry Shostakovich's Twenty-Four Preludes and Fugues, Op. 87: An Analysis and Critical Evaluation of the Printed Edition Based on the Composer's Recorded Performance." (DMA doc., University of Nebraska-Lincoln, May 2010), 24, Accessed October 1, 2022. https://www.proquest.com/docview/231277585?parentSessionId=ChkObTaeCMauM0xwDWvqMDFBaze6VpTzWZumy9Z0kko%3D&accountid=8116.

[17] Dmitri Shostakovich, "Prelude and Fugue in F-sharp Minor, Op. 87," in *24 Preludes and Fugues* (New York: Sikorski, 1955), 47.

[18] Paul Barnes, Piano Lesson.

[19] Karol Sue Reddington, "The Musical Language of Olivier Messiaen in Vingt Regards sur L'Enfant-Jésus." Fine Arts International Journal 14, no. 1 (Srinakharinwirot University, June 2010): 53, accessed October 10, 2022, https://archive.ccwatershed.org/media/pdfs/15/06/04/14-06-15_0.pdf.

[20] Heekyung Choi, "The Theme of God: A Musical and Theological Discussion Of Olivier Messiaen's Vingt regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus." (DMA diss., University of Kansas, 2017), 21, Accessed October 9, 2022. https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/bitstream/handle/1808/25235/Choi_ku_0099D_15371_DATA_1.pdf?sequence=1.

however, Messiaen uses the same contour but with smaller individual intervals.[21] Compare figures 2.5 and 2.6 paying particular attention to the contour of the melodies and the intervallic content.

Figure 2.5. Haec dies from Liber Usualis[22]

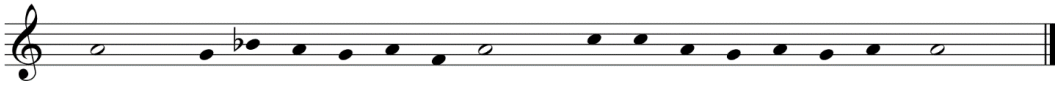
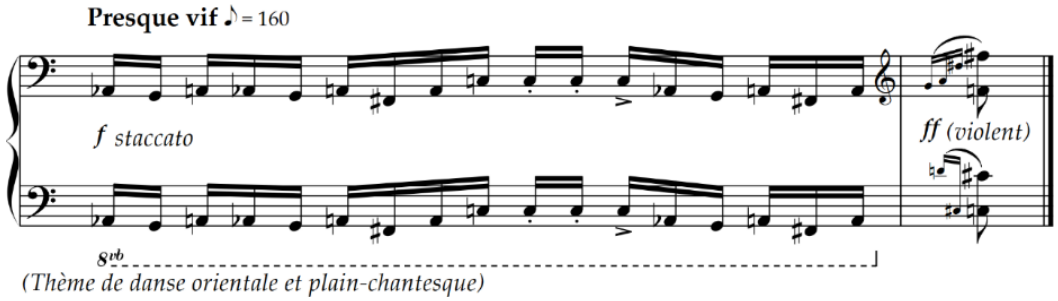


Figure 2.6. Regard de l'Esprit de joie from Vingt Regards..., mm. 1-2



Another particularly interesting composer who included Gregorian chant in his music is Norman Dello Joio. His Piano Sonata No. 3, a work in four movements, begins with a theme and variations, the theme of which comes out of the Gregorian Mass of the Angels. This is the same theme, in fact, that he used in his *Variations, Chaconne, and Finale for Symphony Orchestra*. Indeed, the two pieces are so similar that it easily leads one to the conclusion that the sonata was built from the orchestral work, though the two pieces do give off very different airs.[23] The section of the Gregorian Mass used for

[21] Ibid., 17.
[22] Ibid., 17.
[23] Emerson Meyers, "Music Reviews: Reviewed Works: Variations, Chaconne, and Finale for Symphony Orchestra by Norman Dello Joio; Piano Sonata No. 3 by Norman Dello Joio," ed. Lee Fairley and Frank C. Campbell. *Notes* 8, no. 1 (Music Library Association, December 1950): 123, accessed October 10, 2022. https://www.jstor.org/stable/890280.

these works is the Kyrie.[24] A close analysis of the theme of the sonata movement with the original chant shows that the section of the chant used is heard three times in the theme, the final example shared between both hands and missing the third measure, but with an extended ending. Additionally, Dello Joio used the beginning of the chant as a motif woven throughout the polyphonic texture.

Figure 2.7. Gregorian Kyrie[25]

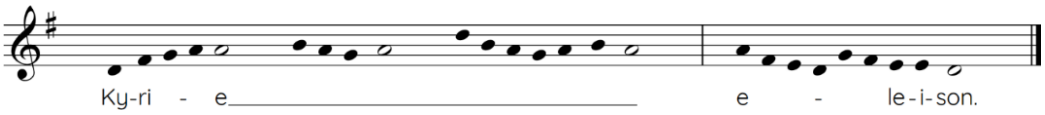
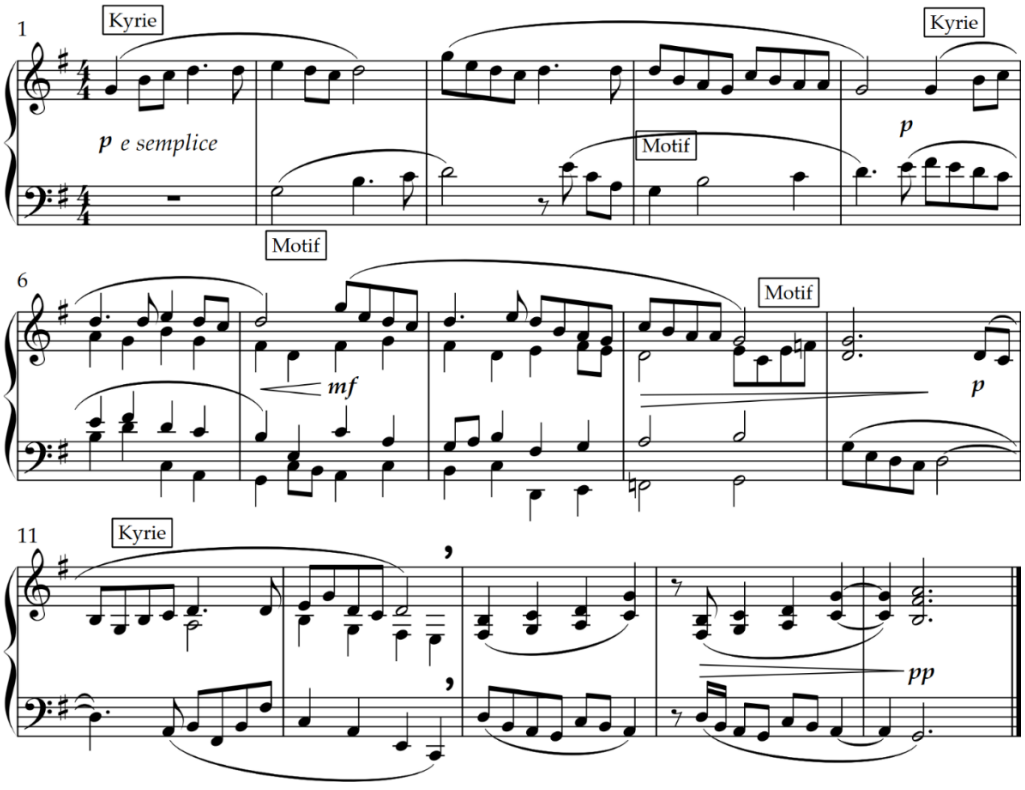


Figure 2.8. Theme from Piano Sonata No. 3 by Dello Joio[26]



[24] Maurice Hinson, "The Solo Piano Music of Norman Dello Joio." *American Music Teacher* 19, no. 3 (January 1970): 34, accessed October 11, 2022. https://www.jstor.org/stable/43557363.
[25] "Mass VIII (Missa de Angelis)," Corpus Christi Waterhsed, accessed October 11, 2022, https://archive.ccwatershed.org/media/pdfs/15/06/04/14-06-15_0.pdf.
[26] Norman Dello Joio, *Piano Sonata No. 3* (New York: Carl Fischer, 1968): 2.

A fairly unknown duo of composers, whose music has only recently become available to the general public, are also worth mentioning here. George Ivanovich Gurdjieff was born in Alexandropol. His Greek father was a musician who was able to improvise on religious and philosophical themes. Indeed, he would often tell stories and present character dialogue in song form.

George was educated in the musical and religious customs of the Russian Orthodox Church and in medicine as the Cathedral dean of the church choir in which he sang quickly noticed his talents and agreed to be his teacher. Despite his training, however, he still had questions to which he sought answers with a group known as the "Seekers of Truth." They would travel throughout central Asia in search of an ancient knowledge. During these travels, he was introduced to and studied the religious and musical customs of other cultures he and his group encountered. The result of his sojourns was a new philosophical and religious teaching that claimed to combine the East's spiritual knowledge with the science of the West.

After moving to Moscow in 1913, Gurdjieff found several people who were interested in his new teachings, including Ukrainian composer Thomas de Hartmann, who studied at the academic military school in St. Petersburg at age nine. Later, he studied harmony and composition with Anton Arensky and the piano with Annette Esipova-Leschetizky. He would also study counterpoint with Sergei Taneyev and earn his diploma from the St. Petersburg Conservatory in 1903.[27] De Hartmann moved to Munich

[27] George Ivanovich Gurdjieff and Thomas de Hartmann, *Music for the Piano: Volume III: Hymns, Prayers and Rituals* (New York: Schott, 2002), 11.

to study conducting with Felix Mottl. It was in Munich that he had the opportunity to meet and work with Arnold Schönberg after the two joined an avant-garde cultural movement together. In 1912, he returned to St. Petersburg, where he would join Gurdjieff's movement in 1916.[28]

As war escalated, Gurdjieff, and de Hartmann, and much of the remainder of the group left Russia, eventually to settle in France in 1922. It was at the Château du Prieuré where Gurdjieff established the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man, at which many people studied his teachings. Gurdjieff would also travel to the United States in order to visit those who were studying his teachings as well as to give lectures and performances.[29] De Hartmann and his wife, who was an opera singer, would live at Gurdjieff's institute from 1922 until 1929, when de Hartmann would resume his solo compositional career. De Hartmann would go on to write a number of instrumental and vocal works, including an opera titled *Esther* and a setting of the last of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. During this period, he made his living writing film scores.[30] Gurdjieff closed his institute in 1932 but continued to work with his students until his death on October 29, 1949.[31] The couple lived in the United States from 1951 until his death on March 26, 1956.[32]

[28] Ibid., 12.
[29] Ibid., 11.
[30] Ibid., 12.
[31] Ibid., 11.
[32] Ibid., 12.

Most of the music Gurdjieff and de Hartmann composed together occurred from 1925 to 1927.[33] Their music was heavily influenced by the music Gurdjieff heard as he traveled throughout Asia. Gurdjieff believed that music could tell us a lot about a culture's roots and traditions, and he had a remarkable ability to remember the diverse array of music he heard as he visited and studied these different cultures.[34] Indeed, this music is central and indispensable in the teachings of Gurdjieff.[35] In contrast, de Hartmann, who was classically trained, had a much more difficult time understanding this music. The music was not written down. Often the pitch content included different divisions of the octave. Also, it was not uncommon to hear music that included drones under the melody, giving the foundation for its tonality or modality. Of Gurdjieff's teachings on this music, de Hartmann wrote, "Gurdjieff gave us the different modes of several nationalities, and not only the modes but also…details peculiar to the character of each nationality. These modes served later on for the creation of music for a variety of exercises."[36]

In 1919, when de Hartmann and his wife were giving concerts of European music as well as the music of Armenian composer Komitas Vardapet in the capital of Armenia, de Hartmann said, "Mount Ararat was wrapped in a shroud of mist. To accompany this vision there was authentic Eastern music, played on…the tar. Through this trip to

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[33] Ibid., 11.
[34] Ibid., 12.
[35] Constance A. Jones, "Reviewed Work: Gurdjieff and Music: The Gurdjieff/de Hartmann Piano Music and its Esoteric Significance by PetscheJohanna J.M.," *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 21, no. 4 (May 2018): 109, accessed October 17, 2022, https://www.jstor.org/stable/26501388.
[36] Gurdjieff and de Hartmann, *Music for the Piano: Volume III*, 12.

Erivan…Gurdjieff gave us the opportunity of listening to Eastern music and musicians, so that I could better understand how he wished his own music to be written and interpreted."

The result of their collaboration was a large collection of piano music—over 300 piano pieces in total, a significant portion of which was influenced by the religious music Gurdjieff heard as well as their own experiences in the Russian Orthodox Church. De Hartmann described in vivid detail the process by which these pieces would come to be:

> "It usually happened in the evening in the big salon of the Château. From my room I usually heard when Gurdjieff began to play and, taking my music paper, I had to rush downstairs. Soon all the people came, and the music dictation was always in front of everybody.
>
> It was not easy to notate. While listening to him play, I had to scribble down at feverish speed the shifts and turns of the melody, sometimes with repetitions of just two notes. But in what rhythm? How to mark the accentuation? Often there was no hint of conventional Western meters; at times the flow of melody…could not be interrupted or divided by bar-lines. And the harmony that could support Eastern tonality of the melody could only gradually be guessed.
>
> Often—to torment me, I think—he would begin to repeat the melody before I had finished my notation, usually with subtle differences and added embellishments which drove me to despair. Of course it must be remembered that this was never just a matter of simple dictation, but equally a personal exercise for me, to grasp the essential character, the very noyau or kernel of the music.
>
> After the melody had been written down Gurdjieff would tap on the lid of the piano a rhythm on which to build the bass accompaniment. And then I had to perform at once what had been given, improvising the harmony as I went."[37]

[37] Ibid., 13.

The resulting body of music is a complex combination of ethnic melodies, remote ritual music, and the cadences of the Russian Orthodox Church. Most of the music is composed very simply and clearly. Interestingly, the manuscripts show very little in terms of editing and rewriting, which is quite unusual. Most composers will go through a process which includes a fair amount of revising. Certainly, a set of collaborating composers, who each might have different ideas, ought to go through periods of revision. Perhaps it is partially the simplicity of the music, but also perhaps the two men had such a deep understanding of each other's intentions that such periods were unnecessary.[38]

The works that are relevant to a discussion of chant-based repertoire comprise a significant portion of the total body of the two composers' work together. There are several works given the title "Hymn" and "Prayer" often with some bit of extra specifying information such as their *Orthodox Hymn for a Midnight Service* and their *Women's Prayer*. There are two works given the title *Hymns for Christmas Day* and several hymns on the topic of Holy Week. Some works were given entirely unique titles. Consider the work *Holy Affirming, Holy Denying, Holy Reconciling*. This work represents an important teaching of Gurdjieff. It is composed of three sections, each built of the same thematic material, but reworked in terms of dynamic and register representing his teaching of the *Law of Three*.[39] Yet other works either have no title or only an indication of tempo.

[38] Ibid., 13.
[39] Ibid., 14.

While there is a fair bit written about their music already, most of what can be found on Gurdjieff is on his philosophical and religious teachings. His music would certainly be worthy of in-depth research and study. Pianists have also begun to take note of their large body of work. Jeroen van Veen released a recording of the piano music composed by the duo in 2021. The music takes up six compact discs and lasts almost seven and a half hours.[40]

[40] "Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Complete Music for the piano," Brilliant Classics, October 2021, accessed October 17, 2022, https://www.brilliantclassics.com/articles/g/gurdjieff-de-hartmann-complete-music-for-the-piano/.

CHAPTER 3: CONNOR CHEE AND THE PRESERVATION OF A MUSICAL TRADITION

An unexpected amount of piano music has been inspired by Native American chant, though it is unsurprising when considering other composers' use of their own countries' native music. Liszt and Bartok found inspiration in the folk music of Hungary. Vaughan Williams used English folk music in his own works. It's only natural that Native American composers would find inspiration in their ancestors' music. Connor Chee is certainly not alone in this endeavor.

Louis Ballard is most well-known for his teaching method that largely consisted of Native American vocal and percussion music.[41] He found inspiration in Native American chant for his *Four American Indian Preludes* and a piano concerto that was completed by Brent Michael Davids after Ballard's death in 2007.[42] Arthur Farwell, who studied with George Whitefield Chadwick and Engelbert Humperdinck, believed Native American chant and other American folk music to be undervalued sources of inspiration among composers at the time.[43] When Farwell could not find a publisher for his *American Indian Melodies*, he founded the Wa-Wan Press, for the publication of American contemporary music,[44] and published the piece himself.[45]

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[41] Louis W. Ballard, "Put American Indian Music in the Classroom," *Music Educators Journal* 56, no. 7 (March 1970): 38-44, accessed October 18, 2022, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3392745.
[42] Brent Michael Davids, "Indiana Concerto for Piano and Orchestra," Brent Michael Davids, accessed October 19, 2022, http://www.brentmichaeldavids.com/louiswballard.html.
[43] Arthur Farwell, "The Struggle Toward a National Music," *The North American Review* 186, no. 625 (December 1907): 565-570, accessed October 19, 2022, https://www.jstor.org/stable/25106044.
[44] Library of Congress, "Arthur Farwell (1872-1952)," Library of Congress, accessed October 19, 2022, https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.200035729.
[45] A pdf copy of the work can be found at: https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/0/09/IMSLP103707-PMLP211869-AFarwell_American_Indian_Melodies,_Op.11.pdf.

Connor Chee has since gone on to compose *The Navajo Piano*, a set of 12 "Navajo Vocables" and 3 "Navajo Preludes" for piano solo, and, in an effort to preserve his ancestor's musical traditions, recorded it along with his grandfather singing the original chants on which the piano works are based. In addition to using this pre-existing chant, he also included some general characteristics of his native chant tradition, especially in the pieces that are not based on a specific chant melody. These characteristics included the pentatonic scale, on which much of Navajo chant is based. Four, an important number in his people's religious beliefs, is well-represented in his use of harmony and repetition. Additionally, he uses aspects of rhythm and meter that are characteristic of his ancestors' musical traditions.

The set opens with the "Vocables," which Chee describes as "non-lexical syllables used in indigenous chants to carry melodic lines and to mark formal structures."[46] These "Vocables" are based on Navajo (Diné) work songs,[47] called Corn Grinding Songs,[48] and chants from the "Enemy Way Ceremony,"[49] a ritual intended for healing returning soldiers from harmful spirits.[50] The "Enemy Way Ceremony" songs, or Nidáá songs, used by Chee are not from the actual ceremony; rather, they are part of a girls' dance.[51] Today, these songs are mostly performed for their musical value.[52]

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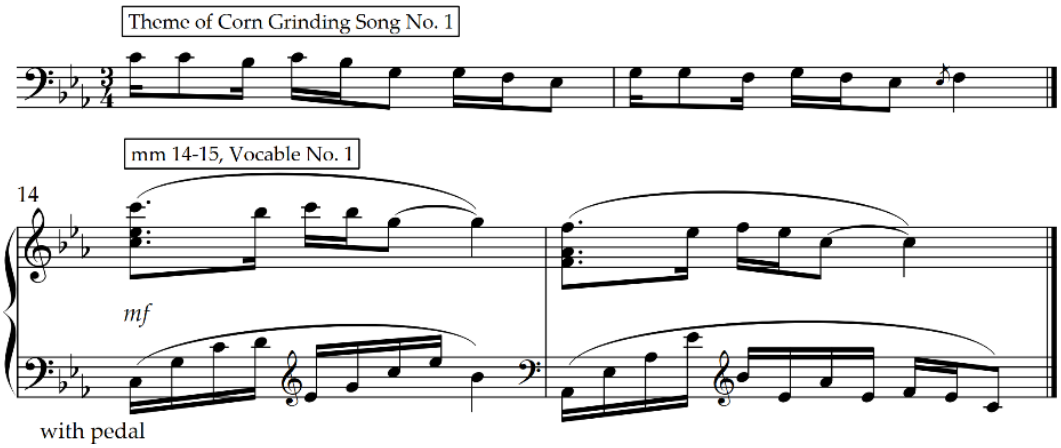
[46] Connor Chee, "A Modern Indigenous Approach to Piano Composition" (lecture recital, Westfield Center Historical Keyboards, Ithaca, January 29, 2022), (1162) Connor Chee, "A Modern Indigenous Approach to Piano Composition" - YouTube: 6:27.
[47] Ibid., 6:42.
[48] Ibid., 7:15.
[49] Ibid., 6:42.
[50] Ibid., 7:33.
[51] Ibid., 6:50.
[52] Ibid. 7:15.

The clearest use of Connor Chee's chant tradition in this set of piano solos is his direct use of pre-existing chant. The thematic material for "Navajo Vocable No. 1," for instance, is heavily based on the theme in "Corn Grinding Song No. 1;" in measures 14 and 15, Chee uses the Corn Grinding Song theme motivically (see figure 3.1). The same theme can also be heard against a G Minor accompaniment as the work progresses. "Navajo Vocable No. 3" is largely a sparse harmonization of thematic material from "Corn Grinding Song No. 2," the melody of which (see figure 3.2) begins one octave apart in each hand, spreads to two octaves, then eventually three octaves as it nears the end of the work.

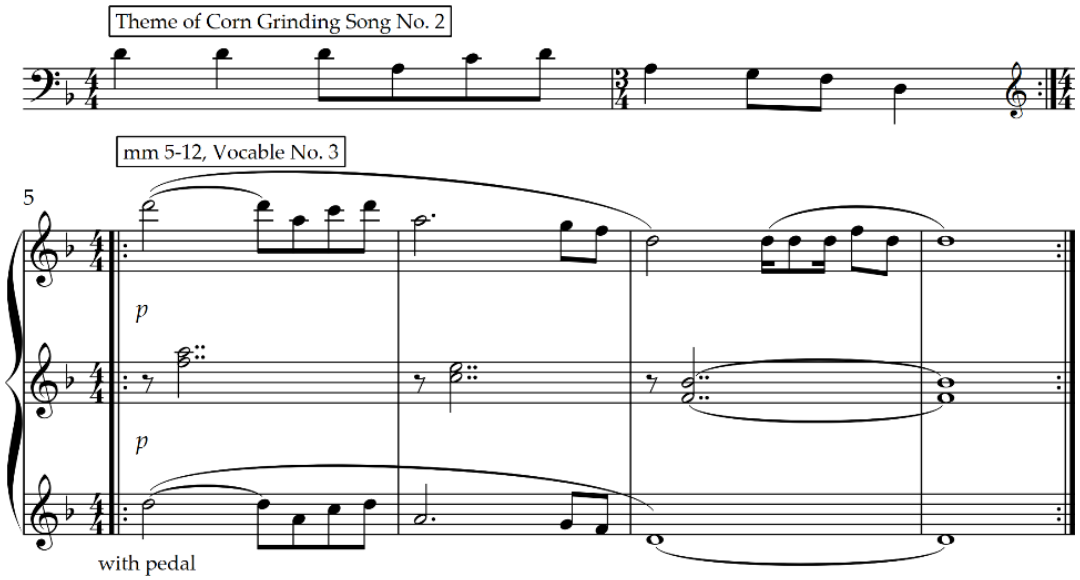
Figure 3.1. Compare Corn Grinding Song No. 1[53] and Vocable No. 1[54]



[53] Connor Chee, *The Navajo Piano (Revisited)*, Performed by Connor Chee, Keith Chee, Tex Chee, Angelica Hairston, and Johanna Wienholts, released September 17, 2021, Wild Saguaro Records, Inc, Apple Music, Track 1.

[54] All of the chant examples in this chapter and the full chants in the appendix were transcribed by the author of this document. Additionally, for the sake of clarity, all of the musical examples throughout the document were written out using Sibelius by the author.

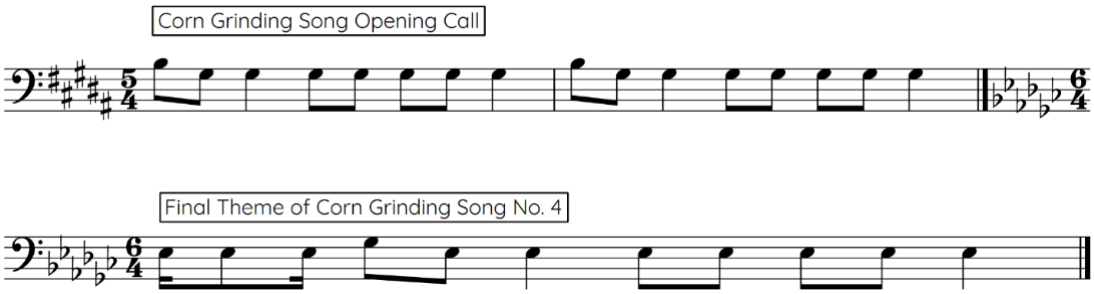
Figure 3.2. Compare Corn Grinding Song No. 2[55] and Vocable No. 3



Finally, each piece of what Chee describes as the opening "movement," consisting of Navajo Vocables 1-4, is tied closely together using the call material found in each of the Corn Grinding Songs (see figure 3.3), a motif that highlights a falling minor third that, according to Chee, is found throughout the corn grinding song oeuvre.[56] These two similar motifs find themselves in a diverse array of textures and modalities. In Vocable No. 1, the theme is passed in a middle voice between the right and left hands. Vocable No. 2's use of the theme is sometimes varied, though still clearly recognizable and very prominent. Vocable No. 4 has the theme in the major mode. Connor has devised several creative ways of including this thematic material throughout his set of Vocables.

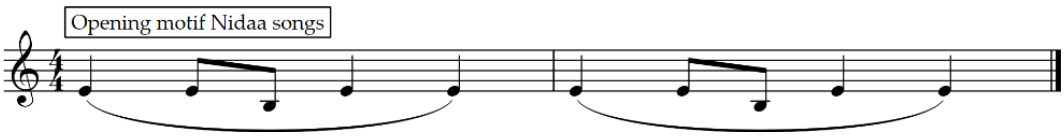
[55] Ibid., Track 4.
[56] Chee, "A Modern Indigenous Approach to Piano Composition," 9:54.

Figure 3.3. Corn Grinding Song Call Themes[57]



The second "movement" is the Navajo Vocables Nos. 5-8.[58] Connor takes a different approach with his use of Navajo chant in this middle movement, though he does employ a limited amount of pre-existing chant. For instance, each piece in these four vocables opens with a motif often found in Nidáá songs. According to Chee, this motif sometimes includes the interval of a fourth (see figure 3.4) and sometimes it is on only one note; the rhythm repeatedly returns and brings the whole song together.[59] Every work in this movement begins with this motif, though transposed to their respective tonalities. Nidáá Song No. 1 from Connor Chee's album is most closely related to this opening pattern with the addition of the interval of a fourth.

Figure 3.4. Opening Nidaa Song Motif[60]



Indeed, it is the Nidáá Song No. 1 that plays the most prominent role in this movement. Chee describes Navajo Vocable No. 8 as "a transcription of a melody from

[57] Chee, *The Navajo Piano (Revisited)*, Tracks 13 and 15.
[58] Chee, "A Modern Indigenous Approach to Piano Composition," 6:59.
[59] Ibid., 10:53.
[60] Chee, *The Navajo Piano: 12 Navajo Vocables for Piano/3 Navajo Preludes for Piano.*

the Enemy Way Song,"[61] and, of the Enemy Way Songs on the album, Nidáá Song No. 1 bears the closest resemblance and shares the most motifs. Figure 3.5 compares the relevant passages from both works.

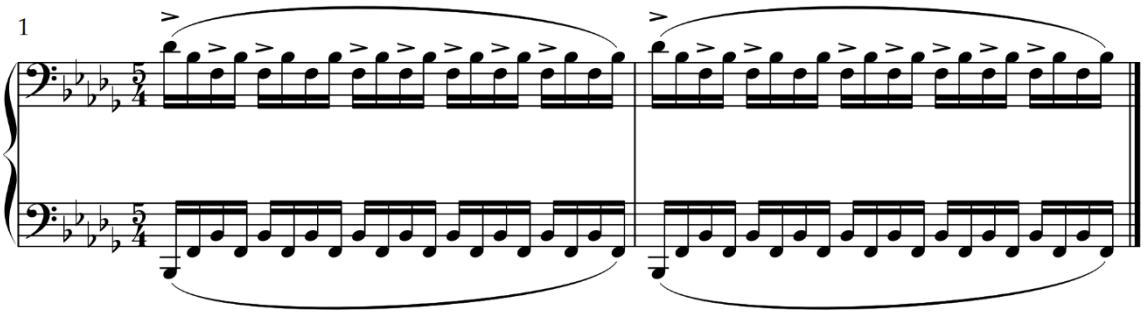
Figure 3.5. Compare Vocable No. 8 and Nidaa Song No. 1[62]

The third "movement" of Connor Chee's set is the Navajo Vocables Nos. 9-12.[63] In this case, all four vocables are heavily based on the existing chant repertoire. Navajo Vocables Nos. 9, 10, and 11 begin with the opening motif (figure 3.3) seen in the first "movement" of the set. In nos. 9 and 10, the iteration of the motif is presented in a very straightforward manner. Navajo Vocable No. 11, however, is presented more subtly, in a

[61] Chee, "A Modern Indigenous Approach to Piano Composition," 11:26.
[62] Chee, *The Navajo Piano (Revisited)*, Track 7.
[63] Chee, "A Modern Indigenous Approach to Piano Composition," 6:59.

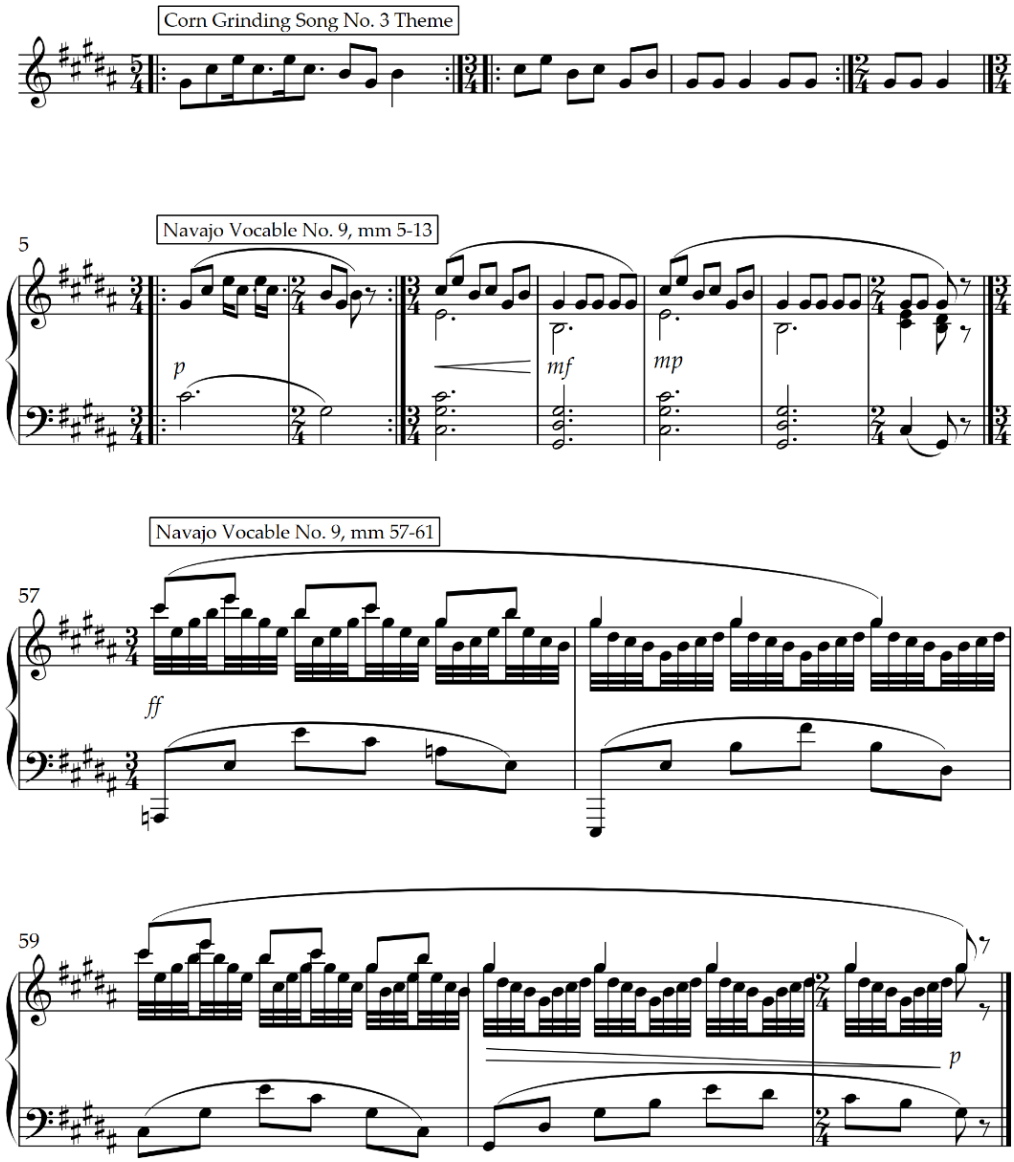
manner similar to the material seen throughout the second “movement” (see figure 3.6). It is presented in a sea of 16th notes over the span of a minor sixth. The accented pitches in the right hand clearly allude to the motif.

Figure 3.6. Vocable No. 11 Call Motif



Following the call themes in each of the first three vocables in this third “movement,” Connor Chee then presents more thematic material from the Navajo chant tradition. Navajo Vocable No. 9 is based on Corn Grinding Song No. 3. The music is first presented very obviously, followed by a middle section discussed later before presenting and developing the chant in a rather virtuosic manner. Figure 3.7 compares the relevant chant melody to Chee’s arrangement and presents the right hand of the straightforward, sparsely harmonized melody with the later virtuosic iteration. In the earlier example in the figure, Chee even repeats the theme the same number of times.

Figure 3.7. Compare Corn Grinding Song No. 3[64] and Navajo Vocable No. 9

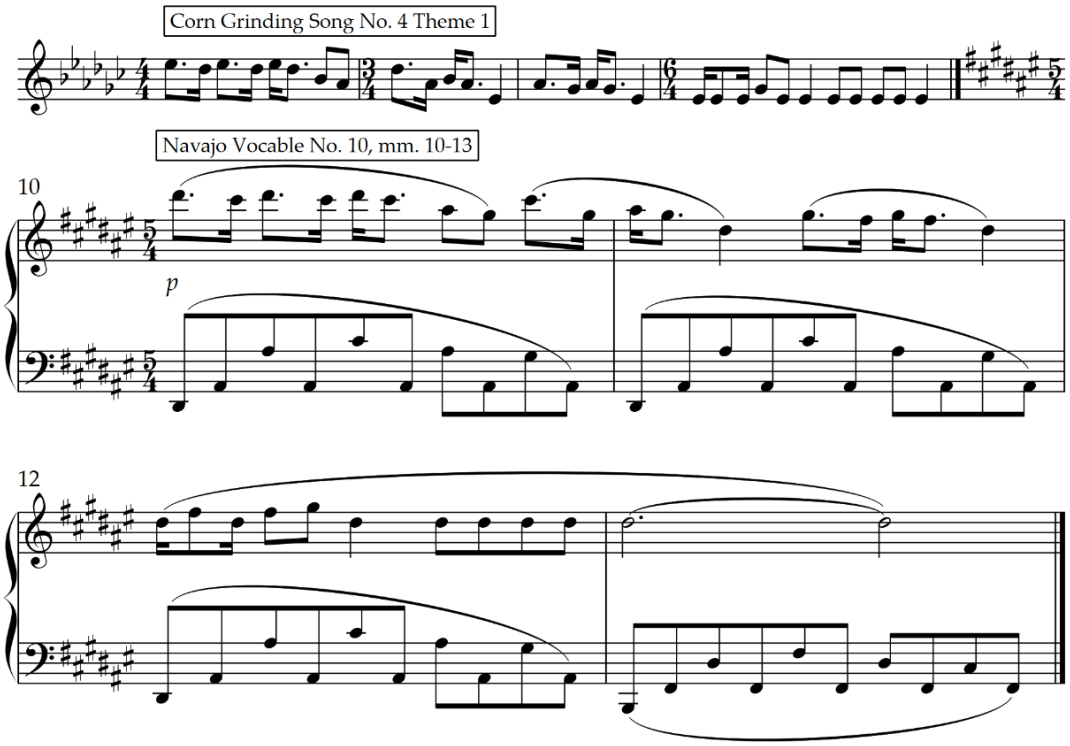


Navajo Vocables Nos. 10 and 11 are both based on the unique Corn Grinding Song No. 4 from Connor Chee's album. The uniqueness of this particular song is in its use of multiple themes on different scales, which offered Connor the opportunity to compose two separate pieces based on the same chant. Like most of the other examples, the original theme and Connor's use of the theme are on the same pitch

[64] Chee, *The Navajo Piano (Revisited)*, Track 13.

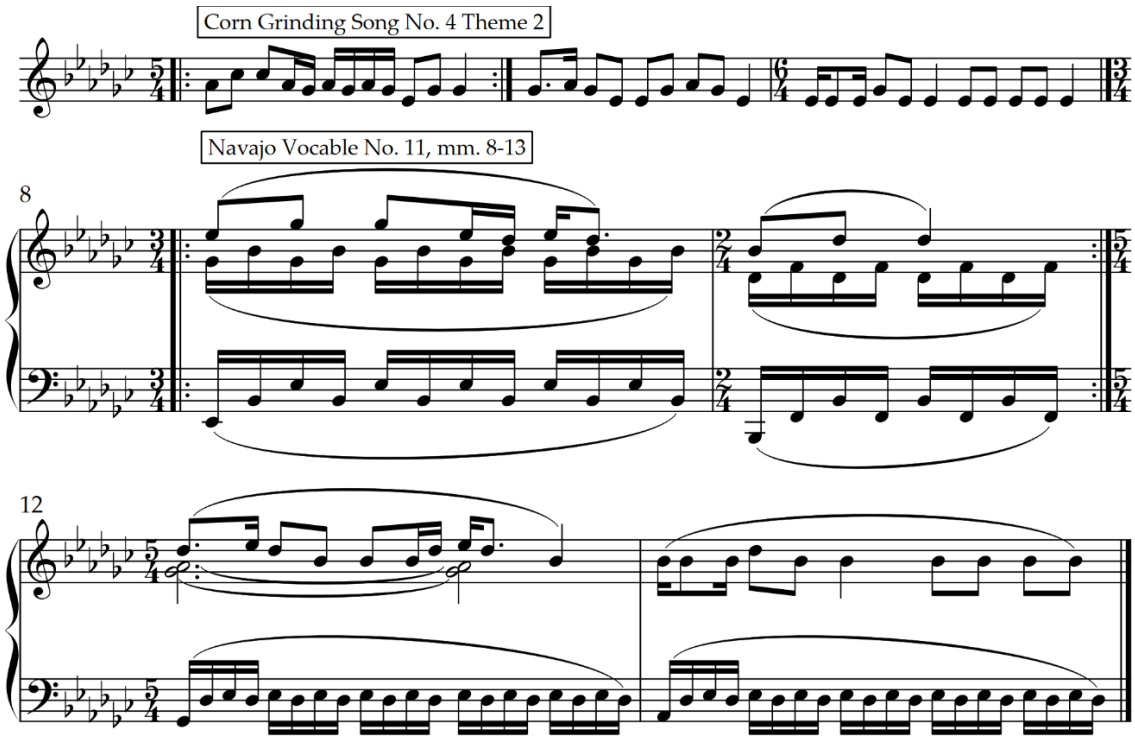
classes; the transcriptions were created from the album and before any analysis of Connor's work took place to avoid as much bias as possible. For the case of Navajo Vocable No. 10, while the piano work is firmly in the key of D-sharp minor, the transcription of the related corn grinding song is engraved in E-flat minor. Navajo Vocable No. 11 is a rare case of the chant being transposed into a different key. The only other chant melodies presented in different keys than the original are the opening call themes found throughout the set. Figures 3.8 and 3.9 compare the chant theme with a relevant passage in each of Chee's piano works. Notice particularly that the time signatures of both the chant and solo work are different; however, the transcription's meters reflect the slurs in the piano work.

Figure 3.8. Compare Corn Grinding Song No. 4[65] and Navajo Vocable No. 10



[65] Ibid., Track 15.

Figure 3.9. Compare Corn Grinding Song No. 4[66] and Navajo Vocable No. 11



While the Navajo Vocables comprise a cycle in itself, the set of pieces that make up the entire *The Navajo Piano* includes three preludes at the end. They are each placed in the key of A major. In particular, "Navajo Prelude for Piano No. 3" is based on the Nidáá Song No. 4 from Connor Chee's album. The two previous preludes have bits and pieces of the chants from the album but are not entirely based on pre-existing chant and so are also discussed further down. From the first two preludes, Chee seems to mostly use motifs from Nidáá Song No. 3, which is also sung in A major on Chee's album. Both preludes begin with similar repeated figures that are not entirely unlike the opening of the Nidáá songs (see figure 3.10). Then, after the opening music in "Navajo

[66] Ibid., Track 15.

Prelude for Piano No. 1," another motif appears that is heard throughout the piece and is quite similar to a motif found in Nidáá Song No. 3 (see figure 3.11). Similarly, a motif in "Navajo Prelude for Piano No. 2" is also found in the same Nidáá song (see figure 3.12).

Figure 3.10. Opening of Nidaa Song No. 3,[67] Navajo Prelude Nos. 1 and 2

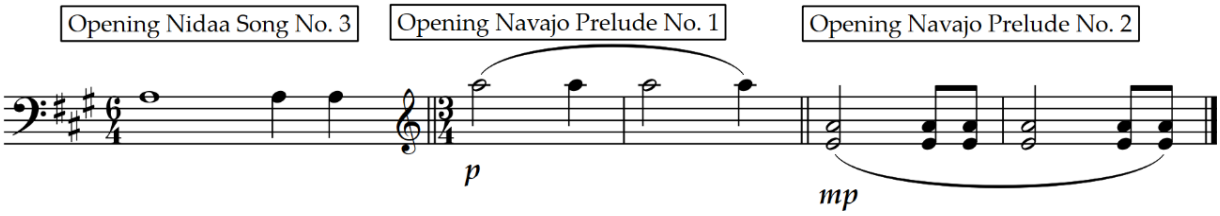


Figure 3.11. Motif in Nidaa Song No. 3[68] and Navajo Prelude No. 1

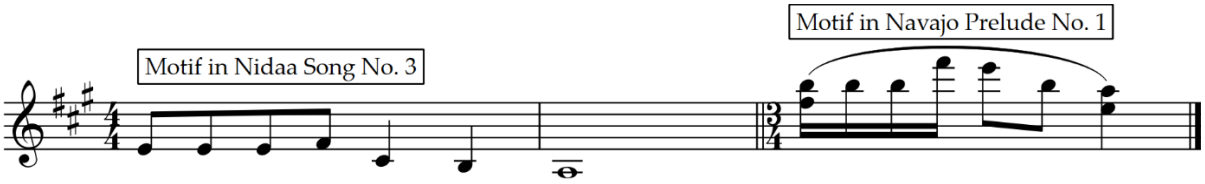
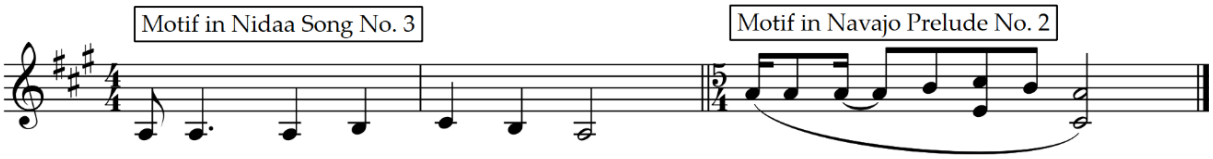


Figure 3.12. Motif in Nidaa Song No. 3[69] and Navajo Prelude No. 2

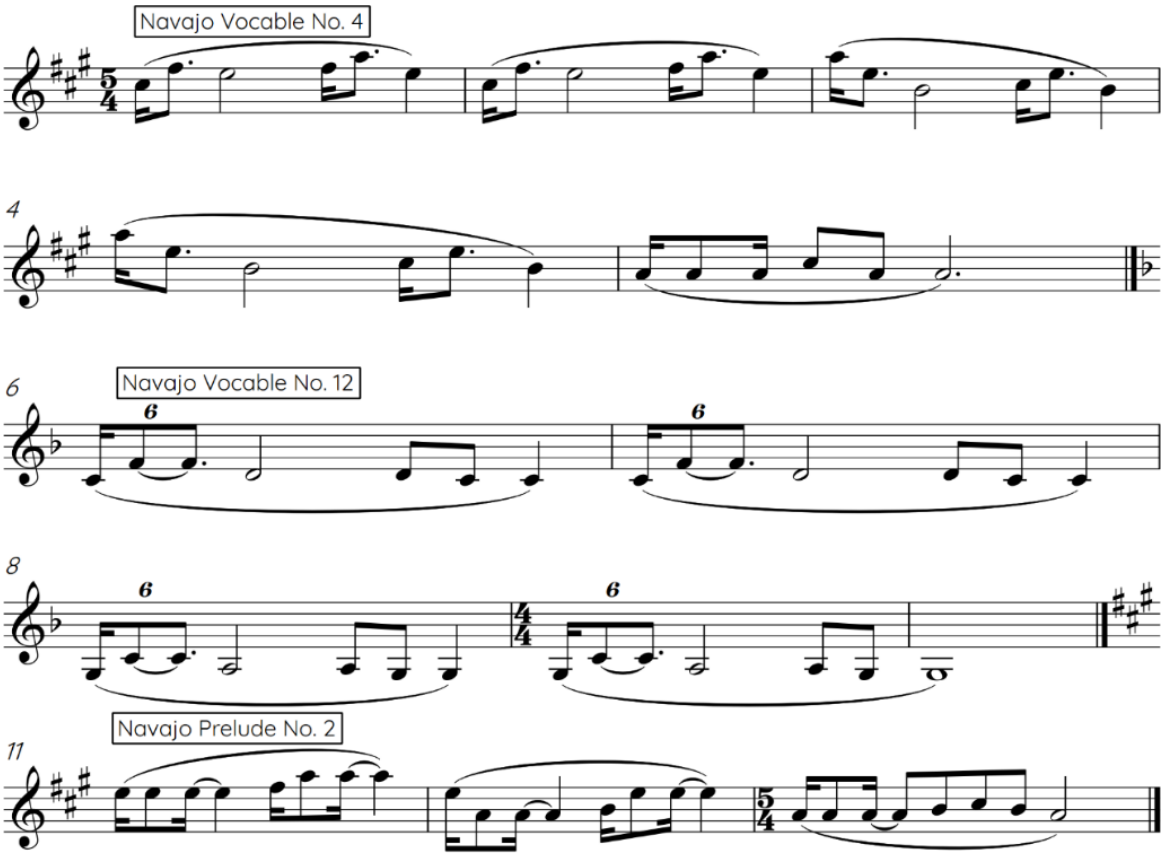


This last motif is often sung evenly; but sometimes there is a bit of syncopation on Chee's album, so it is heard both ways. It seems to be the case with the Nidáá songs that melodic fragments are slightly varied throughout the song, especially in regards to the rhythm and ornamentation. The syncopation in this particular Nidáá song is actually

[67] Ibid., Track 21.
[68] Ibid., Track 21.
[69] Ibid., Track 21.

reminiscent of a syncopated rhythm found throughout the set of Vocables as well as in "Navajo Prelude for Piano No. 2." Additionally, Corn Grinding Song No. 4 also displays a syncopated rhythm in its two themes; figures 3.8 and 3.9 include examples of those syncopated rhythms. Figure 3.13 highlights some of Connor's melodies that display this syncopated rhythm.

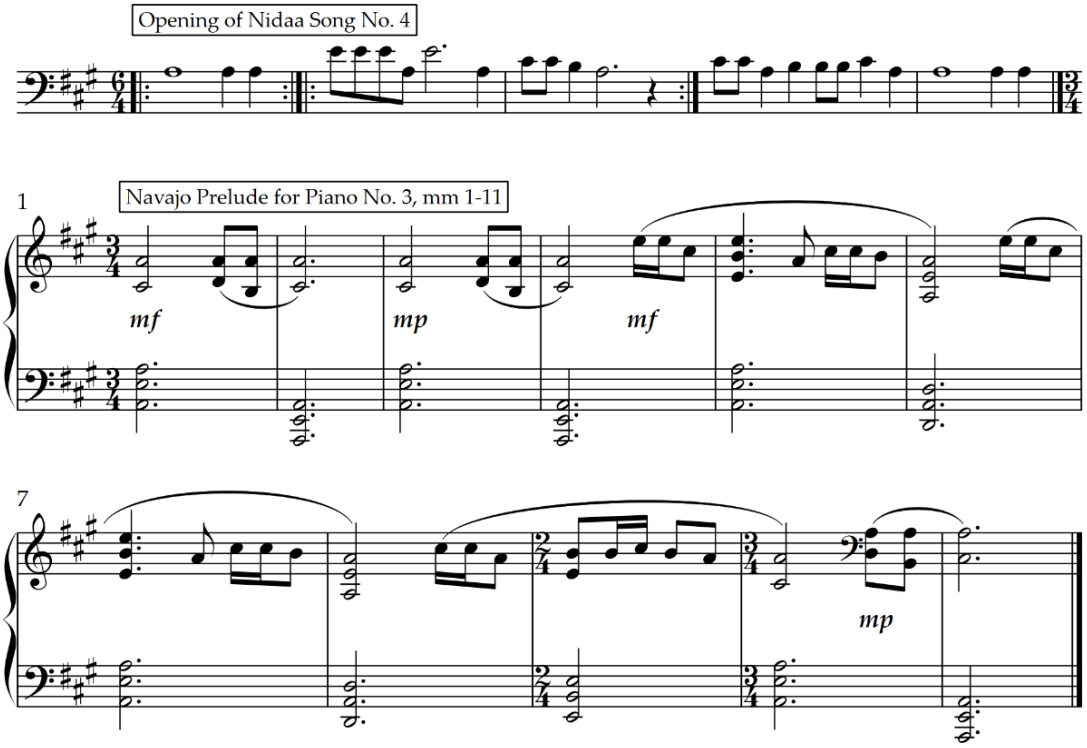
Figure 3.13. Melodies in Navajo Vocable No. 4, No. 12, and Navajo Prelude No. 2



Unlike the previous two pieces, "Navajo Prelude for Piano No. 3" makes use of an entire melody, this time from Nidáá Song No. 4. It opens with the same beginning motif that pervades many Nidáá songs and is followed immediately by the main thematic material found in the original chant. It is from these two ideas that Connor creates the music for the entire prelude. As mentioned before, the transcriptions of the

chant were made without any knowledge of Connor's musical treatment of those chants to ensure the young composer's work did not influence the transcriptions. In the case of these preludes, the transcriptions of the chants are slightly different than the melody found in Connor's music; but they are similar enough to make the connection to their relatedness. The discrepancies are likely due to the difficulty of trying to notate an oral chant tradition. Figure 3.14 compares the Nidáá song with the first iteration of the main theme.

Figure 3.14. Compare Nidaa Song No. 4[70] and Navajo Prelude No. 3



In addition to using pre-existing chant, Connor also includes characteristics of that tradition where existing chants are not specifically used. For example, the number four is very important in Navajo culture; it reflects the four seasons, four directions, four

[70] Ibid., Track 23.

sacred stones, four mountains (Mt. Blanca, Mt. Taylor, San Francisco Peak, and Mt. Hesperus), etc.[71] Chee utilized the number four in multiple ways throughout the entire set of Vocables and the preludes at the end of set. The keys for each vocable, for instance, follow a descending fourth pattern (C Minor – G Minor – D Minor – A major – E major – B major – F-sharp major – D-flat major – G-sharp Minor – D-sharp Minor – B-flat Minor – F major).

Additionally, corn grinding songs do not traditionally have harmony associated with them.[72] Connor's harmonizations of the melodies, however, make heavy use of quintal and quartal chords and arpeggiations.[73] In measures 5, 6, and 10 of "Navajo Vocable No. 1," the left hand clearly outlines fourths and fifths; additionally, the harmonies as a whole in measures 5, 6, 10, and 11 are harmonies built on the same intervals (see figure 3.15). For the most part, the left hand in "Navajo Vocable No. 2" outlines arpeggiations of open fifths that expand over the course of two octaves and eventually peaks as the arpeggiations include the right hand; later, in Navajo Vocable No. 9, Connor writes a similar accompanying passage in the left hand (see figure 3.16). In this way, the work, as a whole, is cyclical. "Navajo Vocable No. 4" contains a comparable open fifth arpeggiated passage as "Navajo Vocable No. 2," which then culminates in a restating of its initial thematic material based on the fourth; this restatement is also harmonized in mostly fourths (see figure 3.17).

[71] Chee, "A Modern Indigenous Approach to Piano Composition," 8:17.
[72] Ibid. 8:26.
[73] Ibid., 8:41.

Figure 3.15. Navajo Vocable No. 1, mm 5-11

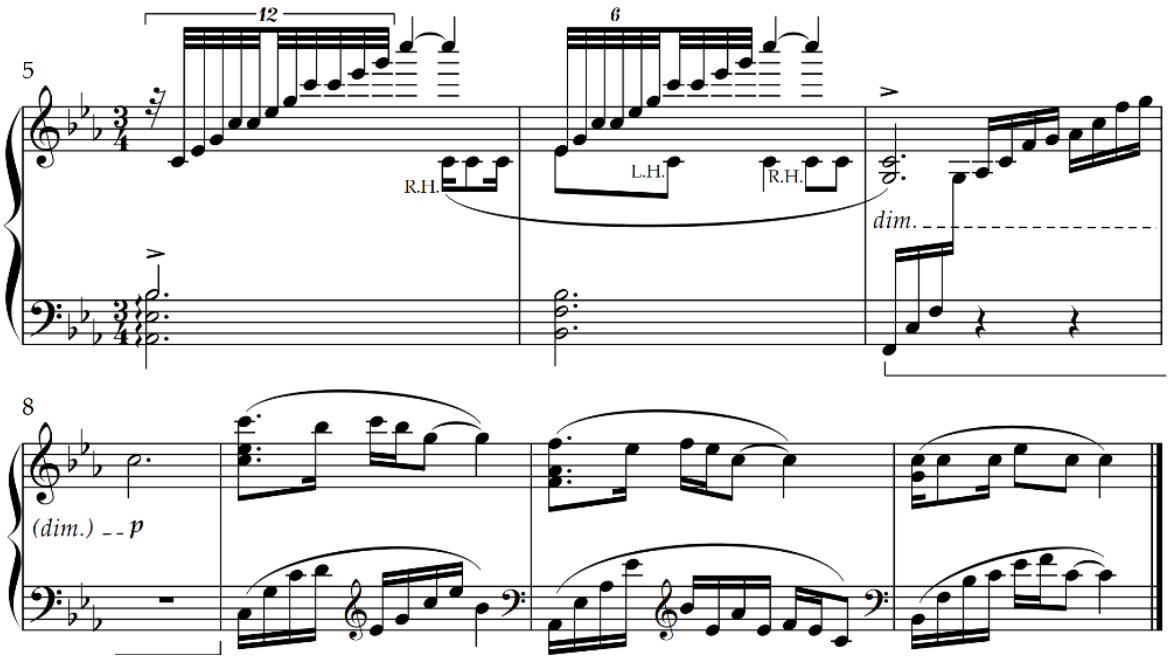


Figure 3.16. Compare Vocable No. 2 and Vocable No. 9

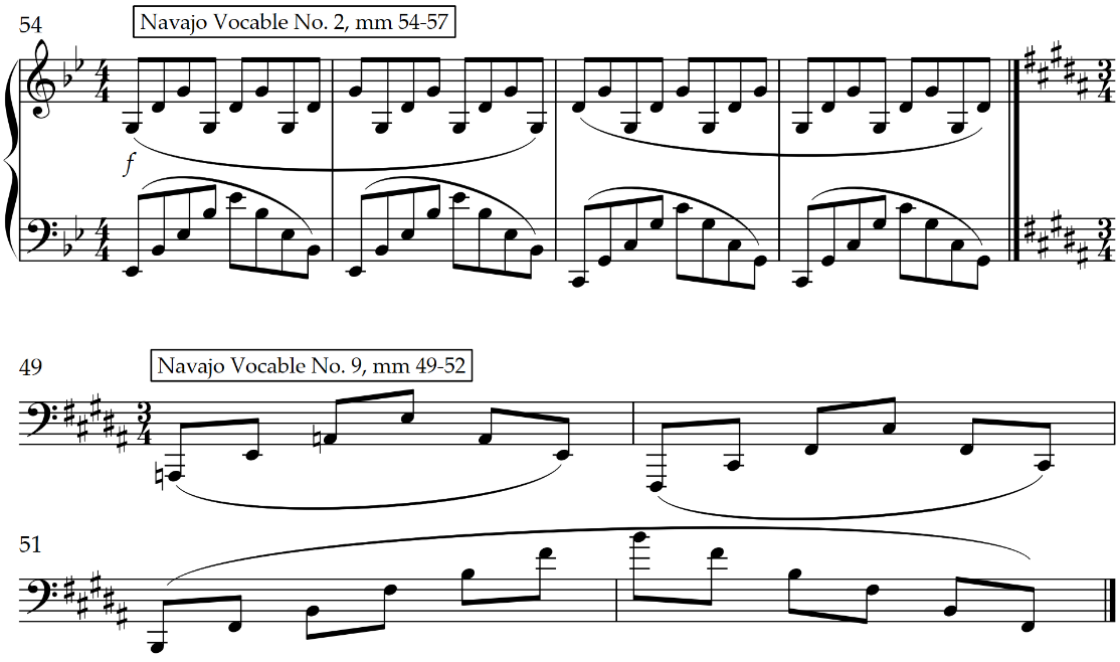
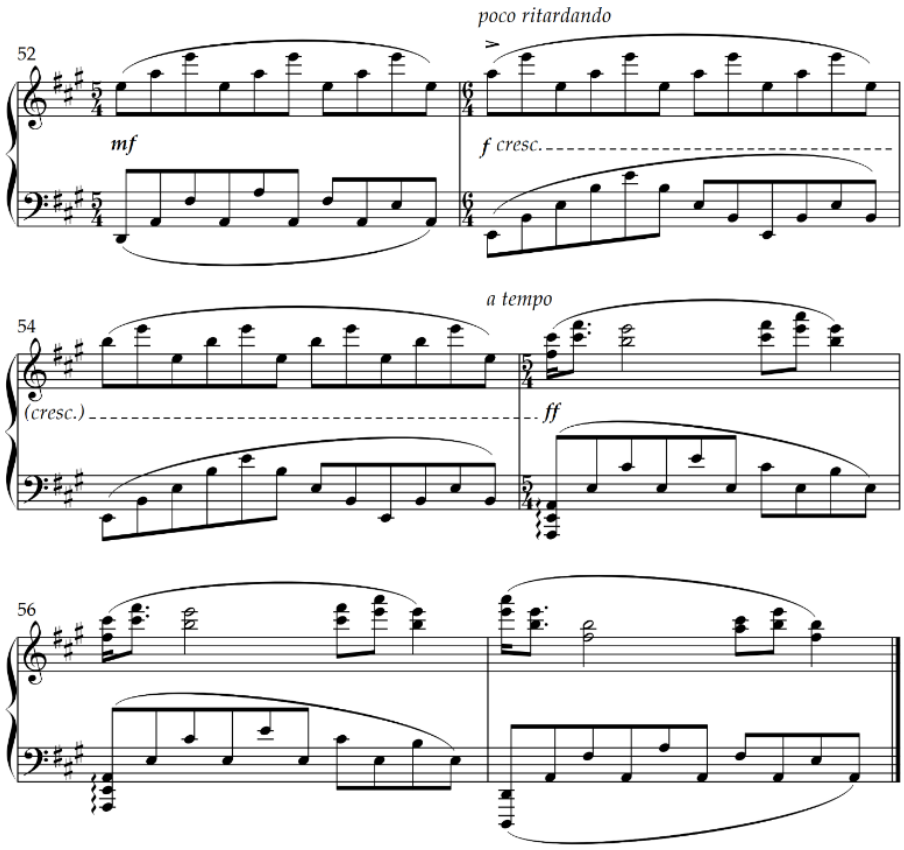


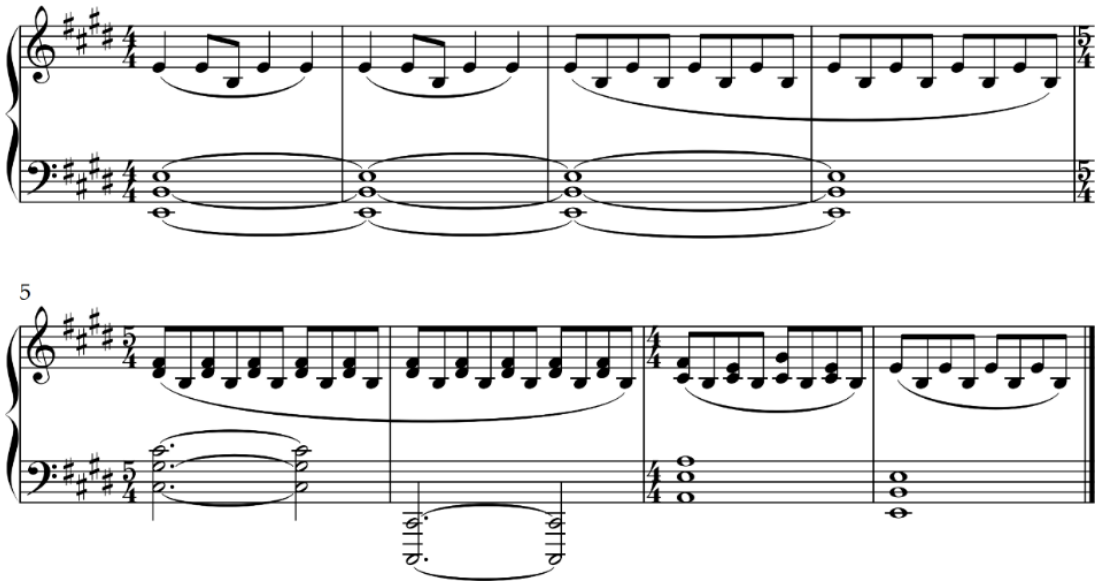
Figure 3.17. Navajo Vocable No. 4, mm 52-57



Connor's heavy use of open harmonies in the second movement largely makes up for his limited use of existing chant. Navajo Vocables Nos. 5, 6, and 7 all begin with a similar call theme (figure 3.4) that outlines a perfect fourth and is either accompanied or harmonized by perfect fourths and fifths. Following each of those iterations of the call theme, Chee takes an almost Glass-like approach to, in his own words, "organically" develop the musical ideas found within that theme.[74] Figure 3.18 illustrates how Navajo Vocable No. 5 transforms the opening call into the main body of the work. In each of the cases of Navajo Vocables Nos. 5, 6, and 7, the accompaniment and harmonic language are based mostly on perfect fourths and fifths.

[74] Ibid., 10:42.

Figure 3.18. Navajo Vocable No. 5, mm 1-8



Likewise, in movement three of the set of vocables, harmonic fourths and fifths can be found throughout the music. Harmonically and accompanimentally, there are many of the same structures found in earlier movements of the set, again highlighting the cyclical nature of Connor Chee's set of pieces. For instance, compare measures 29-32 of Navajo Vocable no. 9 and the left hand of measures 1-3 of Navajo Vocable No. 11 to measures 3-6 of Navajo Vocable No. 7 (see figure 3.19). In each of these examples, there is a perfect fifth on the bottom of each harmony, and the right hand is also filled with multiple examples of fourths and fifths. There are similar relationships in the left hand between Navajo Vocable No. 8 and Navajo Vocable No. 2 as well as between Navajo Vocable No. 10 and Navajo Vocable No. 4 (see figure 3.20).

Figure 3.19. Compare Navajo Vocables Nos. 9, 11, and 7

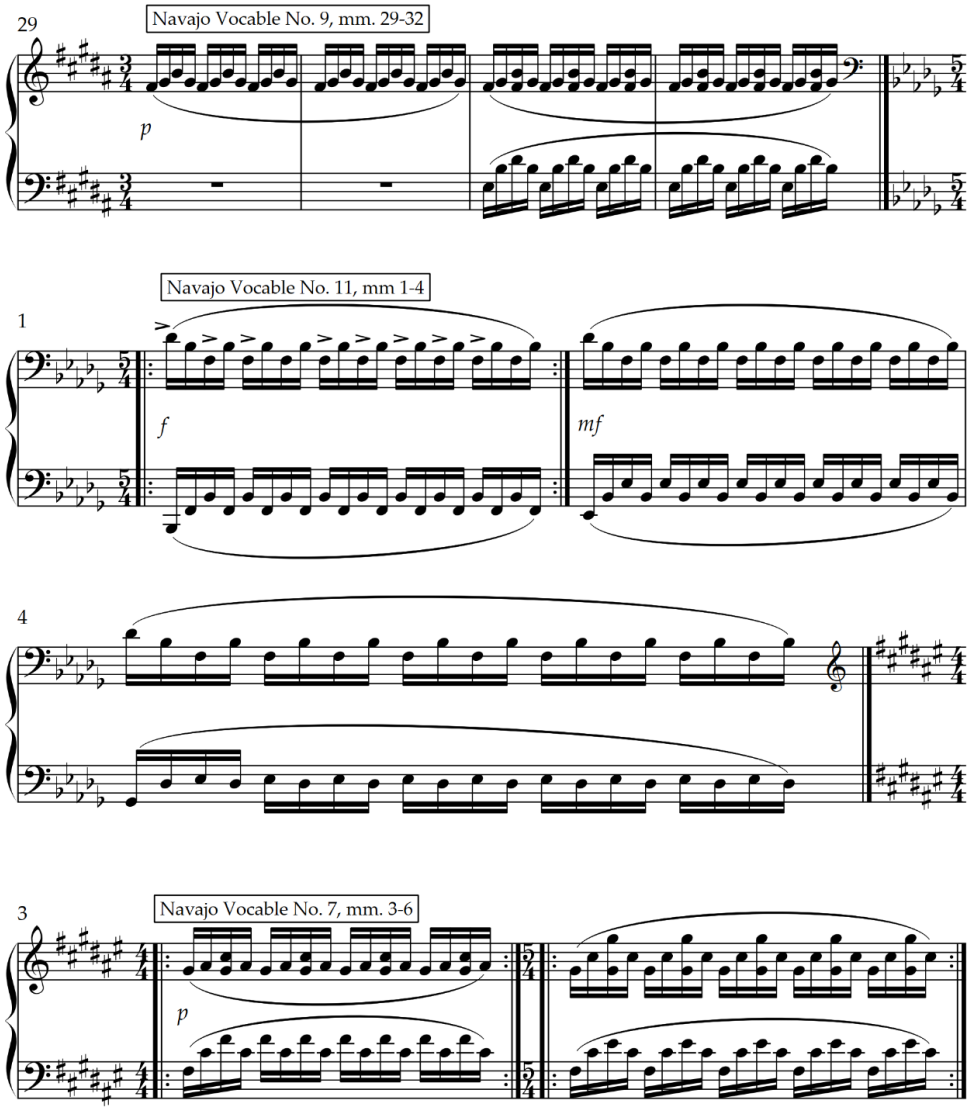
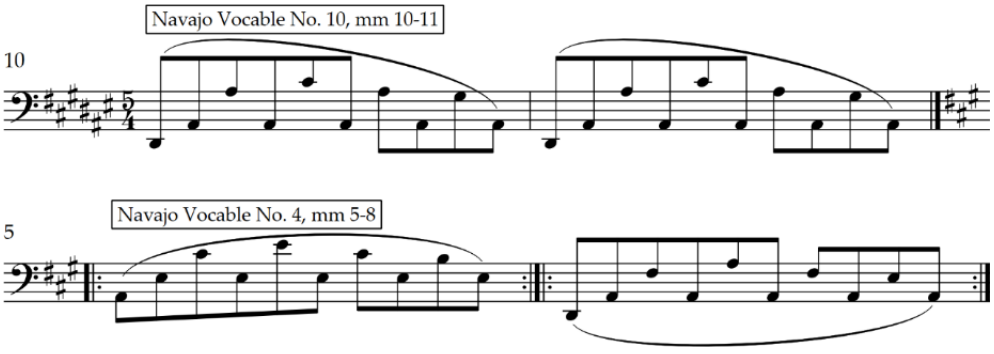


Figure 3.20. Compare Navajo Vocables 10 and 4



Indeed, fourths and fifths pervade the entire set of vocables, even when the intervals are not reflected in the harmonic language. This is largely because most of the melodic content, whether or not Chee based a work on a specific chant, is based on the pentatonic scale, which can be stacked in perfect fourths (see figure 3.21). According to Chee, chant associated with his native tradition is often built on the pentatonic scale.[75] A particularly interesting example of Connor's use of the pentatonic scale as well as an example of the scale's possibilities can be found in Navajo Vocable No. 9, which, as discussed earlier, is based on Corn Grinding Song No. 3 (see figure 3.7). The chant Connor used to write the ninth vocable is sung on the pentatonic scale in figure 3.21; however, neither the original chant nor Navajo Vocable No. 9 are based on a tonic of C-sharp. Instead, they are based on G-sharp. Figure 3.22 shows Connor's harmonization of the original chant. Notice how the melodic content ends on repeated G-sharps and Connor's key signature and final harmonization reflect G-sharp minor. Navajo Vocable No. 11 has a similar relationship between its pentatonic pitch collection and the mode of the chant (see figure 3.9). The collection of pitches used in the chant might suggest a work that is in E-flat Minor; however, B-flat is clearly the pitch center of both the chant and Connor's arrangement. This is not entirely universal, though. The melody of Navajo Vocable No. 10 uses the same pitch collection as the melody of Navajo Vocable No. 11; however, D-sharp is the clear tonic of Navajo Vocable No. 10.

[75] Ibid., 13:20.

Figure 3.21. Pentatonic Scale As Quartal Chord

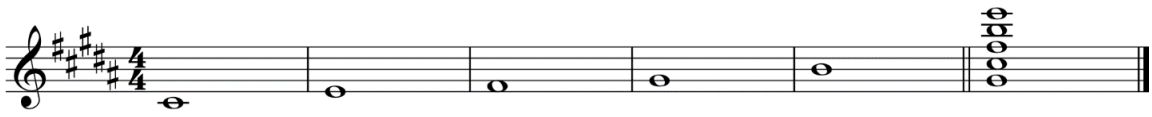
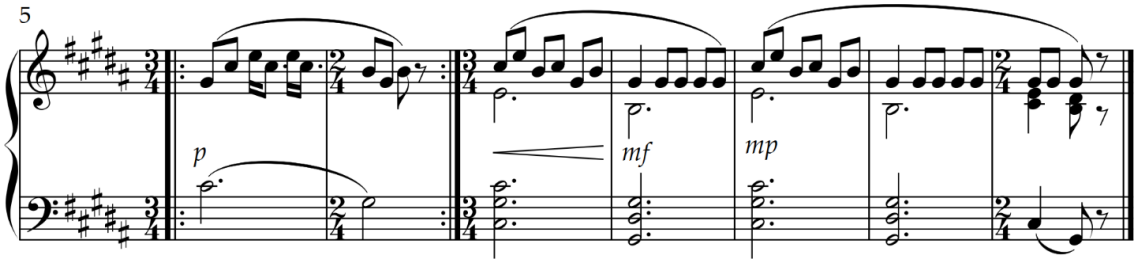
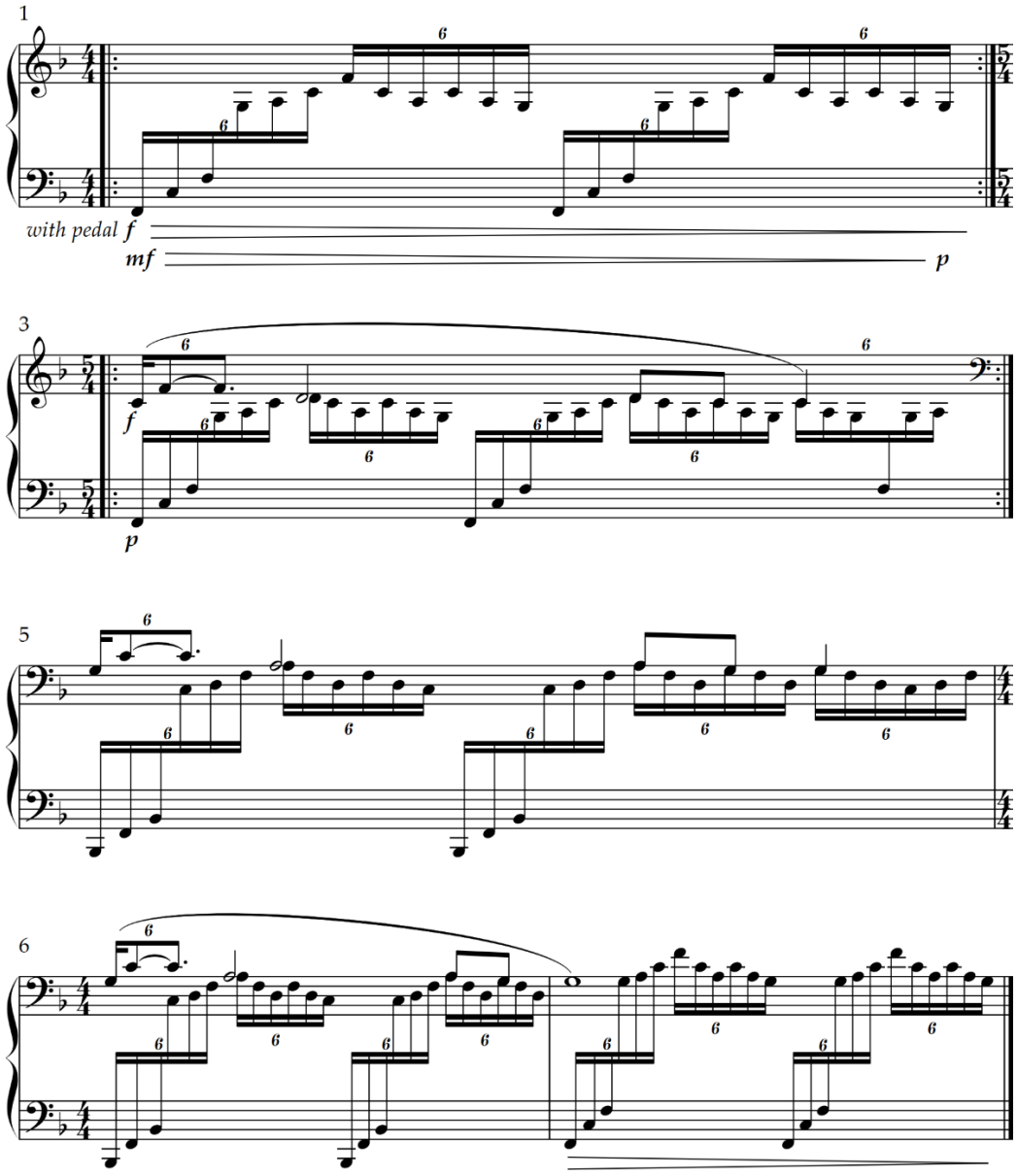


Figure 3.22. Navajo Vocable No. 9, Theme



Navajo Vocable No. 12 is also an interesting study in pentatonic modality. The melody does not seem to be directly taken from one of the chants on Connor's album. He places it in the key of F major, completing the cycle of descending fourths, but the chant-like melody implies a modal center of G. The melodic content is sourced only from the pentatonic scale, though Connor utilizes every note of the major scale in his swirling arpeggiated harmonies. Often, Connor makes use of add2 chords or extended tertial harmonies to bridge that gap (see figure 3.23). Even the final note of the melody, which ends on a G, is harmonized with a B-flat 9 chord before the set comes to its glorious Chopinesque close firmly in the key of F major.

Figure 3.23. Navajo Vocable No. 12, Theme



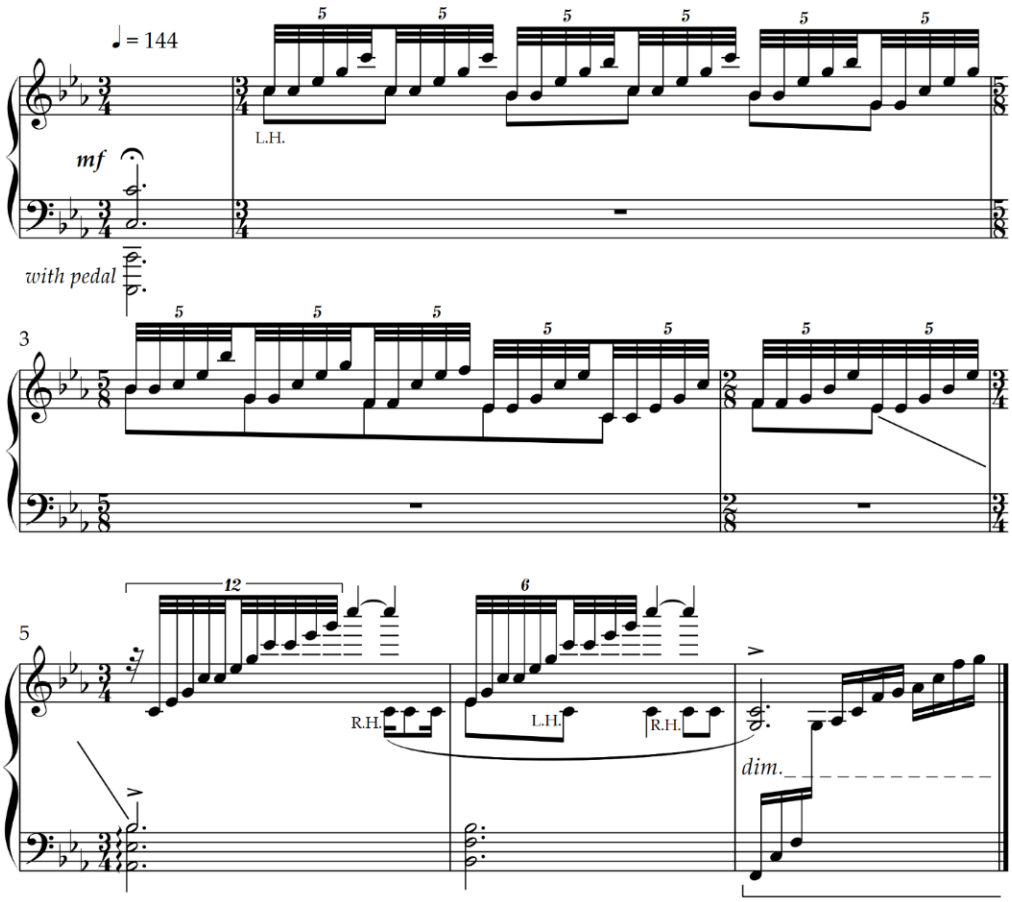
The number four is also represented by repetition in Navajo songs.[76] According to Chee, repetition, in general, is also an important cultural concept.[77] For instance, in the transcriptions of the Corn Grinding Songs on Connor Chee's album (Appendix), one can find multiple examples of thematic material being repeated exactly four times. Chee

[76] Ibid., 8:53.
[77] Ibid., 8:54.

then used the same technique in his own piano works. For instance, in *Corn Grinding Song No. 1*, the theme is repeated four times, as is the theme for *Corn Grinding Song No. 2*, the opening call in *Corn Grinding Song No. 3* that is found in all four Corn Grinding Songs, and the final iterations of the thematic material in *Corn Grinding Song No. 4*.

This technique of repeating themes four times is reflected in the piano solo work. For instance, in "Navajo Vocable No. 1," the opening thematic material (see figure 3.24) is repeated four times throughout the piece. Additionally, the theme of "Navajo Vocable No. 2" is initially repeated four times before any melodic variations are introduced. "Navajo Vocable No. 3" has four distinct sections, each containing the initial call at the beginning of each of the Corn Grinding Songs followed by some variation of the main thematic material of the piano work. "Navajo Vocable No. 4," then, repeats thematic material four times before reaching the work's middle section. The second movement of the set, Navajo Vocables 5-8, does not seem to continue this pattern of repeating themes four times. The third movement, however, returns with this practice. Navajo Vocables Nos. 9, 10, and 12 all repeat their main thematic material exactly four times with little melodic variation, though the texture and harmonies often change from one repetition to the next. Figures 3.22 and 3.8 show the repeated themes in vocables 9 and 10. Figure 3.23 shows the repeated theme in Navajo Vocable No. 12; it can also be seen in the figure that the opening arpeggiated figuration is repeated four times before the main theme is heard—twice in the opening measure, which is then repeated.

Figure 3.24. Navajo Vocable No. 1, Theme



In addition to harmony and repetition, he also focuses on the rhythmic aspects of his native chant tradition.[78] According to Chee, traditional Navajo music utilizes a freely changing meter,[79] often switching between duple and triple times[80] to suit the melody or other purpose of the song.[81] This changing meter can be seen throughout the set of Navajo Vocables, and it is especially obvious in the opening measures of Navajo Vocable No. 1 (figure 3.24) and their transposed repetition in the closing measures of Navajo Vocable No. 10 as well as in Navajo Vocable No. 3. In the second "movement,"

[78] Ibid., 10:15.
[79] Ibid., 10:06.
[80] Ibid., 10:22.
[81] Ibid., 10:27.

Chee uses chant subtly, choosing to mimic or represent stylistic characteristics of his chant tradition. Here, the meter changes among 4/4, 5/4, and 6/4 as needed to suit thematic material. Generally, in Navajo Vocables Nos. 5, 6, and 7, the music begins in 4/4, then 5/4 after the introductory motivic material. The middle portions of the works, the meat of the pieces, are where one can find the 6/4 measures; even here, though, Chee changes the meters back to 5/4 or 4/4 as the music requires. As each of the pieces nears its end, the young composer begins taking away beats from the measures, and all three vocables end in 4/4. The meter serves a formal function in these works. Navajo Vocable No. 8 only sees two meters, 4/4 and 5/4; and, Chee does not switch between them in the same systematic way. This is likely because Navajo Vocable No. 8 is a transcription of a melody from the Enemy Way Song,[82] so there was not as much room for metrical and rhythmic interpretation. It is this particular arrangement, Chee says, that inspired the meters in Navajo Vocables Nos. 5, 6, and 7,[83] which Connor describes as an expansion of the rhythmic structure of the original song.[84] The third movement, too, switches among multiple meters, but mostly stays in the range of 2/4 to 6/4. In only one instance can one find a meter based on the eighth note (figure 3.24).

In addition to Connor's direct and indirect use of chant materials in his music, he also found inspiration in his cultural traditions.[85] In his lecture recital, Chee talks about a middle section he added in Navajo Vocable No. 9. According to the young composer,

[82] Ibid., 11:26.
[83] Ibid., 11:58.
[84] Ibid., 11:26.
[85] Ibid., 13:07.

there's a common thread among corn grinding songs of a baby crying for their mother. This, Chee says, is what inspired the lullaby-like mood of the opening and the frenzied middle section. Traditionally, the women in his culture would be out grinding the corn while the father or someone else is taking care of the baby. When there is meaningful text in these traditional songs, the words often paint a similar scene. The middle section that Chee added in this particular work is a reflection that the baby wants Mom to hurry up and finish the work so she can get back to the baby.[86]

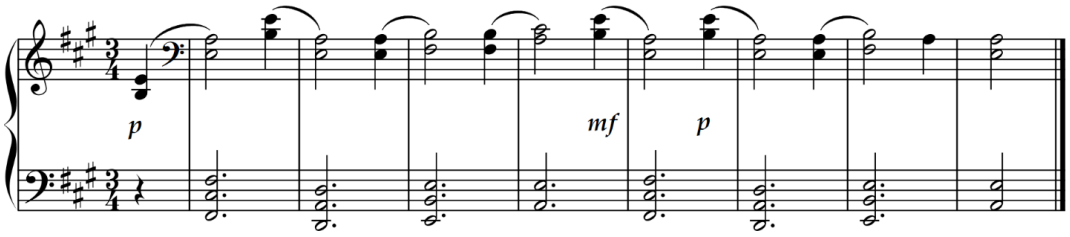
Chee, in his lecture recital, focused on the set of Vocables, and so did not reference any of the preludes in regard to these style characteristics; however, the same ideas can certainly be applied to the preludes. Discussions here will focus on Navajo Prelude for Piano Nos. 1 and 2 as No. 3 was discussed earlier for its direct use of Diné chant. The two biggest concepts concerning traditional Diné chant Chee talked about in his lecture recital were the use of the number four in relation to harmony, melody, and repetition as well as a freely changing meter.

"Navajo Prelude for Piano No. 1" is in an ABA form, the A section containing the chant motifs discussed above. The middle section, though, is loaded with examples of parallel fourths harmonized by open fifths (see figure 3.25). In this section, the melody contains several descending perfect fifths, every melodic pitch is harmonized with a perfect fourth except the one example of a major third in the fourth measure (G-sharp is not part of the pentatonic pitch collection being used in the right hand) and the single

[86] Ibid., 13:47.

note in the penultimate bar. The left hand is solely open fifth chords, usually with the addition of the octave. In this same prelude, there are two examples of repetitions in groups of four. The opening two measures of the prelude feature four repeated A's, which is then followed by four consecutive E's in a broken octave. Additionally, the chant motif in the same prelude is heard twice over the course of two bars; those two bars are repeated four times throughout the work. Concerning meter, this prelude spends much of its time, including the entire B section in 3/4, but it does switch into 4/4 as the music requires.

Figure 3.25. B section fragment of Navajo Prelude No. 1



"Navajo Prelude for Piano No. 2" also displays these characteristics. Harmonically, the bass throughout the work contains a perfect fifth, which is not terribly unusual in music that uses tertial harmony or contemporary tonal music, but it is worth noting its presence in the context of this work's connection to traditional Navajo chant. Like "Navajo Prelude for Piano No. 1," this prelude is also in an ABA form. The B section and the return of the A section contain significant examples of fourths and fifths both melodically and harmonically. Nearly the entire right hand of the B section, all of which is again in 3/4, is composed of A's and E's, and the left hand continues to be built on a foundation of parallel perfect fifths (see figure 3.26). Additionally, Connor's treatment of the thematic material in the A section, which moves freely among 3/4, 4/4, and 5/4 as

needed, and its return illustrate his use of the pentatonic scale, parallel fourths, and repetition in fours. As figure 3.27 illustrates, the original melody is presented in the initial A section, and it is harmonized in mostly perfect fourths in its return. Not displayed are the left hand arpeggiations underneath, which are in the same style as in figure 3.26. In each section, the measures presented are heard twice, meaning the thematic material is heard four times total. Moreover, this theme, both when presented by itself and when it is later harmonized, only contains pitches from a pentatonic pitch collection.

Figure 3.26. Navajo Prelude No. 2, mm 11-19

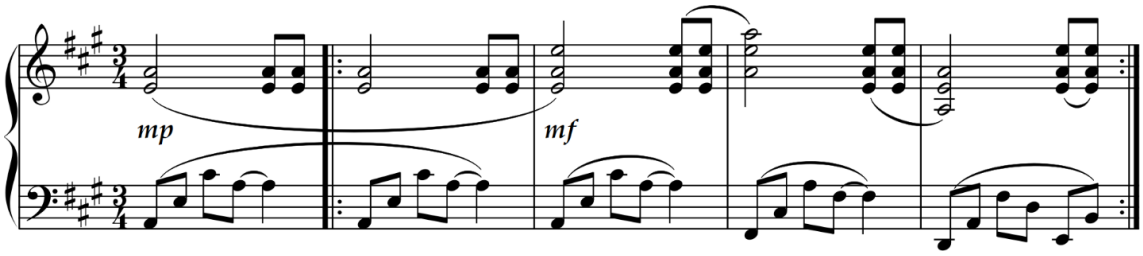
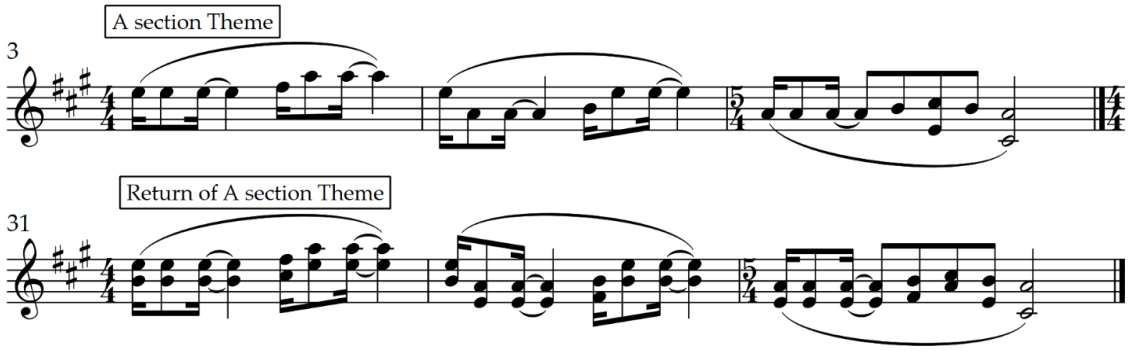


Figure 3.27. Navajo Prelude No. 2, Theme



Connor Chee found inspiration in the music of his ancestors. It is a music that is becoming more obscure as future generations aren't learning and singing these songs.

For this reason, Chee has sought to preserve some of this music in his set of vocables and preludes. In pursuit of this goal, he has largely set entire chants against a backdrop of harmony and accompaniment in his *The Navajo Piano*. The melodies are generally very clear and always in the top voice. In addition, he includes chant characteristics within the works in the form of fours—by repetition and by using harmonies built on fourths and fifths—as well as by freely changing his works' meters as the music requires.

CHAPTER 4: A DELICATE BALANCE IN THE MUSIC OF VICTORIA BOND

Connor Chee, in his *The Navajo Piano*, uses motifs in the Navajo Vocable No. 1, the Navajo Prelude No. 1 and Navajo Prelude No. 2, and in the opening call themes, but mostly uses entire chant themes or chant-like characteristics in his music. Even the call themes are used as they are in the original chants. Connor doesn't, for instance, take the descending minor third and use it chromatically to shift among multiple key areas. Connor's pieces are very true and pure to their source material, which is unsurprising, because his original goal for his album was to preserve the musical traditions of his native heritage. The chants he uses are very audible and the finished product gives off a distinctly Native American flavor.

Victoria Bond, on the other hand, uses motifs from chant as the basis for entire works in a way that Beethoven might write a development section for a sonata.[87] She takes fragments from the chants and elaborates on them, sometimes augmenting or diminishing their rhythms or inverting the intervals. Bond holds a great appreciation for Beethoven's ability to extract ideas from a motif and see it from multiple viewpoints.[88] In fact, in an interview with Madeline Rogers, Bond said, "The reason I became a musician was because of Beethoven and Mozart and Bach…those composers that I played as a child, and they've been with me ever since; they are the source of

[87] Victoria Bond, phone interview with author, July 29, 2022.
[88] Ibid.

inspiration basically of all I do, plus what I've experienced in my travels."[89] Her musical and expressive goals are very different than Chee's. Bond wanted to write powerful music expressing a deep meaning in the Orthodox chant traditions of Paul Barnes as well as the Jewish chant she grew up hearing. The result was something not entirely one thing or another, but a delicate balance of them all. These goals are particularly evident in the textures each composer chose to use. Much of Connor's music consists of a melodic line (often the chant theme itself) and an accompanying line in the left hand. His intention meant melodic lines needed to be obvious and without any competition. Victoria, on the other hand, composed in a more polyphonic style, where each hand shares different aspects of the texture. Sometimes, the left hand has the melody while the right hand has the accompanying figures. Sometimes, the right hand will have the melody and parts of the accompanying figures. Other times, both hands have simultaneous melodic lines built off the motifs she uses, and neither hand is particularly more important than the other.

Her vehicle for achieving this goal was a set of pieces for solo piano entitled *Illuminations on Byzantine Chant*. This was not her first work to use chant, nor will it likely be her last. Bond had already composed *Equinox,* a ballet which used pre-recorded Gregorian chant.[90] She would go on to compose *Sacred Sisters* for flute and harp. This Jewish-chant-inspired work was later expanded for *Seduction and Sanctification*, a triple

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[89] Madeline Rogers, "Unveiling Resolution: Cyclicism and Romantic Conception in Chant-Inspired Piano Music of Victoria Bond" (DMA diss., University of Nebraska-Lincoln, April 2021), 77, accessed July 29, 2022, Unveiling Resolution: Cyclicism and Romantic Conception in the Chant-Inspired Piano Music of Victoria Bond - ProQuest

[90] Ibid., 13.

concerto for flute, harp, and viola based on the Apocrypha and which included a chant of her own creation in the third movement.[91] Additionally, the second movement of *Black Light*, a jazzy piano concerto, uses a chant she had the opportunity to hear in her father-in-law's synagogue in Long Island.[92]

Religion has played a large role in the development of Bond's music. Her father was a conductor and composer in a Chicago synagogue,[93] and, even though they were not observant Jews, she grew up surrounded by this music and finds Jewish teachings to be very powerful.[94] Like Gurdjieff, she sought to harmonize these religious teachings with scientific inquiry, and she had many opportunities to cultivate an interest in science in pursuit of that goal. Her father, who had mixed feelings about his Jewish religion, was educated as a doctor; and her family spent a lot of time in nature.[95]

The first work in this set of pieces is titled *Potirion Sotiriu* ("Cup of Salvation"). It was her first solo work to use chant.[96] Composed in 1999, after her meeting with Paul Barnes,[97] the piece is based on Psalm 116:13:[98] "I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord."[99] According to Bond, the two of them were in the Czech Republic heading to a recording session for her first piano concerto when she asked

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[91] Ibid., 14.
[92] Ibid., 13.
[93] Ibid., 11.
[94] Bond, phone interview.
[95] Rogers, "Unveiling Resolution," 12.
[96] Ibid., 2.
[97] Ibid., 2.
[98] Ibid., 17.
[99] Bible Hub, "Psalm 116:13: New International Version," accessed October 27, 2022, https://biblehub.com/psalms/116-13.htm.

about his work. After telling her that he chants at his Greek Orthodox Church and, at her request, singing the melody to a hymn titled "Potirion Sotiriu," she resolved herself to compose a solo work based on this music,[100] which she described as "haunting in its purity and profundity."[101] As someone who grew up Jewish, she found the music of Barnes's chant tradition to be very powerful and provocative, doubly so after learning they both come from the same source and share a lot of history.[102] Bond was so inspired by this music that she would also, in 2002, expand it into a piano concerto appropriately titled *Ancient Keys*.[103]

The Byzantine/Orthodox chant system consists of eight modes known as the "octoechos."[104] They consist of four modes and the plagal versions of those modes, the third of which is specifically called the Grave mode.[105] Like the major and minor scales of western classical music, the modes of Byzantine music consist of seven different pitches.[106] Roughly equivalent to the solfège system, each pitch is given a different name in what is called the parallage system[107]—Ni, Pa, Vou, Ga, Thi, Ke, and Zo.[108] Each scale has a different base note, which functions like a tonic note would in the western

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[100] Bond, phone interview.
[101] Victoria Bond, "Works: Ancient Keys," Victoria Bond, accessed September 7, 2022, https://www.victoriabond.com/artist.php?view=prog&rid=1957.
[102] Bond, phone interview.
[103] Bond, "Works: Ancient Keys."
[104] Rogers, "Unveiling Resolution," 19.
[105] Aristidis Garinis and Demetrios Kehagias, *Byzantine Music: Theory and Practice Guide*, 1st ed. (New York City: Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, 2011), 12, https://books.apple.com/us/book/archdiocesan-school-of-byzantine-music-theory/id538107708.
[106] Nicholas M. Kastanas, "Byzantine Music Simplified," Sts. Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church, 4, Accessed September 1, 2022, https://www.stsconstantinehelen.org/assets/files/Byzantine_Music_Simplified_(with_neumes),_for_alignment.pdf.
[107] Garinis, *Byzantine Music: Theory and Practice Guide*, 131.
[108] Kastanas, "Byzantine Music Simplified," 4.

tonal system and can also change depending on the type of hymn being sung.[109] The different versions of the scale make use of a system in which pitches relative to each other are slightly different than the modern system of tonality.[110] For this reason, intervals in this system are called "moria," meaning microtones.[111] The Byzantine system divides the octave into 72 equal parts rather than 12. Some of the intervals between the two systems' diatonic scales are equivalent. For instance, Ni to Pa, Ga to Thi, and Thi to Ke are a whole step apart. Only two pitches are relatively different between the two systems. Pa is approximately two microtones lower than mi, and zo is about two microtones lower than ti;[112] so, overall, using a Byzantine chant in a piano solo work does not obscure the original work too greatly.

This system was codified by St. John of Damascus in the eighth century and was chanted monophonically.[113] Instruments were associated with paganism in the early church; it was believed their music "excited the senses."[114] Because the voice is a creation of God, it was and is often still considered to be pure and perfect, whereas instruments are sometimes still considered to be imperfect creations of man.[115] In the 15th century, polyphony was introduced in the worship services, but it was still generally limited to the Ionian Islands. In the mid-19th century, although officially four-part harmony was banned in the church, polyphonic settings of chant grew in popularity in

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[109] Garinis, *Byzantine Music: Theory and Practice Guide*, 131.
[110] Ibid., 12.
[111] Ibid., 14.
[112] Ibid., 12.
[113] Rogers, "Unveiling Resolution," 19.
[114] Garinis, *Byzantine Music: Theory and Practice Guide*, 5.
[115] Dr. Paul Barnes, DMA Document Defense, November 17, 2023.

Western Europe. Later, in twentieth-century United States, harmonizations of hymns were used more frequently, but this was certainly the minority worldwide.[116]

Just like with western notation, Byzantine notation has gone through a process that includes a type of neumatic notation. It is entirely conceivable that Byzantine music had been written down as early as the first millennium AD; however, very little survives from that time as much of it was on documents that included images of Christ and saints and have been destroyed.[117] Iconoclasm, though it began during Leo III's reign, was official policy by the time Constantine V banned the creation of icons in 754. Iconoclasts, or "image breakers," particularly in the sixth and seventh centuries, justified their belief that revering icons was idolatry with the second of the 10 Commandments given to Moses on Mount Sinai.[118] For this reason, the first significant body of notated work comes from around 950 A.D., from when about 7,500 manuscripts of music exist.[119]

The process of changes in notation in the Byzantine system came about in four stages. In its earliest stage (Early Byzantine Notation from ca. 950-1177), the notation was very unstable and unclear. In the second stage, the Middle Byzantine (Round) Notation (1177-ca. 1670), more symbols were used, and those symbols were unambiguous. The third stage, the Transitional Exegetical Notation (ca. 1670-1814), saw some melismatic settings of hymns[120] as well as transcriptions of older hymns into the

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[116] Garinis, *Byzantine Music: Theory and Practice Guide*, 5.
[117] Ibid., 7.
[118] National Gallery of Art, "Iconoclasm," National Gallery of Art, accessed November 20, 2023, https://www.nga.gov/features/byzantine/iconoclasm-.html.
[119] Garinis, *Byzantine Music: Theory and Practice Guide*, 7.
[120] Ibid., 7.

current system. The modern system of Byzantine notation, the New Method of Analytical Notation (1814-today), has only 15 unique, well-defined symbols, making the music easily readable and dispensing with the requirement that much of the music be memorized and passed by oral rules and traditions. This is also when the current parallage system, which is based on the first seven letters of the Greek alphabet, was developed by the Three Teachers (Archimandrite Chrysanthos of Madytos, Gregory Levitides, and Chourmouzios the Archivist). This new system spread rapidly and has continued to be the choice of notation today outside of cases when hymns are renotated into western notation.[121]

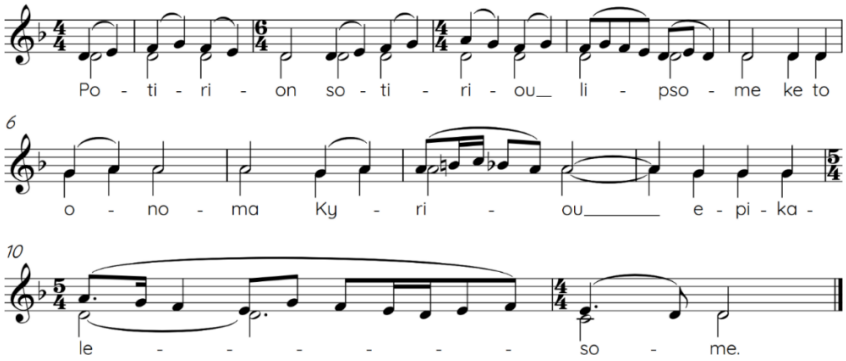
Despite the logicality of the Byzantine system, it can be a bit confusing learning it from the lens of the western classical notation system. For this reason, Theophrastos Sakellarides (1853-1938) transcribed Byzantine music into modern notation. He also advocated for equal temperament and sometimes added extra voices to the chants.[122] It is in Sakellarides' *Hymns and Odes* (1908) that the original chant for *Potirion Sotiriu* can be found.[123]

"Potirion Sotiriu" (figure 4.1) is in the Plagal First Mode,[124] which belongs to the diatonic scale[125] and contains two identical tetrachords[126] separated by a whole step

[121] Ibid., 8.
[122] Rogers, "Unveiling Resolution," 19.
[123] Ibid., 20.
[124] Theophrastos Sakellarides, "Potirion Sotiriu," New Byzantium Publications, accessed November 6, 2022, https://newbyz.org/files/09-08.12_theotokos_communion_gr_en_staff.pdf.
[125] Kastanas, "Byzantine Music Simplified," 31.
[126] Rogers, "Unveiling Resolution," 21.

beginning on Pa.[127] It contains roughly the same intervals as the Dorian mode,[128] except that Zo is lowered when the melody descends.[129] This raising and lowering of pitches does not occur in the pentatonic modality of the native chant which Connor uses in his music.

Figure 4.1. Potirion Sotiriu Chant[130]



Bond's piano solo is a loose theme and variation set. It begins with a full statement of the chant accompanied by arpeggiated open fifth chords (figure 4.2) continuing through measure 13, but missing the final "alleluia" cadence of the chant.[131] In an interview with Madeline Rogers, a recent graduate of the Doctorate of Musical Arts degree in the University of Nebraska's piano department, Bond says:

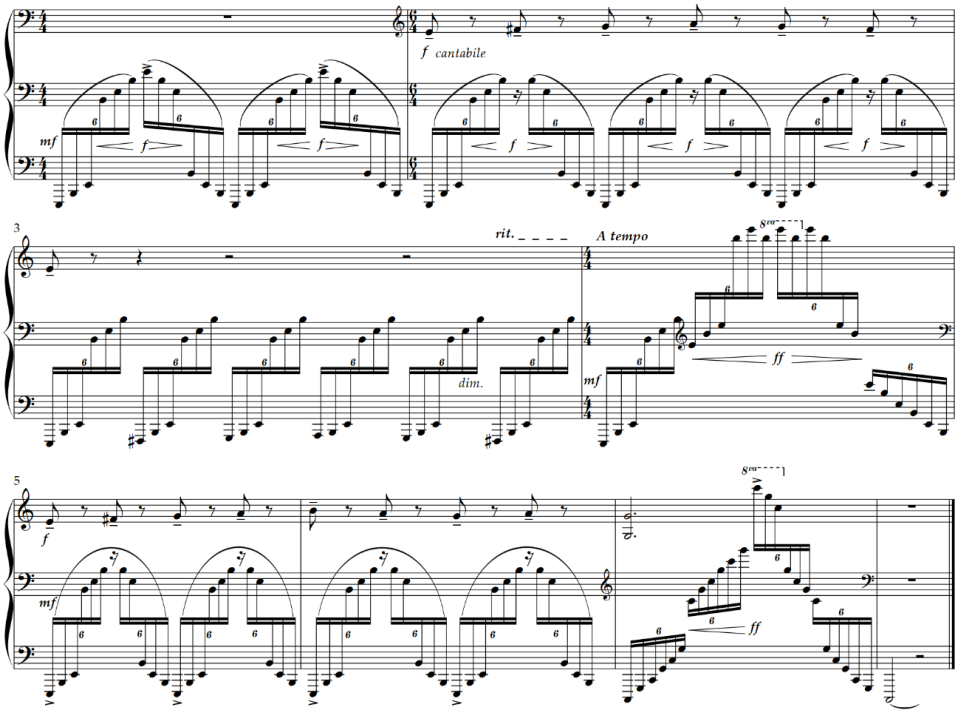
> "I like to get a helicopter shot of the piece at the beginning. Sometimes I have a clear idea of what the form will be, like looking at a landscape looking at the whole thing in front of you and looking at the various sections and how they relate. It's good to have a structure, a firm structure to build things on and have a sense of direction. Form should not necessarily be evident to the listener. In fact, if it is too evident to the listener, it's like looking at a building and seeing all of the structural

[127] Kastanas, "Byzantine Music Simplified," 38.
[128] Rogers, "Unveiling Resolution," 21.
[129] Kastanas, "Byzantine Music Simplified," 39.
[130] Sakellarides, "Potirion Sotiriu," https://newbyz.org/files/09-08.12_theotokos_communion_gr_en_staff.pdf.
[131] Rogers, "Unveiling Resolution," 22.

> elements rather than the totality of the building itself. You want to appreciate the building as a work of art, not just where it's joined. With a piece of music, if you're too aware of the form it's too obvious and it's like a story—you're not being pulled into the story…"[132]

This is obviously directly contradicting Connor Chee's purposeful repetition in groups of four. The same factor as before explains this difference in style. Connor needed his forms and chant themes to be obvious because he was ultimately working toward preservation of a waning musical tradition. In the end, the two composers were working toward entirely separate goals.

Figure 4.2. Potirion Sotiriu Piano Solo, Opening



The opening repeating E's in the bass are a nod to the ison in Greek Orthodox chant.[133] Ison refers to a sustained tone on generally either the bass of the mode or the

[132] Ibid., 15.
[133] Ibid., 28.

dominant note of the current tetrachord.[134] Since its purpose was modal stability rather than melodic enrichment, the various bans on polyphonic and harmonized arrangements of Greek Orthodox hymns did not apply to the ison.[135] Byzantine music can be thought about in three parts that make the whole—as a Trinity of words, melos (melody), and ison.[136] The words are more important than the melos; the purpose is not to have beautiful, lush, and complex music, but that music would serve the meaning of the words.[137] The melos, or the "Unified Voice of the Church," is heightened by the ison, or the "Uncreated Light of God," and, as such, should never be overpowered by the ison. Musically, it provides a reliable and firm foundation for the melos and the mode of the chant. It reminds us of where we came from and informs where we choose to go next.[138] It is also a symbol of stability, that Christians are an "unchanging centering element that remains constant through the chaos of the world."[139] It was first written about in the 14th century, but the concept likely goes all the way back to the use of drone instruments in the Old Testament. It was first notated in the 19th century, and, until the 20th century, was not commonly seen even in liturgy books. There is little written down about the topic.[140]

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[134] Christina T. Stavros, March 1, 2014, Presentation, Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Boston Lenten Family Camp, Contoocook, New Hampshire. Adapted in "Christ Our Ison: Byzantine Music and the Orthodox Family." Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. June 23, 2015. Accessed September 6, 2022. https://www.goarch.org/-/christ-our-ison-byzantine-music-and-the-orthodox-family.
[135] Garinis, *Byzantine Music: Theory and Practice Guide, 5.*
[136] Stavros, March 1, 2014, Presentation.
[137] Garinis, *Byzantine Music: Theory and Practice Guide, 6.*
[138] Stavros, March 1, 2014, Presentation.
[139] Rogers, "Unveiling Resolution," 30.
[140] Charlie Marge and Richard Barrett, "Chanting with Ison." Antiochian Village, 32nd Annual Sacred Music Institute, 1, July 2017, accessed September 3, 2022, http://ww1.antiochian.org/sites/default/files/chanting_with_ison_final.pdf.

Today, there is not only one single way to chant against an ison, and there are traditional uses and innovative uses of the concept. For instance, an ison can be sung on only one vowel, it can reflect the vowels in the main text of the chant, or it could simply be the full text.[141] Additionally, though an ison is generally only a single note or perhaps doubled an octave higher, Constantine Psachos, who taught music in Athens in 1904, introduced the ison at the fourth or fifth above the bass note.[142] It is also not required, and, perhaps most importantly, it is preferred that there be no ison rather than a poor ison.[143] The ison in "Potirion Sotiriu" should be characterized as a conservative ison, because it only changes based on deviations in tetrachords, pentachords, and modes.[144]

After the initial appearance of the chant, Bond presents the chant's final alleluia motif (see figure 4.3) in a cascading fashion and combines it polyphonically with the original chant. Combining chants together in one texture will be a consistent technique throughout this set of piano works. Even in this opening work, Bond combines motifs created from the chant in interesting and unique ways. For example, measures 188-89 combine another cascading motif created from the very opening of the chant with a motif from measures five and six of the chant. Then, in measure 224, she stacks a rhythmic diminution of the chant's opening on top of the original motif. Figure 4.4 highlights these two passages.

[141] Ibid., 2.
[142] Ibid., 3.
[143] Ibid., 2.
[144] Rogers, "Unveiling Resolution," 29.

Figure 4.3. Compare Alleluia[145] and Potirion Sotiriu, mm 21-23

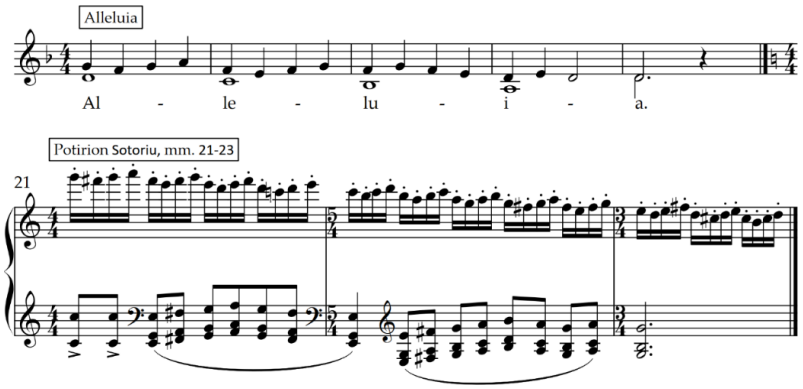
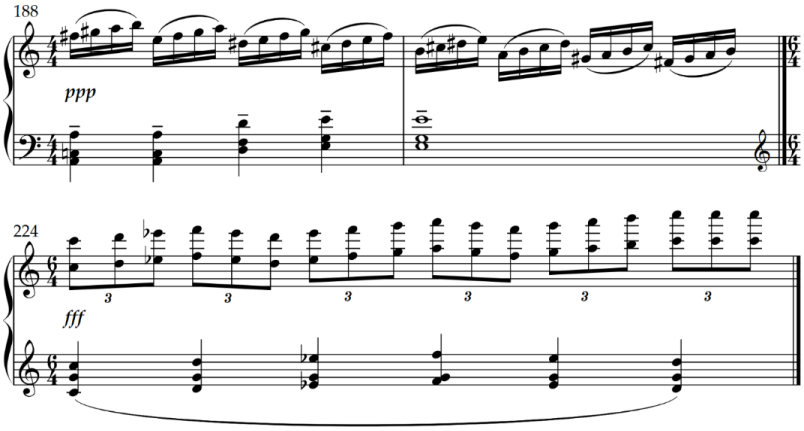


Figure 4.4. Potirion Sotiriu, mm. 188-89 and 224



One could easily make the comparison of Bond's treatment of motifs derived from the chants to how the development section of a Beethoven sonata or symphony might play out. She creatively places these motifs in diverse textures and in a landscape of ever-changing pitch centers; though each work finishes back in the original tonic. For instance, as can be seen in figures 4.5, 4.6, and 4.7 Bond employs parallel minor chords using the main theme of the chant in the *Presto* section beginning at measure 26. Here, the theme heard in the left hand is placed with C as its pitch center; in just a few measures, though, the theme is briefly heard in G, and, when it occurs in a similar, more

[145] Sakellarides, "Potirion Sotiriu."

diatonic passage at measure 59, the pitch center is D. In some cases, Bond changes the rhythm of the chant passage being developed. At the Meno mosso at measure 53, the composer uses triplets, giving the performer and audience a fresh perspective on the chant. Bond uses this rhythm again in measures 136-37 and 166, sometimes intermingling it with an asymmetrical rhythm in five, at various places in the music, such as in measures 117 and 162. Bond even employs the “more learned” compositional techniques of retrograde and inversion as she develops these motifs. For instance, she retrogrades the alleluia theme in the section beginning in measure 71, and, at measure 87, accompanies it with a repeating broken octave pattern that looks back to the broken octaves at measure 53.

Figure 4.5. Potirion Sotiriu, mm 26-29

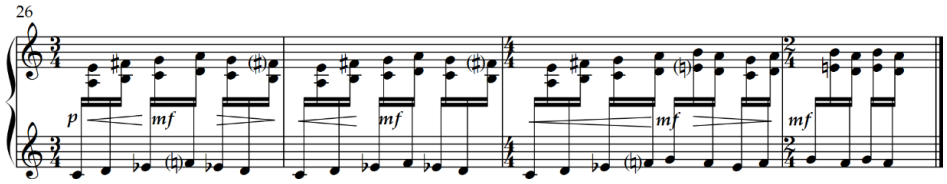


Figure 4.6. Potirion Sotiriu, mm 53-56

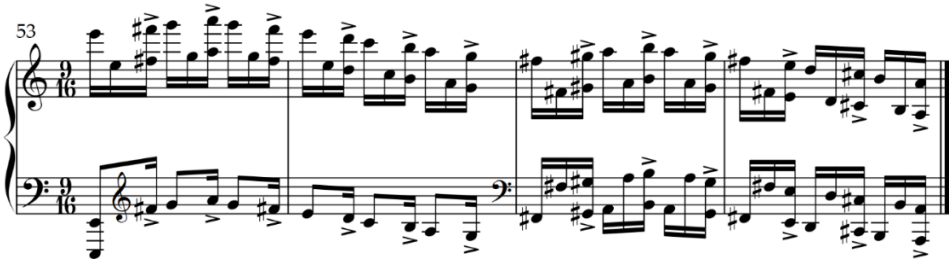
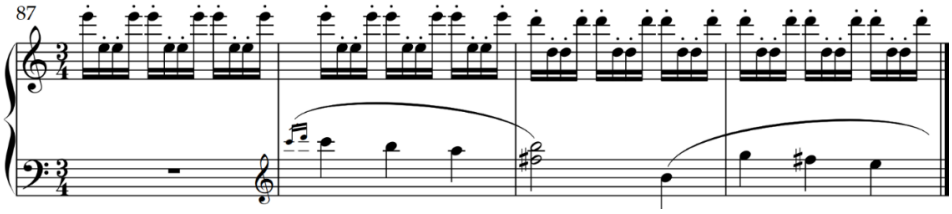


Figure 4.7. Potirion Sotiriu, mm 87-90



There is a powerful explosion of dissonance and bimodality at measure 151, where she combines an ever-modulating chant motif in the top notes of the top staff with the later section of the same chant (see figure 4.8). The same sort of dissonance returns in the softer section beginning at measure 176. In the last section, Bond includes more biting dissonances as she delays the work's resolution with an altered snippet of the original chant. Finally, she allows the dissonance to resolve, completing the ascending scale in the left hand, and ends the movement monophonically with a repeating alleluia motif in the extreme treble range of the piano (see figure 4.9).

Figure 4.8. Potirion Sotiriu, mm 151-59

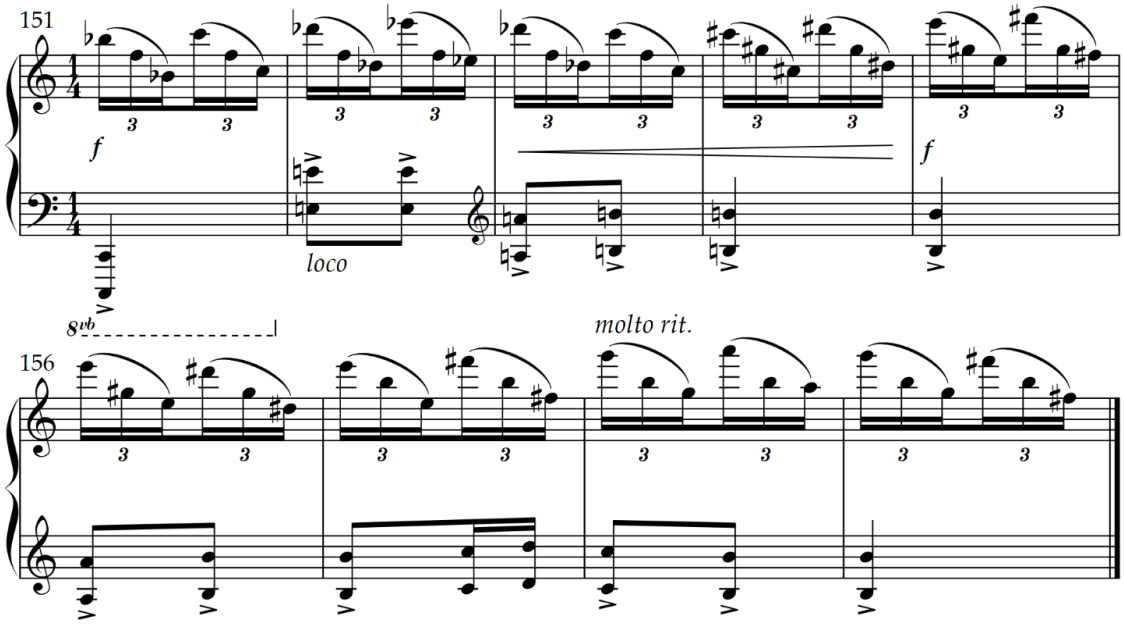
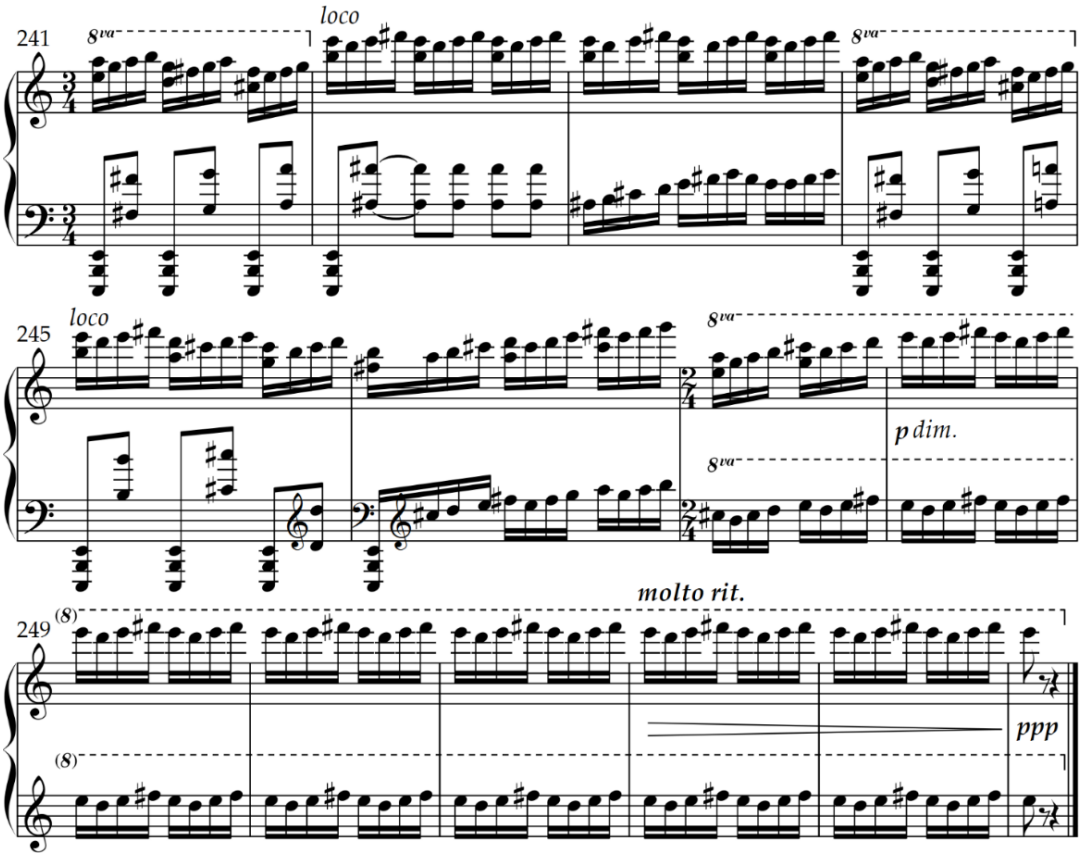


Figure 4.9. Potirion Sotiriu, mm 241-54



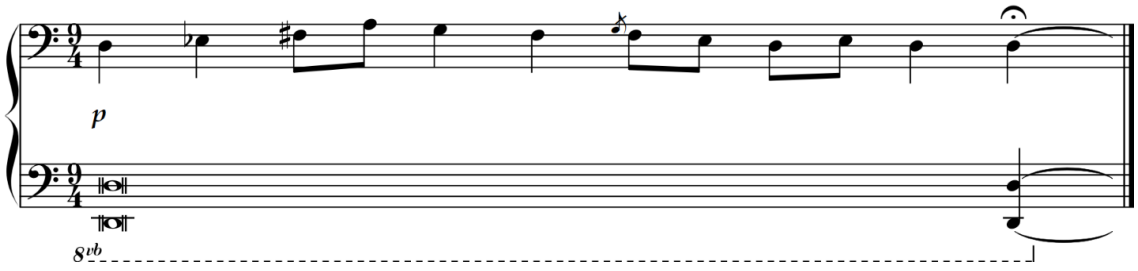
Simeron Kremate (Today is Suspended), though it is only the second piece in the set, was composed almost 20 years after *Potition Sotiriu*, in the fall of 2018 and spring of 2019.[146] Commissioned by the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the Soli Deo Gloria Music Foundation in Chicago, this work is based on a Greek Orthodox crucifixion chant of the same title from the Holy Thursday service during Orthodox Holy Week[147] and the Jewish Passover prayer for dew, *Tal*.[148] Both chants are based on the same scale,[149] which is the plagal second mode in

[146] Victoria Bond, "Works: Simeron Kremate," Victoria Bond, accessed September 9, 2022, https://www.victoriabond.com/artist.php?view=prog&rid=3299.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Bond, phone interview.
[149] Rogers, "Unveiling Resolution," 31.

the Orthodox system.[150] The second and plagal second modes are what make up the chromatic family of modes.[151] Like the ascending version of the plagal first mode, the ascending version of this scale contains two identical tetrachords,[152] and is therefore also symmetrical.[153]

Madeline Rogers views the use of Orthodox and Jewish chants as a reconciliation of the two faiths,[154] and Bond wasted no time making this combination of chant traditions evident to the listener. She opens the piece with a typical *apichima*,[155] or an introduction to a Byzantine hymn that clearly establishes the mode of the chant.[156] She even includes the ison of the chant in this introductory passage (see figure 4.10). Following this introductory material, she then includes a Jewish-style intonation in an appropriate improvisatory style before eventually exposing the Greek Orthodox chant on which the work is based.[157]

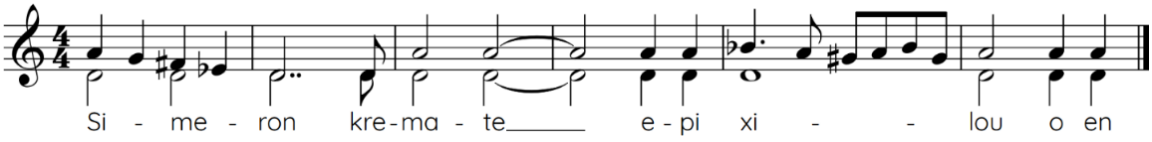
Figure 4.10. Simeron Kremate Apichima



[150] N. Takis, "Today is Hung," New Byzantium Publications, accessed November 6, 2022, https://newbyz.org/files/thurs_eve_15th_antiphon_en_staff.pdf.
[151] Kastanas, "Byzantine Music Simplified," 43.
[152] Rogers, "Unveiling Resolution," 34.
[153] Ibid., 34.
[154] Ibid., 42.
[155] Bond, "Works: Simeron Kremate."
[156] Garinis, Byzantine Music: Theory and Practice Guide, 119.
[157] Bond, "Works: Simeron Kremate."

Simeron Kremate makes heavy use of a five-note motif taken from the opening notes of the original chant (figure 4.11), a motif which is later revealed to be the resolution of the secondary theme, Tal, the Jewish prayer for dew.[158] Unlike in *Potirion Sotiriu*, the entire chant is not presented—only the motif being developed throughout the work. This is perhaps the most iconic presentation of Bond's work fitting within the Beethovenesque model of motivic development because he was able to compose his Symphony No. 5 largely on the back of a single 4-note motif.

Figure 4.11. Simeron Kremate Chant[159]



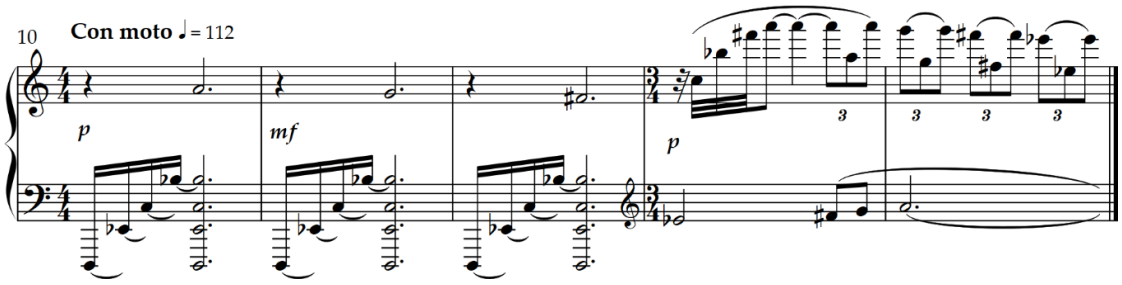
Bond's five-note motif features the augmented second that is iconic of both the plagal second mode in the Orthodox tradition and the Ahava Rabbah mode of the Jewish tradition.[160] This is the same interval Shostakovich used to achieve a particularly poignant effect in his music, and there are two of them featured in the Jewish mode. In addition to the augmented second, Bond employs the tritone throughout this particular work[161]—the tritone can be found twice in both the ascending and descending versions of the Orthodox mode.[162] Neither the tritone nor the augmented second is found in the pentatonic scale, so Chee could not have used those specifically while remaining within

[158] Rogers, "Unveiling Resolution," 3.
[159] Theophrastos Sakellarides, arr. Pizanis/Takis, "Simeron Kremate," New Byzantium Publications, accessed November 6, 2022, https://newbyz.org/files/thurs_eve_15th_antiphon_gr_staff.pdf.
[160] Bond, "Works: Simeron Kremate."
[161] Bond, phone interview.
[162] Rogers, "Unveiling Resolution," 33.

the scope of his native chant tradition; however, he did have the option of using the falling minor third in a similar manner. Melodically, he stayed within the pentatonic scale, in which two minor thirds exist. Naturally, his music does feature the interval just because of the modality he was using, but he did not develop it in the same way that Bond develops the tritone. It goes back to the reason each composer was writing chant-based repertoire. Connor's music featured entire chants, while Bond's music is more like a sonata.

At the first iteration of the theme, Bond resolves the motif against the backdrop of the same ison as the *apichima*; however, the motif does not resolve again until its connection to the Jewish prayer is made known; and, she hints at this treatment of the motif immediately. At measure 10, a rhythmically augmented motif stops just shy of its resolution only to turn back around and reascend. This is also one of the earliest examples in the piece where the tritone is featured, because the outer range of the unresolved motif is the tritone.

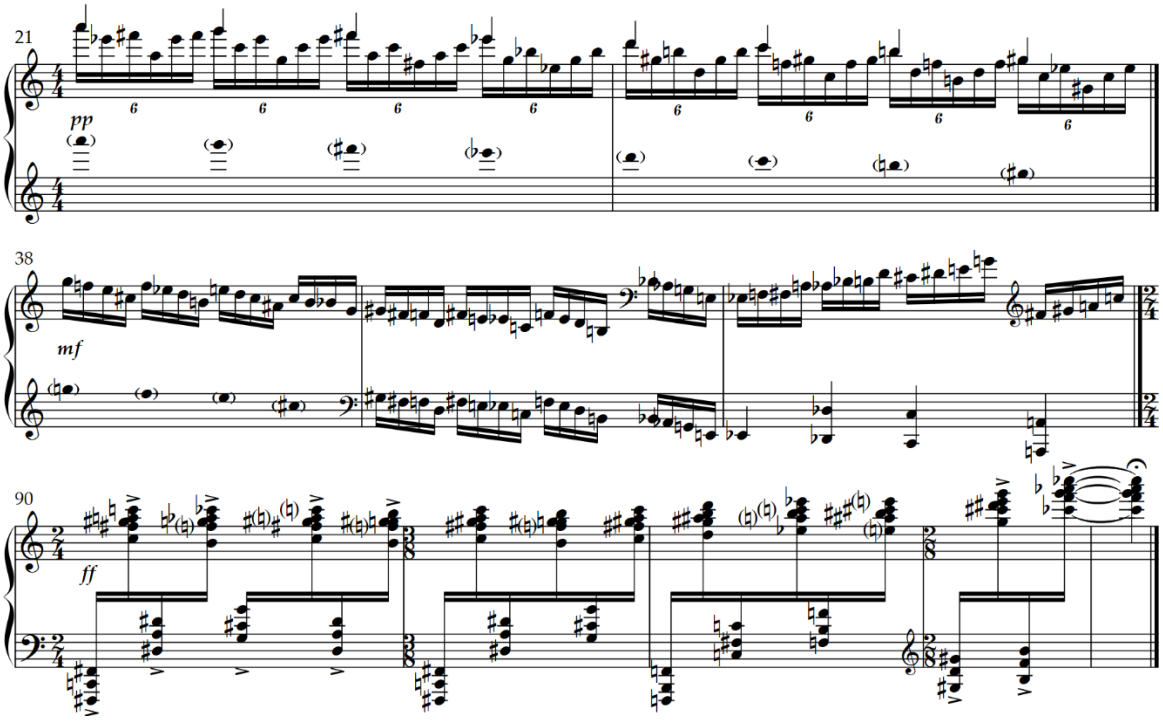
Figure 4.12. Simeron Kremate, mm 10-15



The motif is developed in a few ways before the Jewish prayer is introduced[163] (see figure 4.13). While Connor Chee keeps the modality of his chant tradition intact, Victoria Bond changes modality and ventures into atonality when she is stacking and cascading the chant themes in both *Potirion Sotiriu* and *Simeron Kremate*. Beginning in measure 21, Bond creates a descending passage of figurations in which the motif repeatedly begins anew where the previous motif would have resolved. At measure 34, she cascades the motif, sometimes beginning each motif on what would have been the previous motif's resolution, other times in the opposite direction, and, at select points in the music, creates a big-picture motif by beginning the individual motifs at the next interval of the motif itself as in measure 38. In this section, also, the motif can be seen in its inverted form beginning at measure 40, where she simultaneously has the left hand play the motif in its prime form in octaves in the left hand. The next section beginning at measure 49 doesn't feature the motif, even though each group of two or three measure passages is built from transpositions of the same scale. The section, however, does culminate in fortissimo chords composed of the inverted motif in the right hand and tritones in the left hand.

[163] Bond, "Works: Simeron Kremate."

Figure 4.13. Simeron Kremate, mm 21-22, 38-40, and 90-94



It isn't until the second half of the piece that Bond introduces the Jewish prayer for dew, *Tal*. Jewish liturgy divides the year into a wet winter season and a dry summer season.[164] At the end of Sukkot, in the fall,[165] Jews look ahead to the rainy season, on which Israel is largely dependent for its source of water,[166] with a recitation of the *Tefillat Geshem*; but, on the first morning of Passover, they say the *Tefillat Tal*, meaning "the prayer for dew,"[167] as the dry season arrives.[168] This happens to coincide with Pascha, when Greek Orthodox Christians meditate on the "suspension" of Jesus on the

[164] Reuven Hammer, "Geshem and Tal," in *Or Hadash: A Commentary on Siddur Sim Shalom*, Supplement for Festivals, The Rabbinical Assembly, 2003, 217, accessed September 2, 2022, https://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/sites/default/files/assets/public/jewish-law/holidays/sukkot/or-hadash-geshem-and-tal.pdf.
[165] My Jewish Learning, "The Prayer for Dew," My Jewish Learning, accessed September 22, 2022, https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-prayer-for-dew/.
[166] Hammer, "Geshem and Tal," 217.
[167] My Jewish Learning, "The Prayer for Dew."
[168] Hammer, "Geshem and Tal," 217.

cross.[169] Indeed, the text for *Simeron Kremate* begins, "He who suspended the earth upon the waters is suspended on a cross."[170]

Jews all over the world pray these prayers at the same time of year, despite the differences in climate wherever they currently reside;[171] it was in Israel, after all, where most Jewish prayers originated.[172] Dew represents having our basic needs met[173] and the importance of being efficient with what we have.[174] In ancient times, the regular presence of just a bit of dew could easily mean the difference between a successful or a failed growing season.[175] Unlike rain, dew is a blessing that is given freely with no expectations; it is a great treasure,[176] despite its small size and fleeting nature.[177] In the Midrash, Isaac asked God to bless Jacob with the "dew of heaven" on the first day of the Passover.[178] The text itself is a liturgical poem, or a piyyut,[179] and was composed in Palestine by Rabbi Eleazar Ha-Kalir, one of the earliest Hebrew poets who lived in the sixth century of the Common Era.[180]

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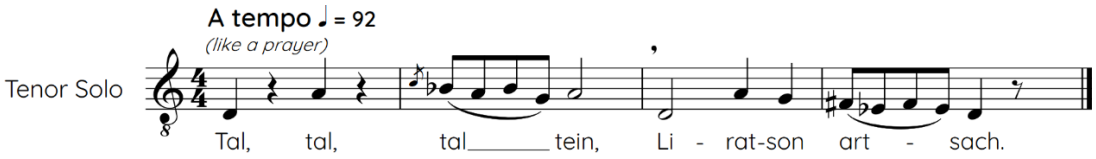
[169] Bond, "Works: Simeron Kremate."
[170] Rogers, "Unveiling Resolution," 42.
[171] Dalia Marx, "Dry Bones, Moist Land, and Vital Prayer," *ReformJudaism.org*, March 29, 2013, accessed September 3, 2022, https://reformjudaism.org/learning/torah-study/torah-commentary/dry-bones-moist-land-and-vital-prayer.
[172] Hammer, "Geshem and Tal," 217.
[173] Shaya Karlinsky, "The Jewish Holidays: Pesach #2," *Torah.org*, accessed September 2, 2022, https://torah.org/learning/maharal-pesach1/.
[174] Sarah Chandler, "Tefillat Tal: Cultivating a Mindset of Sufficiency," *My Jewish Learning*, accessed September 2, 2022, https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-prayer-for-dew-cultivating-a-mindset-of-sufficiency/.
[175] My Jewish Learning, "The Prayer for Dew."
[176] Karlinsky, "The Jewish Holidays: Pesach #2."
[177] Chandler, "Tefillat Tal: Cultivating a Mindset of Sufficiency."
[178] Hammer, "Geshem and Tal," 217.
[179] My Jewish Learning, "The Prayer for Dew."
[180] Hammer, "Geshem and Tal," 217.

Bond's *Dew, Precious Dew* is a choral setting of the *Tefillat Tal* (see figure 4.14). The same chant was used in her Hannukah Opera for Children, *Miracle of Light*. This is the Jewish chant used in *Simeron Kremate*.[181] As can be seen here, the ending of this chant consists of the same pitches as the five-note motif derived from the opening of the Orthodox chant.

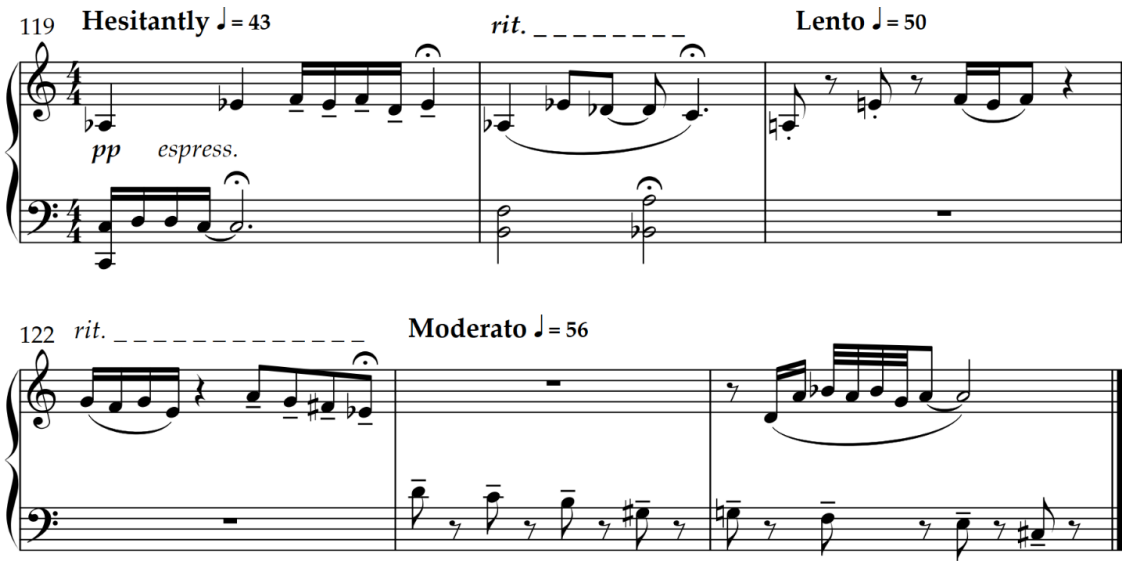
Figure 4.14. Dew, Precious Dew Tenor Solo[182]



When Bond first introduces the chant in her piano work, she does so in the major mode and a tritone away from the Orthodox chant's as well as its own original mode[183] and labels the section "a glimmer of hope." A couple of measures following, she writes a fragment of the Jewish chant transposed to the unresolved pitch of the five-note motif in measure 120, this time with the minor sixth. It's still not for three more measures, during which the pianist is playing the cascading unresolved five-note motif that foreshadows the two chants' melodic connection,[184] that one will hear the first half of the Jewish chant in its original mode at its original pitch level (see figure 4.15).

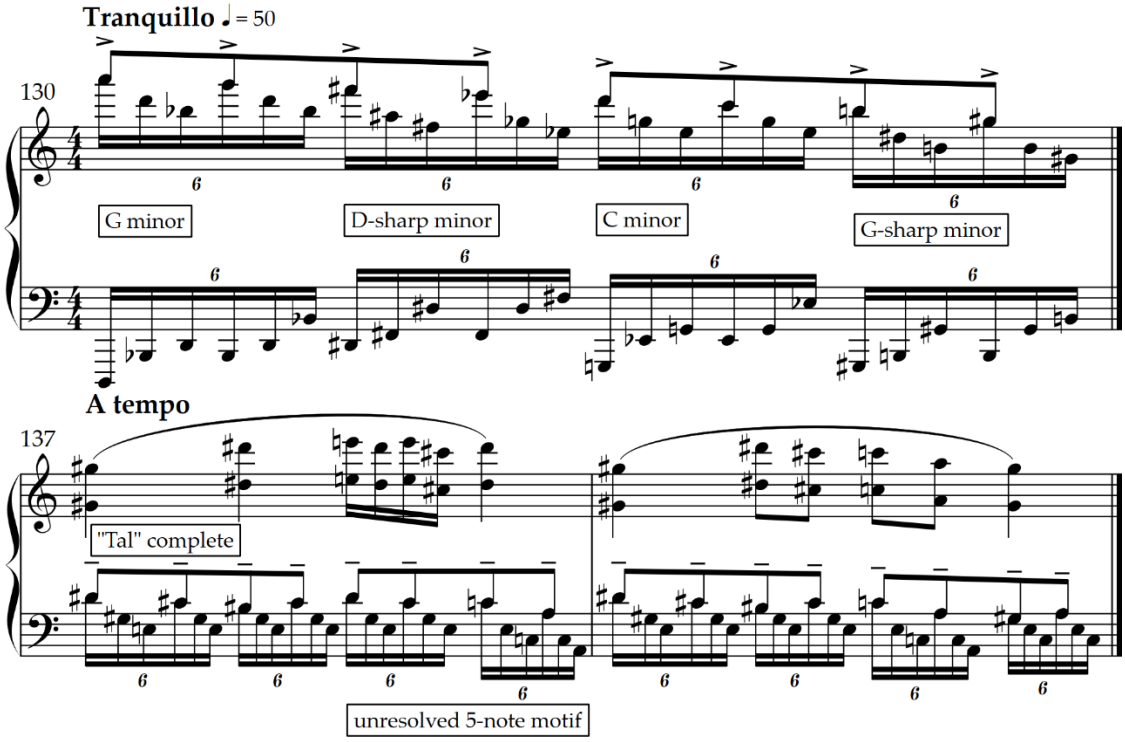
[181] Madeline Rogers, "Unveiling Resolution," 14.
[182] Victoria Bond, *Dew, Precious Dew: based on the Hebrew prayer "Tal,"* (Protone Music, 2015), 2.
[183] Rogers, "Unveiling Resolution," 39.
[184] Ibid., 39.

Figure 4.15. Simeron Kremate, mm 119-124



Following this expository section of the work, the music takes an intriguing turn as illustrated in figure 4.16. The nature of the thematic material doesn't readily lend itself to the same type of tertian treatment as the *Potirion Sotiriu* does; however, the *Tranquillo* section beginning at measure 130 features nothing but tertian harmonies. Each measure contains the cascading five-note motif decorated as a pattern of arpeggiations, the roots of which descend by alternating diminished fourths/major thirds and minor thirds/augmented seconds. Then, at measure 137, Bond combines the five-note motif with the Jewish chant in polyphony, finally revealing the motif to be the ending of the chant as well as resolving the motif for the first time since the beginning of the work.

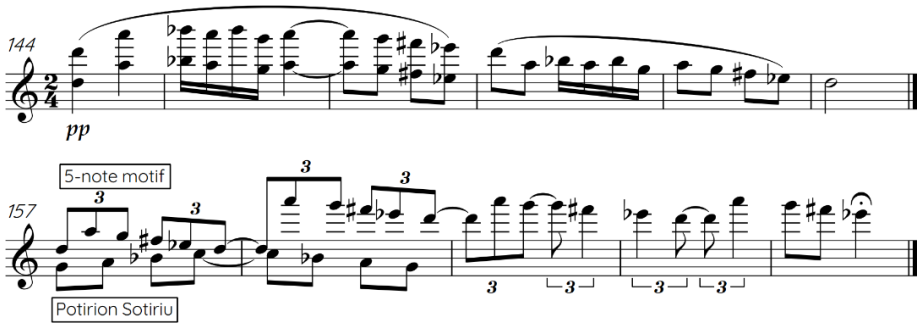
Figure 4.16. Simeron Kremate, mm. 130 and 137-38



In measure 144, Bond truncates the Jewish chant. First, she takes out the D that leads from the first half of the chant to the five-note motif by holding onto the A, then by removing the tie altogether, overlapping the first and second half of the chant in measures 147-48, and finally by repeating only the five-note motif with the *Potirion Sotiriu* in polyphony, foreshadowing her extensive use of cyclicism in the final work in the set. The music winds down until all that's left is the unresolved E-flat, symbolizing the suspension featured in the title of the piece.[185] As Paul Barnes explains, "The work concludes with a *tranquillo* passage of rare beauty. The work ends tentatively as the opening notes of the chant dissipate into eternity."[186]

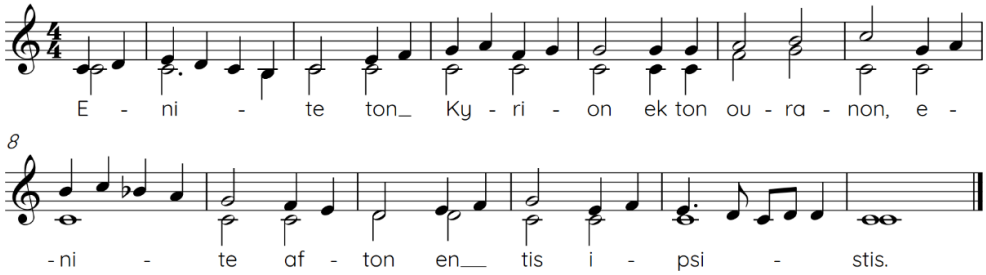
[185] Ibid., 42.
[186] Bond, "Works: Simeron Kremate."

Figure 4.17. Simeron Kremate, Treble Staff, mm. 144-49 and 157-61



Written in 2021, *Enite ton Kirion* is the final work of the trio of pieces that compose Victoria Bond's *Illuminations on Byzantine Chant*. The chant on which the work is based comes from Psalm 148. It is sung in the Divine Liturgy just on non-festal Sundays just before Communion is received.[187] The music is in the fourth plagal mode, which has a base note of Ni[188] and is composed of the identical tetrachords Ni-Pa-Vou-Ga and Thi-Ke-Zo-Ni'. Zo is natural when the scale ascends and flat when it is descending,[189] which puts the scale in the Ionian mode as it climbs upward and the Mixolydian mode as it falls back down.

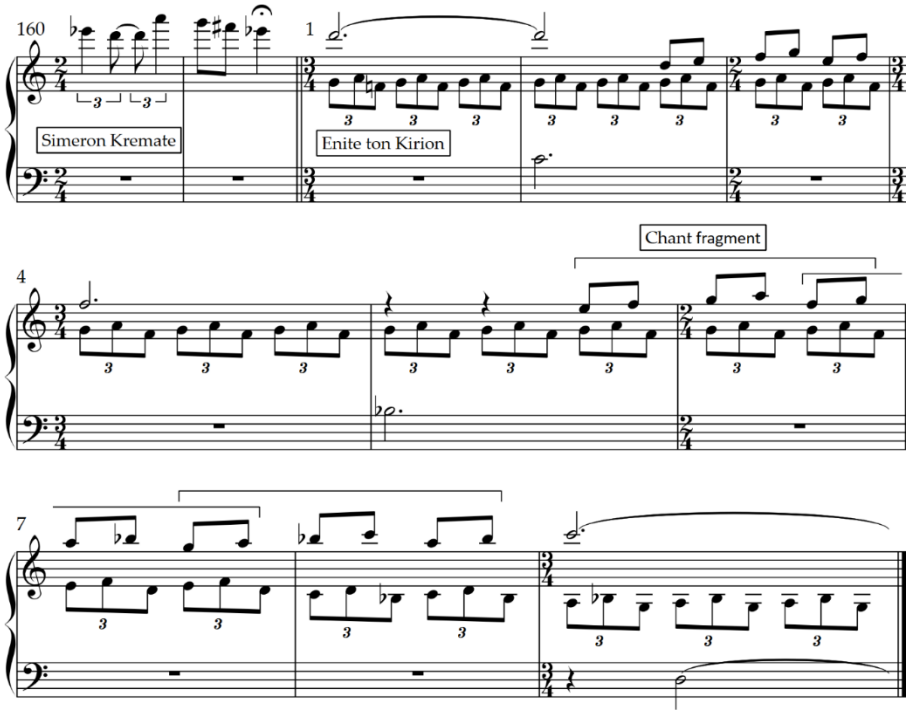
Figure 4.18. Enite ton Kyrion Chant[190]



[187] Victoria Bond, "News: Illuminations on Three Byzantine Chants" Victoria Bond, April 15, 2021, accessed September 9, 2022, https://www.victoriabond.com/artist.php?view=news&nid=11124.
[188] Kastanas, "Byzantine Music Simplified," 41.
[189] Ibid., 42.
[190] Nancy Chalker Takis and Stanley John Takis, *The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, 8th ed. (Williamston, MI: New Byzantium Publications, 2019), 70, accessed February 20, 2023, https://www.newbyz.org/divine_liturgy_newbyz.pdf.

Paul Barnes describes the opening of the piece saying he "envisioned this final movement to be similar to the final movement of Schumann's glorious *Fantasie* which after the emotional intensity of the first and second movements begins slowly as various keys are beautifully and meditatively explored."[191] The very first pitch of the right hand (see figure 4.19) turns out to be the final resolution of the five-note motif from the end of the *Simeron Kremate*, and Bond is already exploring all the possibilities in developing the chant even before introducing the chant itself.

Figure 4.19. Simeron Kremate Ending into Enite ton Kirion

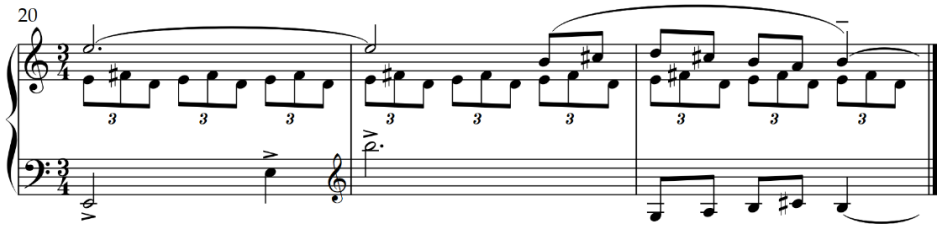


The music is ethereal as if it simply exists, floating, unattached, just waiting to be discovered by whoever is searching. The process of discovery in this work is a journey that traverses multiple keys and modes. Snippets of the chant are heard well before the

[191] Bond, "News: Illuminations on Three Byzantine Chants," https://www.victoriabond.com/artist.php?view=news&nid=11124.

listener realizes from where they came. Bond introduces the second quarter of the chant in measures two through four, but in the wrong mode. She then overlaps these six pitches of the chant to form a pattern of what would otherwise look like groups of four ascending notes each beginning on the next higher pitch. Here, it can also be seen that even the repeating triplets in the lower voice of the treble clef come from the chant. Measure 7 conveniently illustrates the same pitches in both the lower triplet and the first three pitches in the upper voice. These triplets continue mostly uninterrupted for the entire first half of the work. It's not until measures 21-22, after a couple of key shifts, that Bond introduces the first quarter of the chant (see figure 4.20). Note also the diatonically inverted chant fragment in the bottom staff of measure 22.

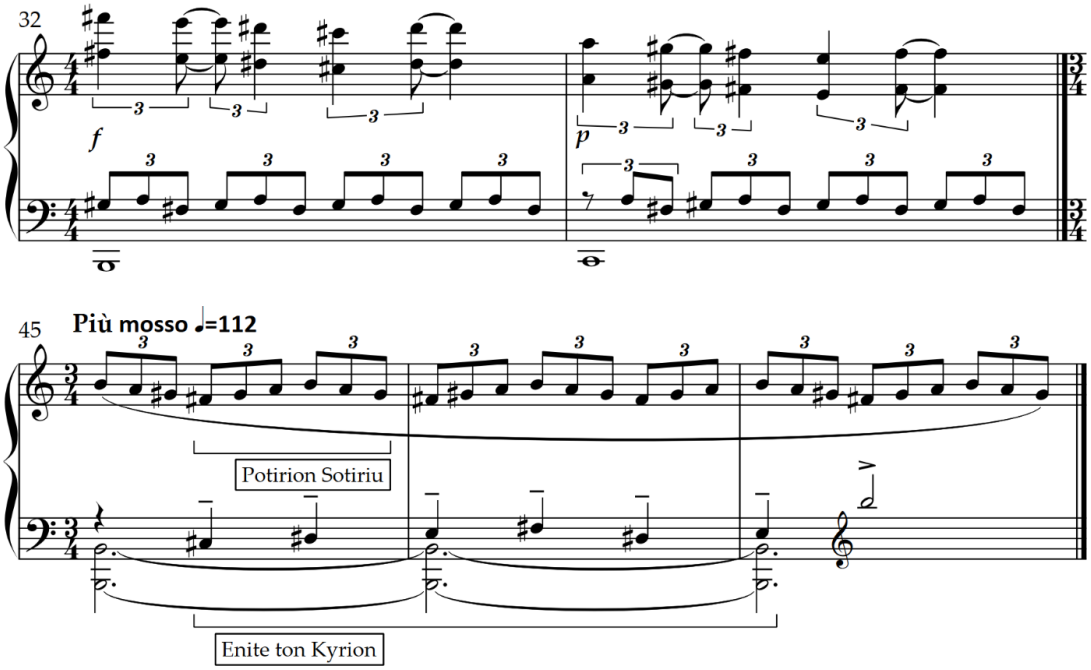
Figure 4.20. Enite ton Kirion, mm 20-22



Throughout the remainder of the first half of the work, Bond twists, turns, and stacks the chant fragments in all sorts of interesting ways. She plays with the listeners' sense of pulse and meter, continuing to create an other-worldly atmosphere. For instance, in measures 32-33 (see figure 4.21), Bond uses the first quarter of the chant to achieve a brief metric hiatus before quickly returning to the opening meter. Later, in the *Più mosso* section beginning at measure 45, she overlaps the second quarter of the *Enite ton Kyrion* chant with a repeating triplet figure in hemiola, which is revealed to be both a cleverly disguised *Potirion Sotiriu* as well as a portion of the *Enite ton Kyrion* chant

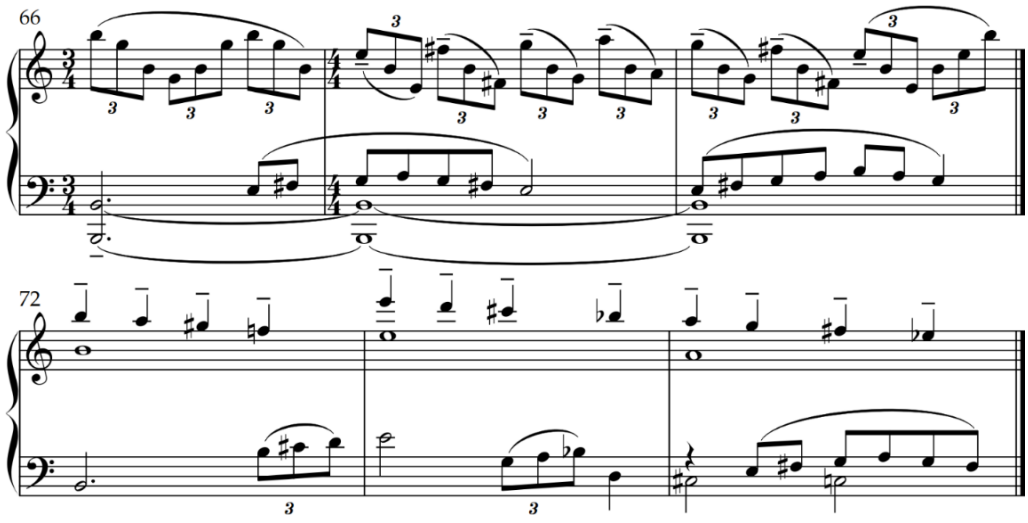
without the pitch differences between the ascending and descending versions of the scale.

Figure 4.21. Enite ton Kirion, mm 32-33 and 45-47



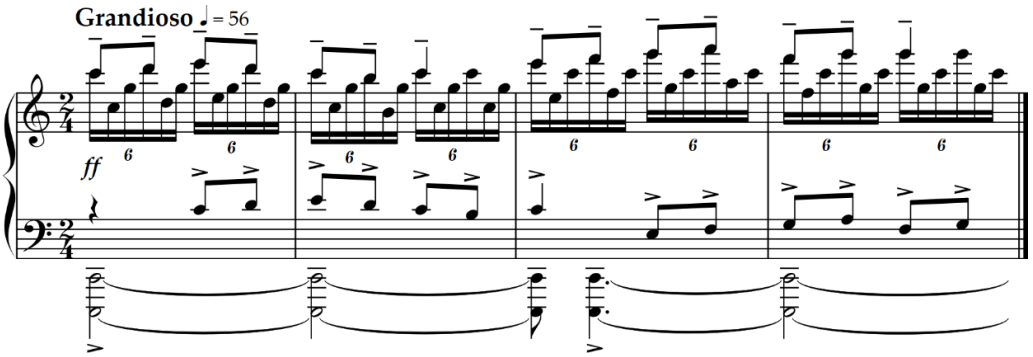
Following a short canon on the second quarter of the *Enite ton Kyrion* chant accompanied by more repeating *Potirion Sotiriu* triplets, Bond at last reveals to the listener the first half of the *Potirion Sotiriu* using the same textures found in the earlier piano work. This is immediately followed by a restatement of the cascading five-note motif from *Simeron Kremate*, a very striking moment in the piece. Neither the *Potirion Sotiriu* nor the *Enite ton Kyrion* include *Simeron Kremate's* tell-tale augmented second. Bond smooths over the transition by finishing the *Potirion Sotiriu* with a simple octave of Bs, including a bit of the *Potirion Sotiriu* in the lower staff of measure 74, and by smoothing out some of the harmonies; however, it can still take a moment for performer and listener alike to acclimate to the change.

Figure 4.22. Enite ton Kirion, mm 66-68 and 72-74



Then, in measures 77 and 78, Bond connects the end of the first half of the *Potirion Sotiriu* to the second half with the same style of arpeggiations as in the original work, though now transposed a major third lower. Just before the final coda and at the resolution of an ever-intensifying five-note motif in the bass, the entire chant is, for the first time in the entire work, presented in canon in the top voices of each staff. The canon is accompanied by powerful sextuplets in the treble staff and, as Barnes describes, "giant bells booming in the bass."[192]

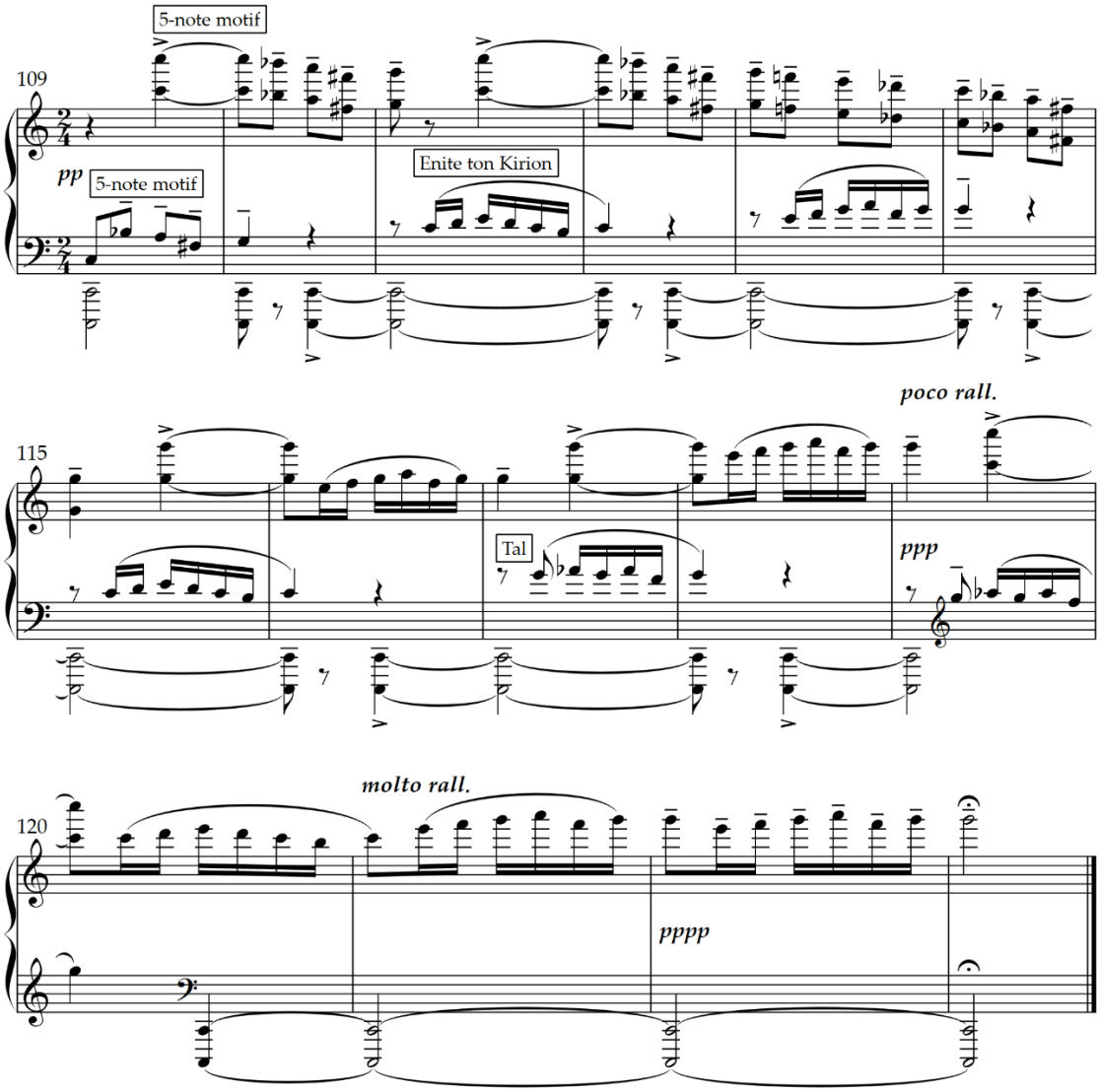
Figure 4.23. Enite ton Kirion, mm 93-96



[192] Ibid.

The coda brings everyone involved into a meditative unity as Bond joins the five-note motif, the *Simeron Kremate*, *Tal*, and the *Enite ton Kyrion* themes together in a subdued and fragmented polyphony still accompanied by the bells of the previous section. The work comes to a close with a sense of reconciliation and a renewed interest in the eternal. There is a quiet strength about the music, as it is the softest dynamic found in the entire set of *Illuminations* (*pppp*).

Figure 4.24. Enite ton Kirion, mm 109-23

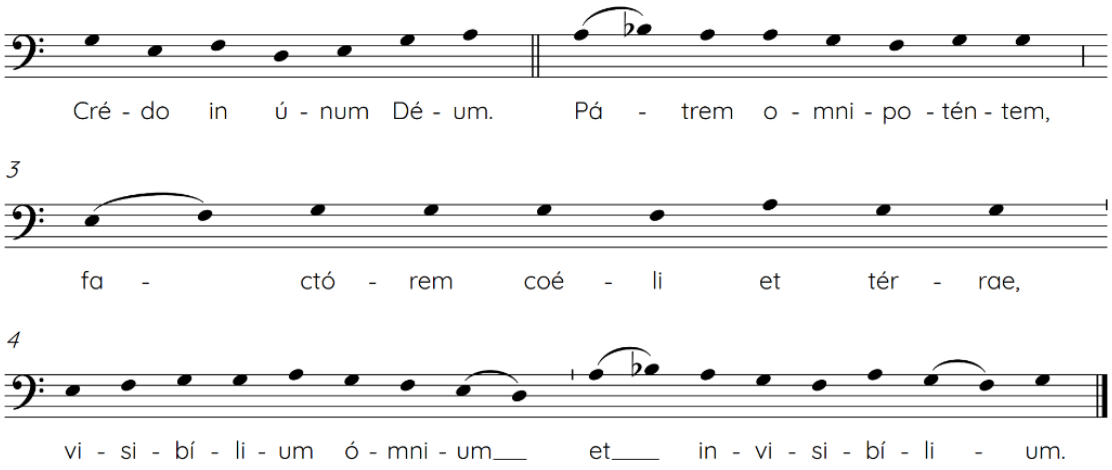


Connor Chee was using entire chant melodies and characteristics of his ancestor's musical traditions in his piano works in order to preserve a musical tradition that is slowly being forgotten. Victoria Bond, on the other hand, was taking chants from both her and Paul Barnes's religious traditions and working them in a way a composer might have developed a theme in a sonata or a symphony. Her aim was to write interesting, powerful music to express a great meaning found within both her and Barnes's religious beliefs. The two musical traditions blend quite well together as they both share a lot between them, historically and theologically. Chee and Bond shared this goal in expressing certain aspects of their and their ancestors' faiths. Chee included the number four in his use of repetition and harmony to express the importance of the number within his people's religious traditions. The number four represented the Four Sacred Stones, the Four Mountains, and the four directions. Bond's music expresses feelings and ideas that are, in many ways, more challenging to put into words, but there is certainly a powerful emotion to her music and a sense of reconciliation among diverse traditions.

CHAPTER 5: HAYES BIGGS AND THE RECONCILIATION OF EXTREMES

The case of Hayes Biggs' *E. M. am Flügel: Poem-Étude for Piano Solo* is a thought-provoking example of a composer infusing pre-existing chant directly into the music; however, Biggs composed the work in such a way that the chant itself is inaudible to the listener. For this piece, Biggs chose to use a fairly common Gregorian Credo that can still be heard during the Catholic Mass today[193] (see figure 5.1) as well as an Amen setting.

Figure 5.1. Gregorian Credo[194]



In a phone conversation with Biggs, he made note that the Credo portion of the Catholic Mass is generally done in monophony rather than the polyphonic settings of other parts of the Mass, particularly once congregational singing was encouraged during services. While he seems to have had no particular reason to use this specific setting, he was working on this piece at the same time as his unaccompanied Mass setting, *Mass for all Saints*. Indeed, music from this solo piano work can also be found in his setting of

[193] Hayes Biggs, phone interview, July 28, 2022.
[194] Hayes Biggs, *E.M. am Flügel: Poem-Étude for Piano Solo*, (New York City: C. F. Peters Corporation, 1993).

the Mass, though he is unsure which idea came first. Additionally, Hayes Biggs has been involved in choral music his entire life, so his music is certainly influenced by a tradition with a rich history of chant.

The work's title, which translates to "Eric Moe at the Grand Piano," is simple, but the music's content is certainly not. It was composed for the pianist who shares the title's name and with whom Hayes Biggs taught for one year at the University of Pittsburgh.[195] At some point while the two were teaching together, The Bellefield Singers,[196] a vocal quartet at the time, asked composers to write settings of music that would be appropriate for Easter. Eric chose to write a motet setting of *O Vos Omnes*.[197] As such, Hayes Biggs also included allusions to Eric's music within his Poem-Étude in addition to the chants. According to Biggs, the solo work was intended for Eric to enjoy studying and playing;[198] and it has since been performed at least three times by two different pianists,[199] including Eric at its premiere on March 30, 1992 at the Frick Fine Arts Museum at the University of Pittsburgh.[200]

According to Biggs, he is no stranger to composers borrowing from each other in their music. In the courses he teaches, he includes references to Stravinsky's neoclassical phase of composition. During this phase, Stravinsky composed his ballet

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[195] Hayes Biggs, phone interview.
[196] Eric Moe, "Compositions," accessed August 1, 2022, https://www.ericmoe.net/compositions.
[197] Hayes Biggs, phone interview.
[198] Hayes Biggs, *E.M. am Flügel: Poem-Étude for Piano Solo*.
[199] Hayes Biggs, phone interview.
[200] Hayes Biggs, *E.M. am Flügel: Poem-Étude for Piano Solo*.

Pulcinella, in which he makes use of the music of Pergolesi.[201] Biggs also talks about Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*, of which the opening four-note motif comes from the duet in Act II of Verdi's *Aida*, and the Serenade in A, which makes an obvious reference to Chopin's Ballade No. 2, op. 38 at the very beginning.[202]

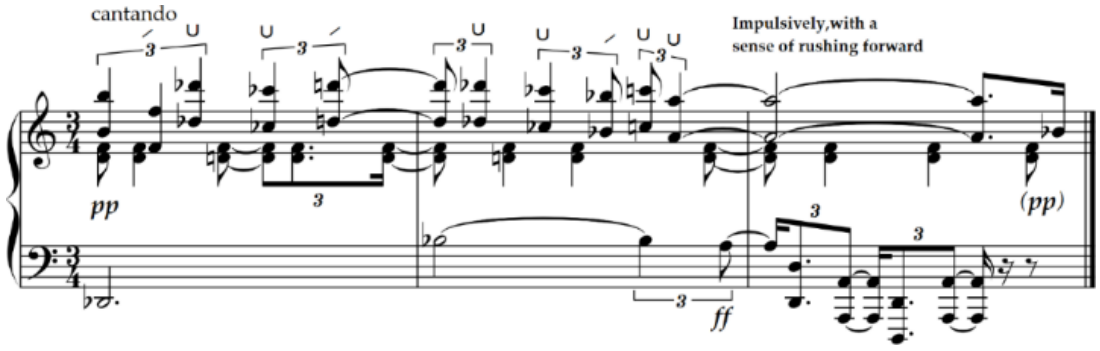
His ultimate goal for this work, however, was the reconciliation of musical ideas that normally do not coexist. This music, according to the composer, has a relationship to diatonicism, Romanticism, and tonality, despite the work overall being written in a highly chromatic, dissonant, and rhythmically complex idiom. For instance, measures 15-17 show a close relationship to the key of D minor and, in Biggs' opinion, the music of Rachmaninoff (see figure 5.2). Additionally, the polyphonic texture in which Biggs composed the work is in stark contrast to the monophonic style in which the chant is normally sung. The music not directly quoting the chant melodies is meant to serve as counterpoint against a harmonic idiom that Biggs liked, but otherwise there is no other musical relationship to the chant.[203] This is quite different than the works discussed previously, because even when chant is not being directly used in a particular passage, often the chant or characteristics of a chant tradition are being utilized; in those works, the use of chant is the point. The music revolves around the chant. Here, the music is not intended to sound like chant; it is simply one aspect of the music. In the opening notes of the score, Biggs says, "It should be stressed that the presence of these chant

[201] Kyle Szabo, "The evolution of style in the neoclassical works of Stravinsky" (DMA diss., James Madison University, April 2011), pp 16-17, Accessed August 1, 2022.

[202] Hayes Biggs, phone interview.
[203] Ibid.

fragments in no way indicates that they are to be played as the principal voice; the pianist should simply be aware of them and play them as distinct but coequal contrapuntal lines."[204] It is the reconciliation of these different ideas that is the point—monophony and polyphony, modality/tonality and atonality, simplicity and complexity. Biggs expressed that he has always wanted to have the broadest possible palette at his disposal when he composes,[205] and this work seeks to merge those extremes into a unified whole.

Figure 5.2. E.M. am Flügel, mm 15-17



In this way, though, Hayes Biggs work is certainly connected to the music of Victoria Bond, even across their different chant traditions—Bond in Orthodox and Jewish chant and Biggs in Gregorian chant. Hayes Biggs sought a unification of extremes, much like Einstein's theory of general relativity; and Victoria Bond is intensely interested in how reality and life is organized based on its circumstances,[206] much like the modern theory of evolution. They both seek something deeper than themselves, scientifically and religiously.

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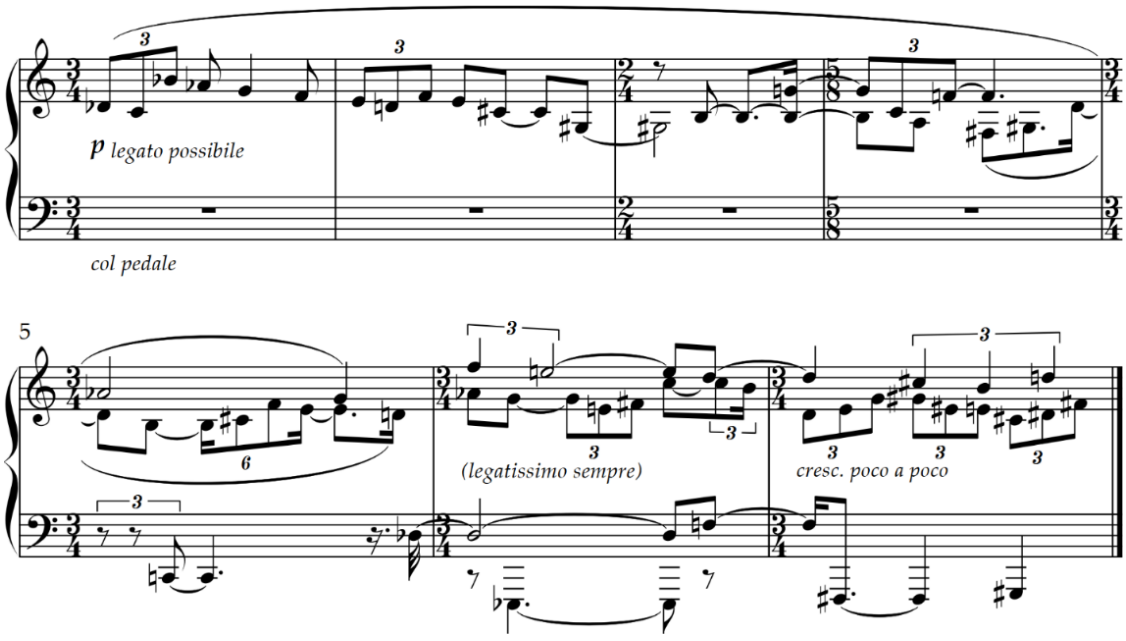
[204] Hayes Biggs, *E.M. am Flügel: Poem-Étude for Piano Solo*.
[205] Hayes Biggs, phone interview.
[206] Victoria Bond, phone interview.

In Biggs' quest for unification, he begins the work with a single line melody, a presentation of the scale from which he extracts motifs throughout the work,[207] with voices entering periodically, thus slowly increasing its complexity (see figure 5.3). Throughout the work, he has a specific system in which he combines mostly simple meters with a very complex metrical system. Out of the 128 measures in the piece, 121 are in a simple meter; there are only a sprinkling of complex meters throughout the piece. Referring to figure 5.2, one can see these extra tick and u-shaped marks above the right hand. The pitches under a tick mark are intended to be stressed like a downbeat, whereas the u-shaped marks indicate an unstressed upbeat sound.[208] So, even though those particular measures are in a simple 3/4 time signature, the actual metrical pulse is in a sort of 3/6 and is shifted by one quarter note triplet.

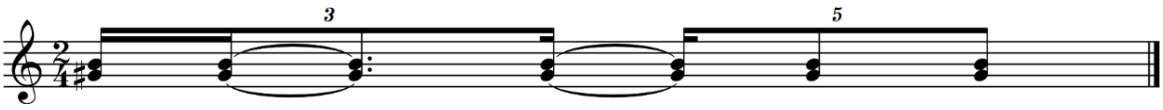
Figure 5.3. E.M. am Flügel, mm 1-7



[207] Hayes Biggs, email messages.
[208] Hayes Biggs, *E.M. am Flügel: Poem-Étude for Piano Solo*.

Another example of Biggs merging simplicity and complexity can be seen in measure 20. Here, the right hand plays a repeated minor third, but in a very complicated rhythm (see figure 5.4). The minor third permeates Biggs' entire piano work, seeking to unify the disparate sections and ideas of the music. Both Victoria Bond and Hayes Biggs unify their works in a motivic fashion such as this; however, Victoria Bond used motifs created from the chant that was used in her music, whereas Hayes Biggs intended the chant to not be distinctly heard, so his motifs were created in addition to the chant.

Figure 5.4. E.M. am Flügel, m 20



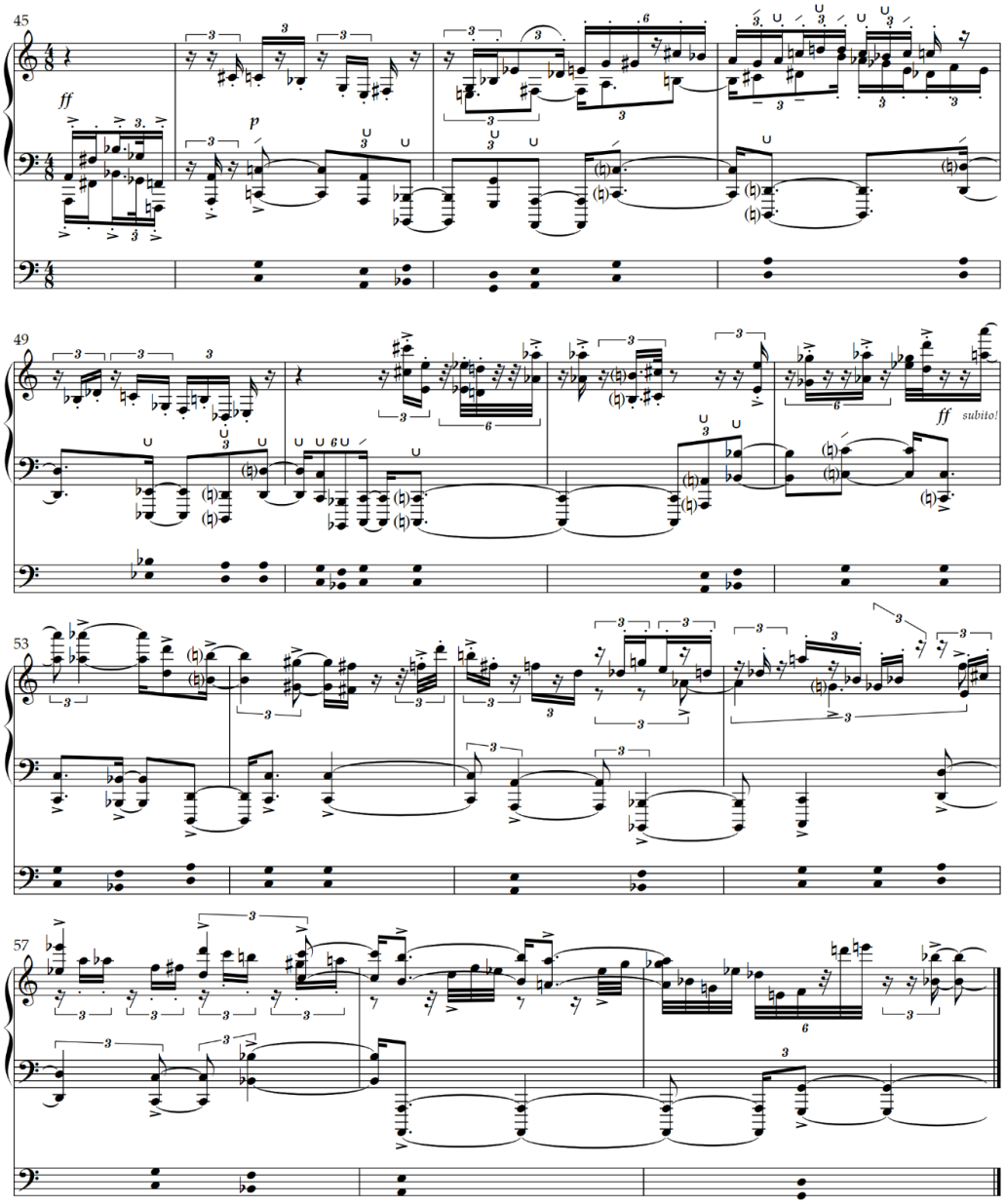
Throughout the etude, there are multiple examples of reconciling opposing ideas into something that works together into a greater whole. The first time, however, that Biggs uses the chant material is well into the work—measure 46, beginning with the second eighth note of the measure in the bass, where the chant is used almost exclusively throughout the work; however, there are some notable exceptions that will be discussed. Additionally, the chant is periodically interrupted by the music, only to continue at a later point in a fragmentary fashion.[209] Measure 46 begins the most intact version of the chant in the etude[210] (see figure 5.5). Below the solo part in the figure is the chant at its original pitch level and its transposed version a perfect fifth lower, the

[209] Ibid.
[210] Ibid.

pitch level used by Biggs in the music. Here, the composer is also reconciling legato playing in the left hand with staccato playing in the right hand. In fact, in the score, Biggs says that, even though the damper pedal can be used in order to achieve a legato in the non-staccato passages, the use of the pedal should not elongate the pitches of the concurrent staccato passages.[211] Additionally, there are passages in the extreme ranges in the piano, both alone and together. Like before, the time signature is simple (4/8 in this case), but the tick and u-shaped marks take listener and performer alike on a much different metrical journey. The opening motif shown in the figure and similar configurations can also be found throughout the etude.

[211] Ibid.

Figure 5.5. E.M. am Flügel, mm 45-59



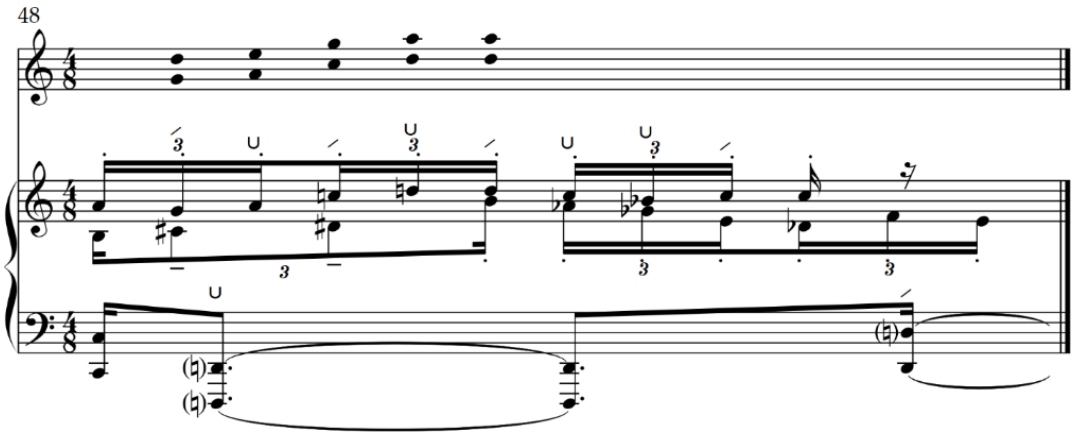
In measure 56, Biggs omits a repeated note in the chant, but the music, otherwise, follows the transposed chant quite closely. He also included a chant fragment in the top voice of this same passage. It begins in measure 48 on the second 16th triplet[212] (see figure 5.6). In a phone conversation, the composer says all the

[212] Ibid.

examples of the chant used in this work are in prime order and not used systematically.[213] In this, he differs from the music of Victoria Bond, because she uses motifs in both their prime and inverted forms. The fragmentary nature of his use of the chant is also quite different from Connor Chee's use of chant, because Chee generally uses entire melodies, which are then intended to be the primary line of the piano solo. Additionally, Chee's music is entirely melody and accompaniment or harmony. There is very little polyphony in the younger composer's music. Chee also achieves a vastness and an openness that is not in either Bond's or Biggs' music, and he does this with the texture he uses, sometimes even doubling the melody in octaves against a static accompaniment. Culturally, this makes sense, because the chant tradition from which Chee draws is a chant tradition sung in the outdoors, whereas the traditions of Biggs and Bond are found inside temples, synagogues, and churches. Each of their melodies struggles in a different way. Connor's melodies and accompaniments are often in the same range of the piano, whereas Biggs creates complex polymetric polyphony in which the fragments of chant aren't really meant to be heard. Bond, on the other hand, builds sections of music on motifs from the chant. The performer of these works must grapple with each of these struggles and how they reflect the different cultures.

[213] Hayes Biggs, phone interview.

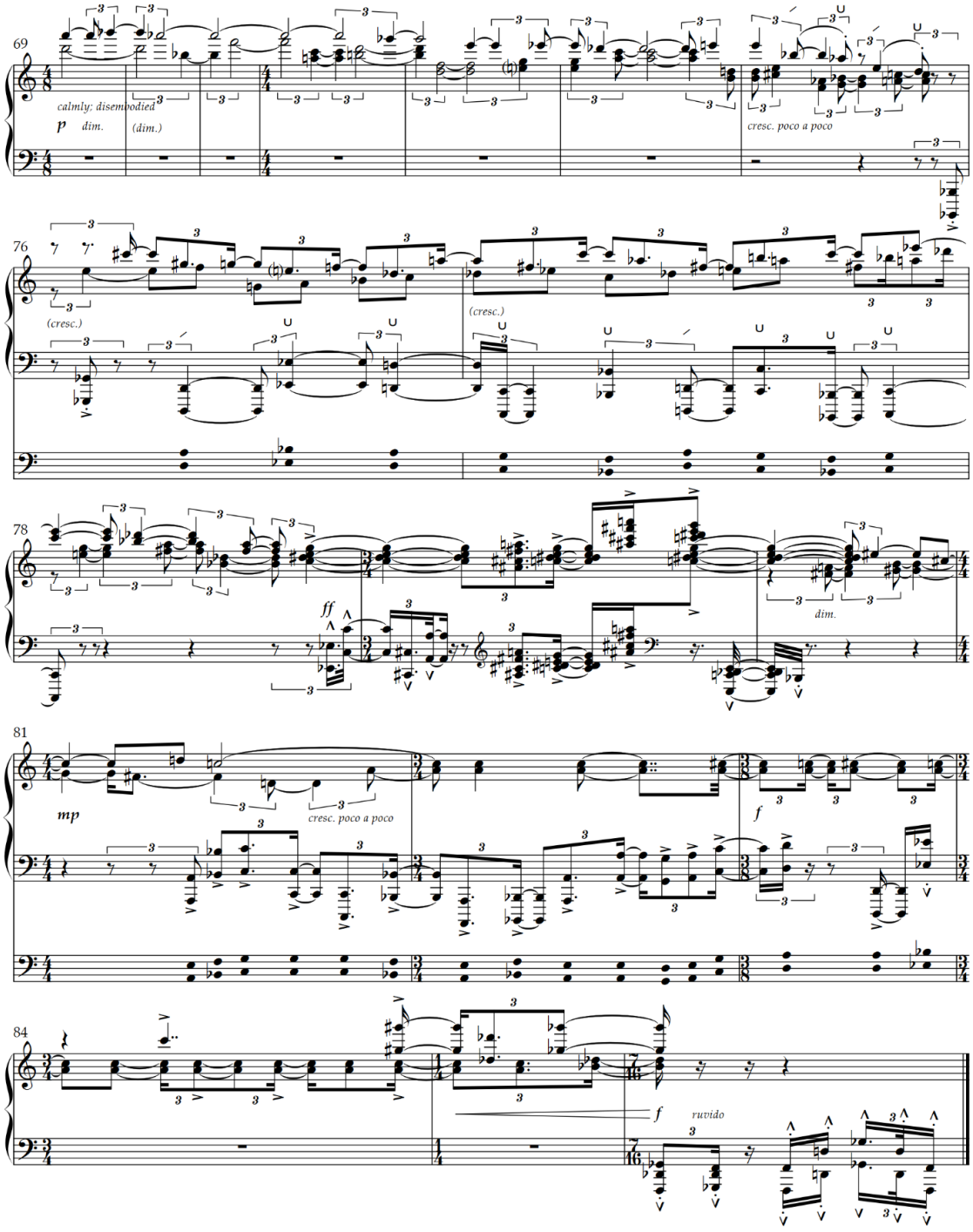
Figure 5.6. E.M. am Flügel, m 48



After being interrupted by music at measure 60, the chant returns again at measure 76, again in the bass, in the second beat. It is once again interrupted by music in measure 78 and returns in 81 only to be interrupted again in measure 83.[214] Equally interesting is seeing where this passage comes from and where it goes to, because there are some of the same structures discussed in other parts of the work. For instance, beginning in measure 69, the pitches are very high on the piano before the chant appears in the extreme low register of the piano. After this section of the chant has concluded in measure 83 then, the repeating minor thirds return along with the motif seen at the beginning of figure 69. When the chant comes in at measure 76, the texture is fairly stable. The right hand has a repeating rhythm on top of a changing left-hand rhythm in measure 77. Figure 5.7 compares these measures to the original Gregorian Credo and shows both the reconciliation of the extreme registers as well as a motif mirrored in the earlier figure.

[214] Hayes Biggs, *E.M. am Flügel: Poem-Étude for Piano Solo*.

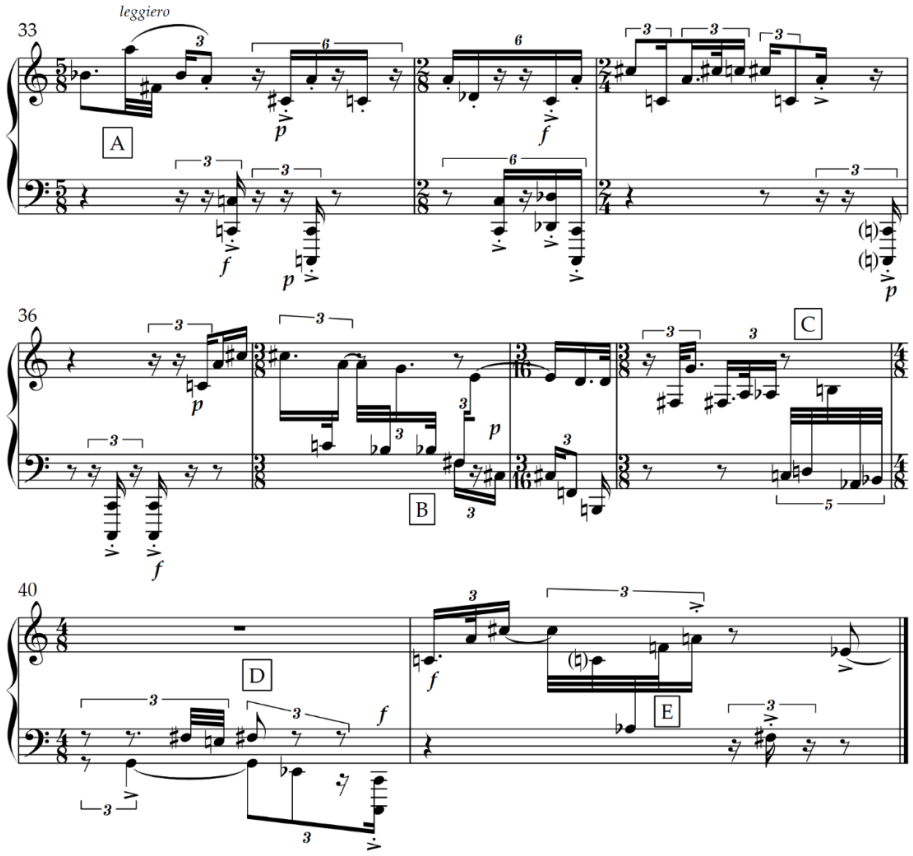
Figure 5.7. E.M. am Flügel, mm 69-86



This motif that Hayes Biggs employs at the beginning of figure 5.5, the end of figure 5.7, and other various points throughout the etude also connects the work back to Victoria Bond's music, specifically the *Simeron Kremate*. The figures in the left hand

found in the *Presto* section beginning at measure 49 through the *Pesante* section at measure 90 are the same as the motif found throughout the Hayes Biggs solo work. In the measures shown in figure 5.8, most of the occurrences of this motif are on the pitches C-natural, A-natural, and C-sharp (sometimes D-flat). Biggs, however, does transpose the motif some, and he sometimes expands it. For instance, the motif itself contains a major sixth, a major third (or diminished fourth in some cases), and an augmented octave (or minor ninth). At Box A at measure 33 in the figure, Hayes jumps up a major seventh (B-flat to A) before descending a minor 10th (A to F-sharp). Additionally, the interval between the first and final notes of the beat (B-flat and F-sharp) are a diminished fourth. The remainder of that line through beat one of measure 37 is composed entirely of A-naturals, C-naturals, and C-sharps/D-flats. At Box B in measure 37, he transposes the inversion of the motif. Beginning with the G in the treble clef, Biggs descends a major sixth to the B-flat before descending another diminished fourth to the F-sharp. He works this motif into the music like how a pitch-class set is often used in a work, in this case [014]; composers will often turn the motif upside down, transpose the motif, use the motif melodically and harmonically, etc. In the examples given below, Biggs stays fairly true to the expanded form of the motif over an octave; however, there are examples of the simplified motif in its prime and inverted forms. This is not entirely unlike how Victoria Bond uses her five-note motif in the *Simeron Kremate*. As one might recall from earlier, Bond used the inversion of her motif at measure 34 in both the prime form and its inversion and the inverted form in measure 90.

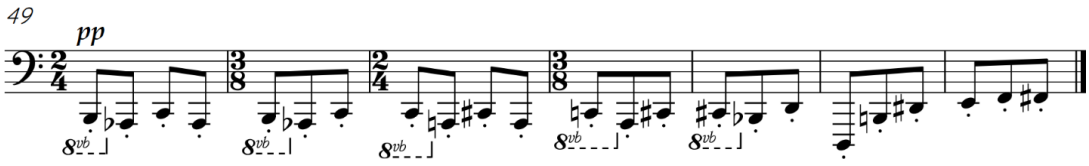
Figure 5.8. E.M. am Flügel, mm 33-41



At Box C, this pitch class set can be found twice. The A-flat, C-natural, and B-natural, together form pitch class set [014] in the inverted form. Likewise, the B-flat, D-natural, and B-natural creates the same pitch class set, but in its prime form. Following that, at Box D, the pitches F-sharp, G, and E-flat form pitch class set [014]. Box E is simply a transposition of the original ascending major sixth and ascending major third.

In Victoria Bond's music, the motif is seen in the left hand at the *Presto* section beginning in measure 49. It is in the same form as many of the examples in Hayes Biggs' work, with a rising major sixth (or diminished seventh in Bond's example), followed by a rising major third (or sometimes a diminished fourth). The motif is played repeatedly rising by half steps until it culminates at the *Pesante* at measure 90 (see figure 5.9).

Figure 5.9. Simeron Kremate left hand motif, mm 49-55



Such a motif is not possible in Connor Chee's music, because the Native American chant on which his music is based is composed on the pentatonic scale. The Orthodox mode on which Victoria Bond's chant is created has the motif built in. Like Connor's music, the chant which Hayes Biggs used in his work does not have this motif built in; however, because of Hayes Biggs' affinity for connecting disparate musical ideas, he is able to extract the motif from the scale presented at the opening of the etude; indeed, Bond's full five-note motif can also be extracted from Biggs' scale (G-F-E-Db-C in figure 5.3). Even though the pentatonic scale prevents Chee from using this particular motif, the concept of cyclicism still exists in his set of pieces; however, in Chee's music, that comes in the form of using the opening call motif found at the beginning of the Nidáá songs and corn grinding songs, which, like Biggs' etude, features a minor third (see appendix), as well as the reuse of a select few themes in their entirety.

From measure 90 through 96, Hayes Biggs picks the chant back up, again in the bass.[215] In the three preceding measures (included in figure 5.10), Biggs uses more stacked [014] motifs. His technique of motivic development by stacking is shared between him and Bond—Bond's cascading five-note motif in the *Simeron Kremate* and

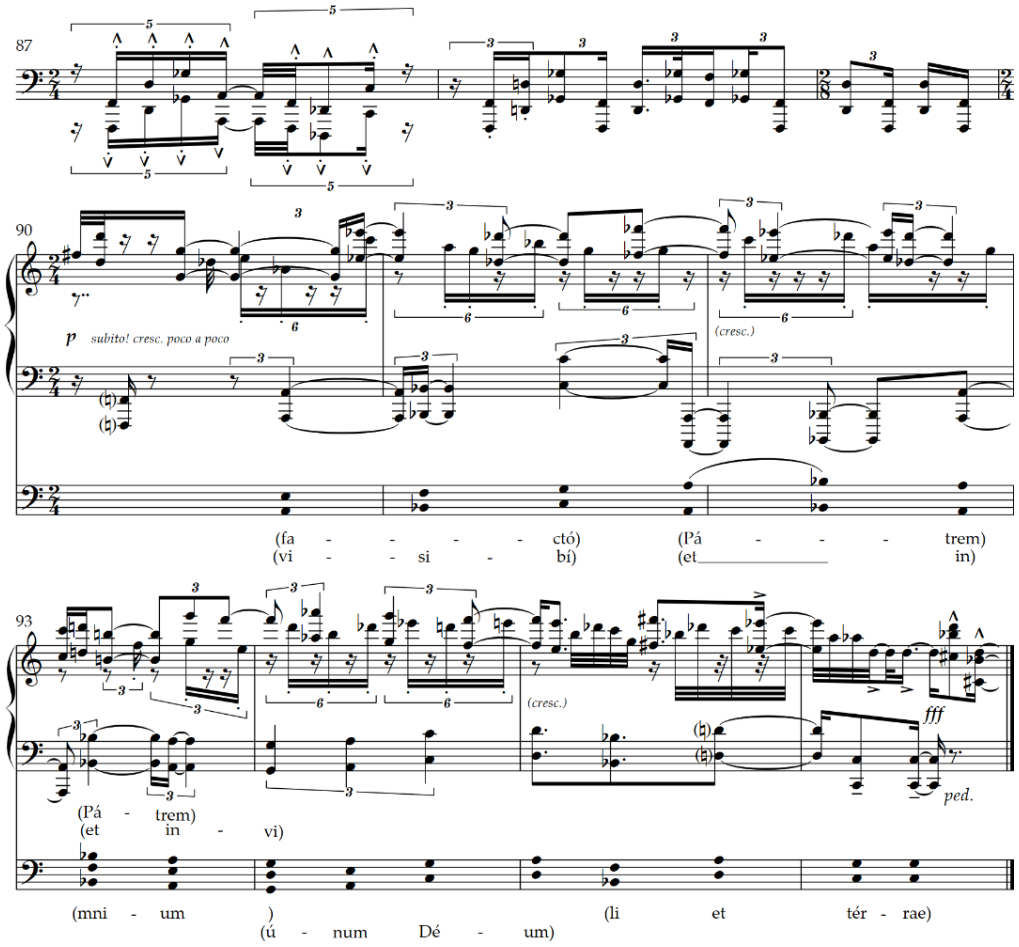
[215] Ibid.

the pitches Biggs uses in these three measures, F-natural, A-natural, D-natural, and G-flat, which can be subdivided into two [014] motifs (F-G flat-A and D-F-G flat).

In an email, Biggs mentions he also uses two other pitch class set motifs in the music, pc set [013] and pc set [027].[216] In figure 5.3, pc set [013] can be found in the first three notes of the first measure, the third through the fifth notes, the fourth through the sixth notes, the fifth through the seventh notes, and the sixth through the tenth notes; it permeates the entire set, because a large portion of the scale is very similar to the octatonic scale, which could be described as a series of overlapping pc set [013]s. Pitch class set [014]s cannot be found in any successive three notes, but they do exist in the scale at various points (for instance, the opening D-flat and C-natural combined with the E-natural from later in the scale). Pitch class set [037] is the equivalent of a major or minor chord, which can be seen in the final three notes of measure two; the scale also contains a B-flat minor chord, an F minor chord, a C major chord, and a D-flat major chord (or their enharmonic equivalences). The repeating minor third found throughout the etude are seen in all these pitch class sets, so it is also a reconciliation of each of those motifs in addition to being something familiar an audience member can hold onto when listening to a performance of the work. This concept connects the etude to the otherworldly coda at the end of Bond's *Enite ton Kirion*, when she combined several very different chants together in a wonderful reconciliation of her childhood faith and Paul Barnes' Orthodox faith.

[216] Hayes Biggs, email conversation.

Figure 5.10. E.M. am Flügel, mm 87-96



In the measures included in figure 5.10, Hayes Biggs fragmented the chant considerably. For that reason, the text is included so that the segments are easily comparable to the original chant in figure 5.1. Because it is so fragmented, there are cases where sections of the chant could have come from any one of multiple sections of the chant, so sometimes alternative texts are included above. Fragments of the text are enclosed in parentheses. Of particular interest here is that the chant in measure 91 is not transposed by a fifth, unlike what has been seen previously in the work. Immediately following, then, are three possible segments of the chant—two untransposed and one transposed—so they are also included. Despite its fragmented

nature, Hayes Biggs made it clear in the score's introduction that these measures do indeed include the Gregorian Credo.

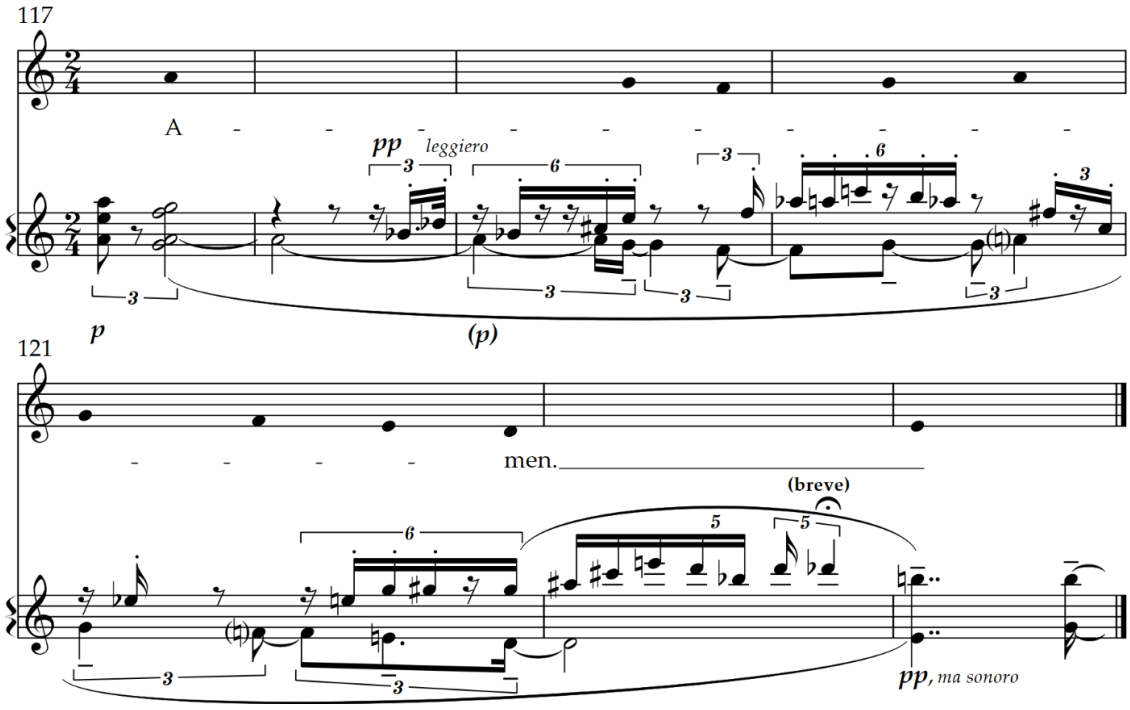
The final example of the Gregorian Credo in Hayes Biggs' work is measures 110 through the beginning of measure 117[217] (see figure 5.11). The chant is still in the bass, but it is less fragmented than the previous example. Here, there is no question about from where each fragment of the chant comes. Additionally, Biggs writes in the very high range of the piano against the very low chant, and those are accompanied by the minor thirds from before.

Figure 5.11. E.M. am Flügel, mm 110-17

[217] Hayes Biggs, *E.M. am Flügel: Poem-Étude for Piano Solo.*

Though that is the final example of the Gregorian Credo in the piano solo work, there is one passage in which Biggs uses an Amen setting. This section picks up from the last chord seen in the previous figure in measure 117 and goes through the downbeat of measure 123, where the "Postlude" begins. This example is a rare case of the chant being found in a voice other than the bass. Here, the chant is found in the alto line, though that is still the lowest voice in the texture.[218]

Figure 5.12. E.M. am Flügel, mm 117-23



[218] Ibid.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND NEED FOR MORE RESEARCH

Composers have always looked to the past to find ways to transform old ideas into something entirely new. By combining the music of yesterday with contemporary compositional techniques, they give us, audience and performer alike, new perspectives on those earlier sounds. Among the many ideas used by composers is chant. The use of chant is so iconic in instrumental music that anytime we see those first four notes of the infamous Dies Irae, it's often assumed that the passage was written with the Gregorian chant in mind. Generally, ideas will fall in and out of style, but chant has continued to be an important source of inspiration among composers even today.

The resulting repertoire is quite vast and diverse. The genre covers a wide range of traditions, including Orthodox, Jewish, Roman Catholic, and the many Native American tribes; and there is no shortage of creativity when it comes to how all of these composers use chant in their music. In the Native American vein, Connor Chee used his ancestors' work chants and war chants in his *The Navajo Piano* along with characteristics of that same chant tradition. Largely in an effort to preserve his ancestors' music, the majority of his set of "Navajo Vocables" are harmonized and accompanied arrangements of these chants; however, he also used characteristics of Navajo chant, particularly in the middle four "Vocables" that, together, comprise the second movement of the piece. These characteristics include representing concepts of his people's religion with the number four through repetition and harmony, using the pentatonic scale, and using rhythms and changing meters found within the original chants.

Victoria Bond used both Greek Orthodox chant and Jewish chant in her *Illuminations on Byzantine Chant*. She grew up in a non-practicing Jewish family but had many opportunities to hear the music sung in the synagogues for which her father conducted and composed. Paul Barnes, who sings in the Greek Orthodox Church, provided chants from his religious tradition. Bond employed a very different strategy when it came to how she utilized the chants in her set of three pieces, though her treatment does share some commonalities with Chee's music. Bond chose to treat the chant in her music much like how a classical era composer might write a development section of a sonata. She broke the chants apart, and used these motifs throughout the music, placing them in various textures, using different rhythms, sometimes stacking ever-modulating motifs in both their prime and inverted forms. Her goals for her piano works were very different than Chee's. Whereas Chee needed his chants to be intact and obvious in the music, Bond sought to write powerful music displaying deep meanings within both her and Barnes's religions. Additionally, she was pursuing a reconciliation of their religious beliefs and the scientific concepts in which she is intensely interested. As such, she had a greater freedom to use her chant material in entirely different ways than Chee. For all their differences, however, Chee and Bond did share one important commonality—cyclicism. Though Bond did so more extensively and more subtly, both composers brought back themes and motifs from earlier works throughout their music.

Hayes Biggs' *E.M. am Flügel: Poem-Étude for Piano Solo* uses a Gregorian Credo in a more elusive manner than Bond. Unlike either of the other two composers, Biggs

used his chant material in a way that is not intended to be heard as chant by the audience. Had he not explained his process in a composer's notes section at the opening of the score, it is entirely possible that nobody outside of the composer and Eric Moe, for whom the piece was composed and named after, would even know. Biggs, like Bond, also sought a kind of reconciliation. He wanted to combine musical extremes into something entirely cohesive. He was also breaking apart the chant, but not for the purpose of using those pieces as motifs throughout the work. Most of his chant examples can be found in the bass voice, in which Biggs also changed octaves as he desired, thus obscuring the chant melodies even more. He dressed his monophonic, modal chant melodies in a highly polyphonic texture and in a very atonal idiom. He also combined extreme ranges on the piano and legato with staccato playing. Though he did not derive motifs from the chant itself as Bond did, he did extract some pitch class set motifs from the scale that opens the work. He wrote these motifs into the fabric of his piano solo and even combined these motifs into macro-motifs that are comparable to the way in which Bond stacked her motifs, where the end of one motif is the beginning of the next.

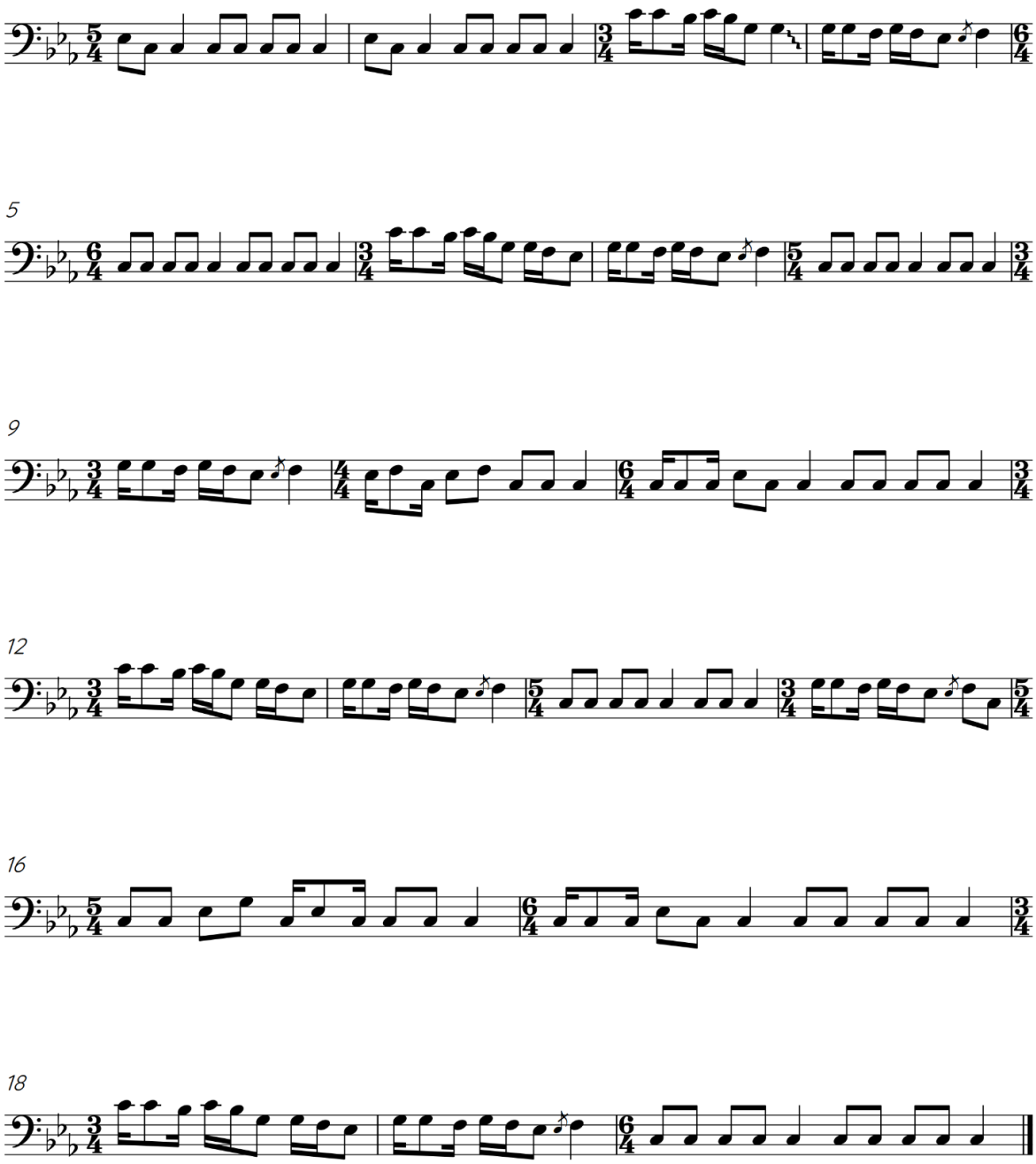
While these works certainly cover a lot of ground, there are a great number of works that are still left to be thoroughly explored. Though much of this music has been performed more than once, little has been written about most of these works. The list includes John Tavener's *Ypakoë,* a work based on a Pascha service in the Orthodox Church. David von Kampen's *Trisagion*, also commissioned by Paul Barnes, merges two Greek Orthodox hymns with jazzy harmonies and playing. Two other works making use

of a similar merger of Russian Orthodox chant and jazz are Doug Pierce's *Apolitikion St. Mary of Egypt* and *Suite for Panagia*. A piece such as Philip Glass's *Piano Quintet "Annunciation,"* also based on a Greek Orthodox hymn in the same mode as *Potirion Sotiriu*,[219] gives performer and listener alike much on which to ponder. Ron Warren's *Distances Between 2*, though it is based on Native American chant, is very ethereal, again searching for just a small piece of perfection, like Bond's *Enite ton Kyrion.* A most unique set of pieces, too, are Samuel Adler's *The Road to Terpsichore: A Suite of Dances for Piano Solo*, *Sonatina for Piano Solo*, and the *Duo Sonata: For Two Pianos*, the second movements of which each have chant-like sections not based on pre-composed chant, but instead are entirely original to Adler. This is all music that is greatly underplayed and undervalued. The world and the piano repertoire are richer for having this music available for us to learn, perform, write about, and, perhaps most importantly of all, to listen to and meditate on.

[219] Rogers, "Unveiling Resolution," 23.

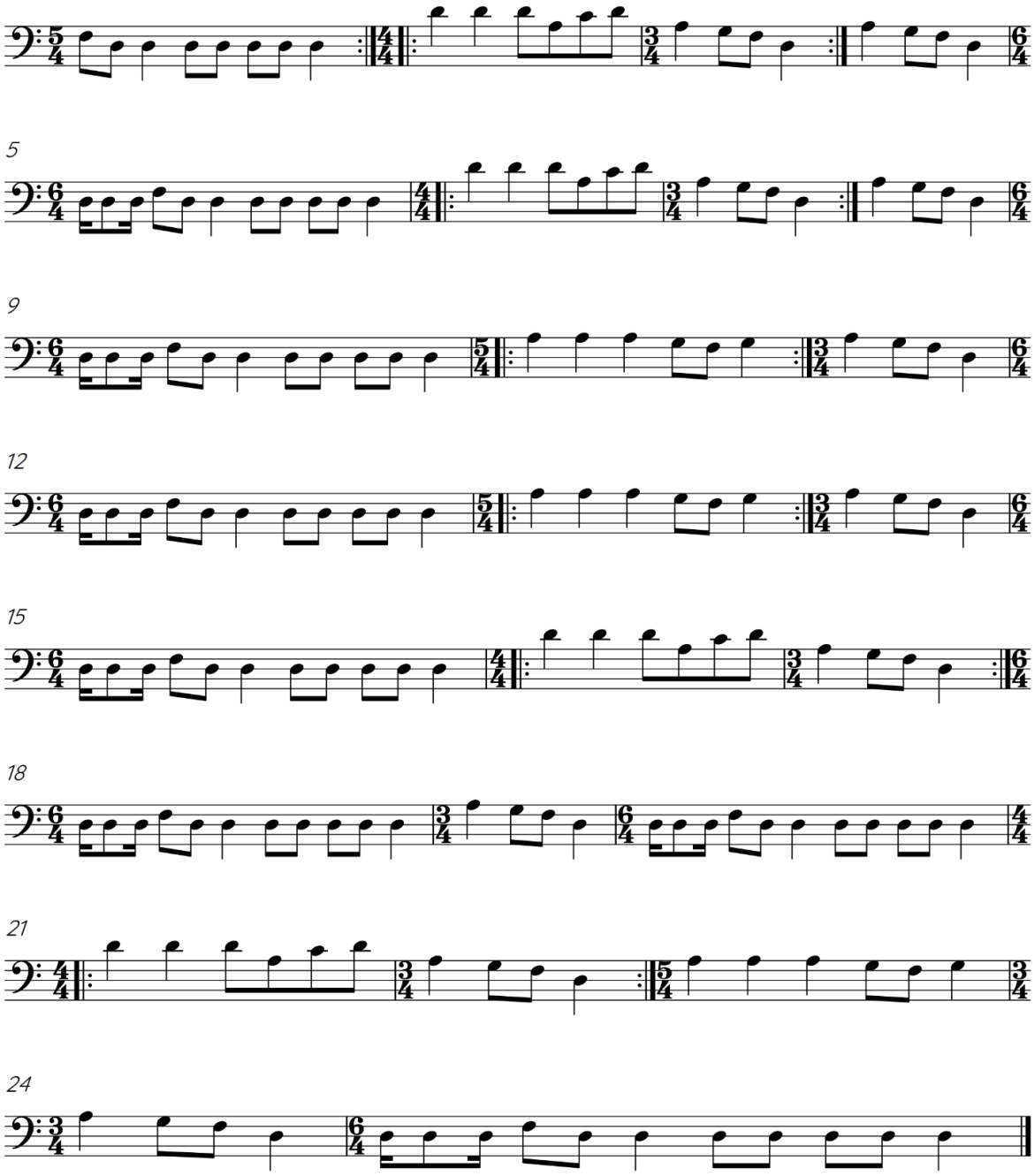
APPENDIX

Figure A.1. Corn Grinding Song No. 1[220]



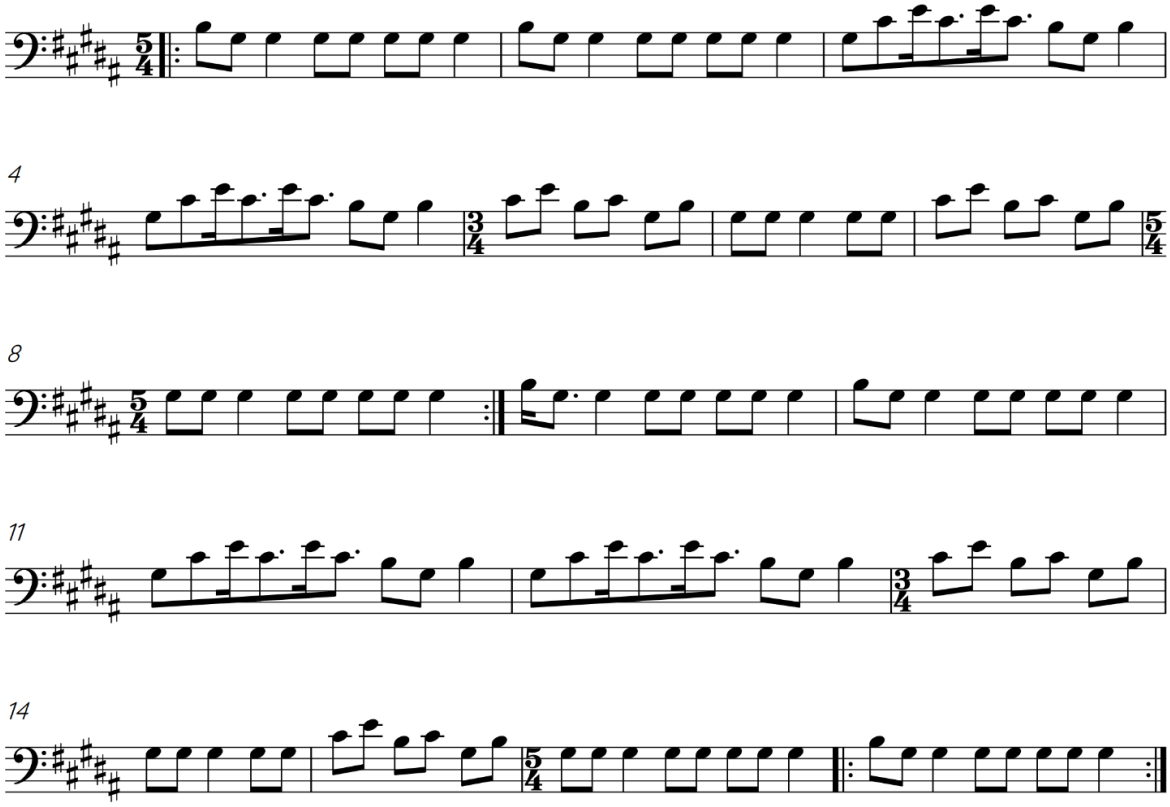
[220] Chee, *The Navajo Piano (Revisited)*, Track 1.

Figure A.2. Corn Grinding Song No. 2[221]



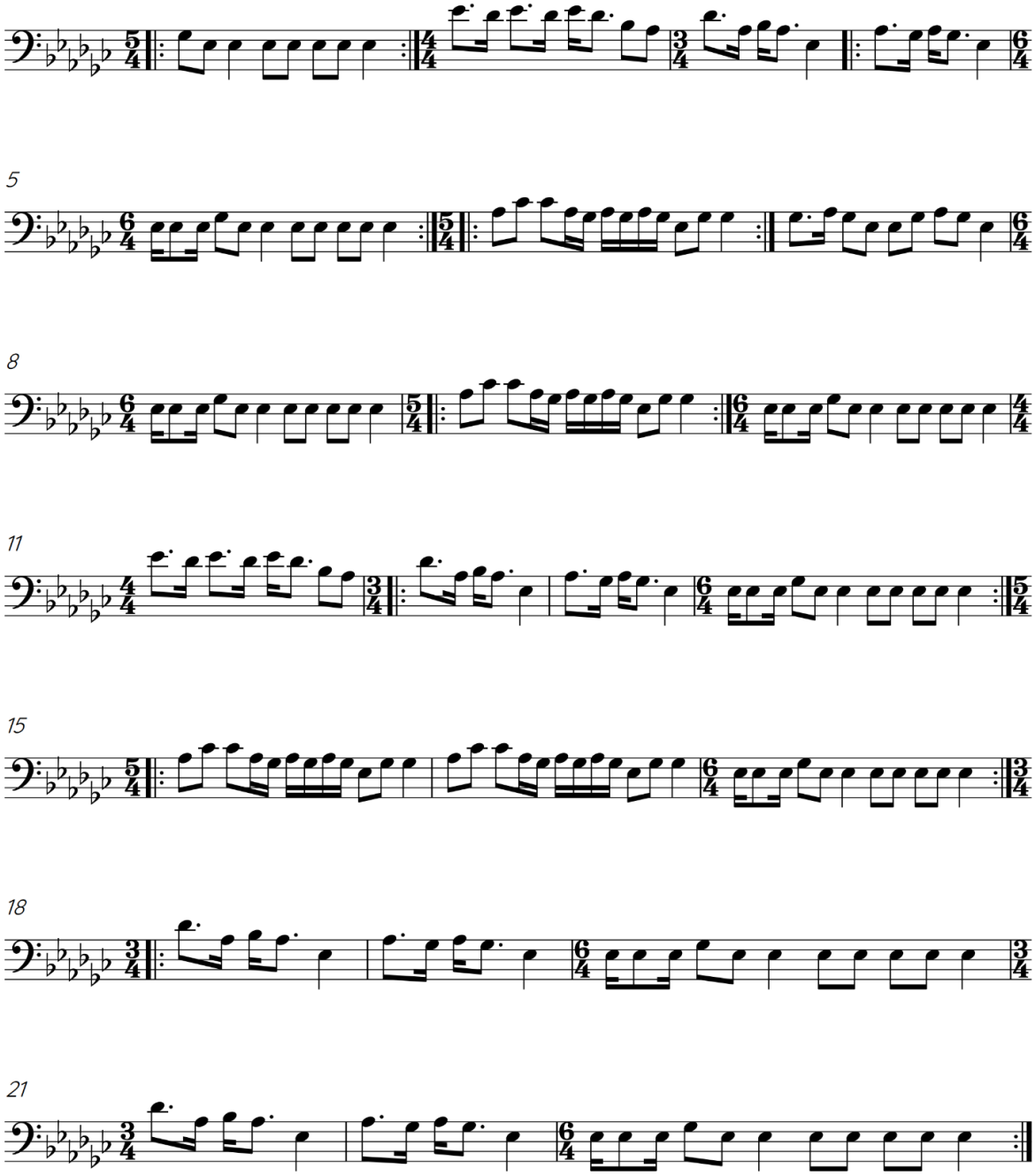
[221] Ibid., Track 4.

Figure A.3. Corn Grinding Song No. 3[222]



[222] Ibid., Track 13.

Figure A.4. Corn Grinding Song No. 4[223]



[223] Ibid., Track 15.

Figure A.5. Nidáá Song No. 1[224]

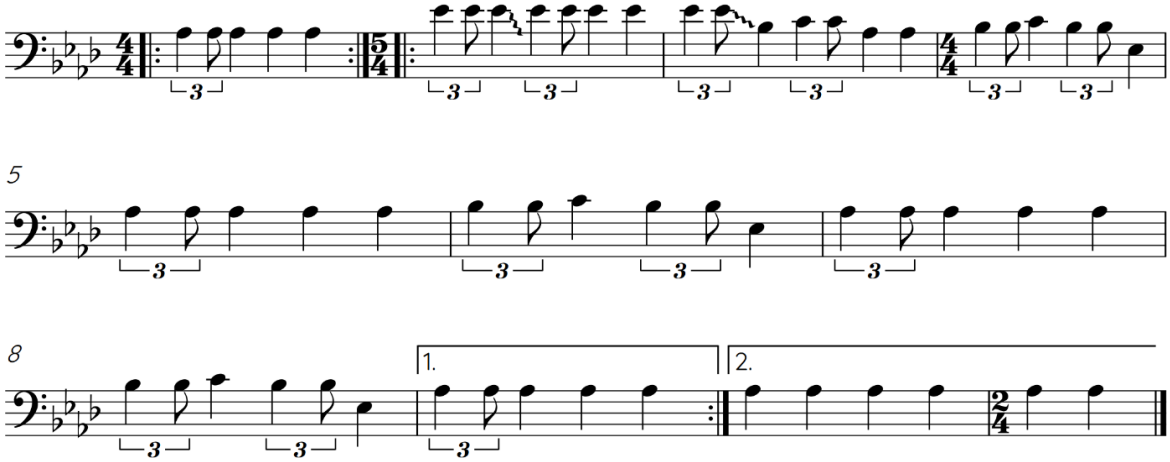
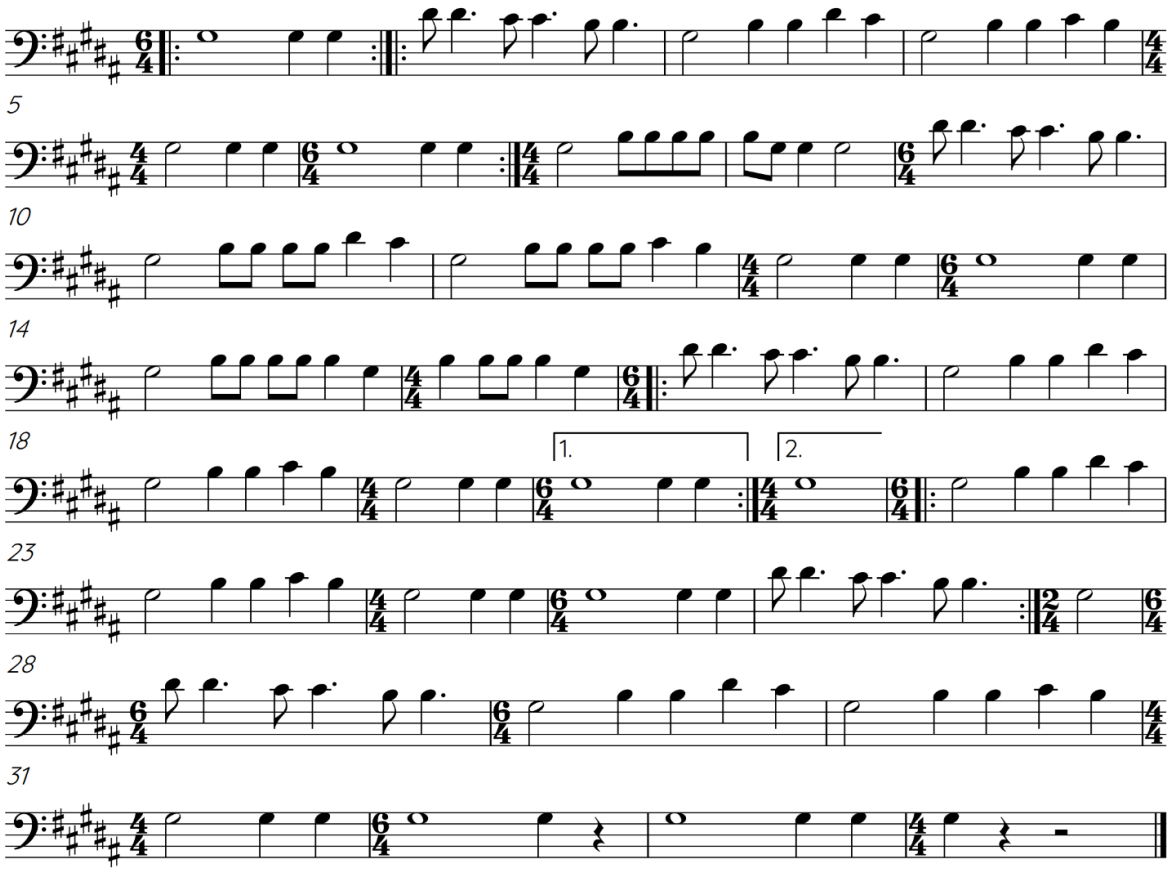
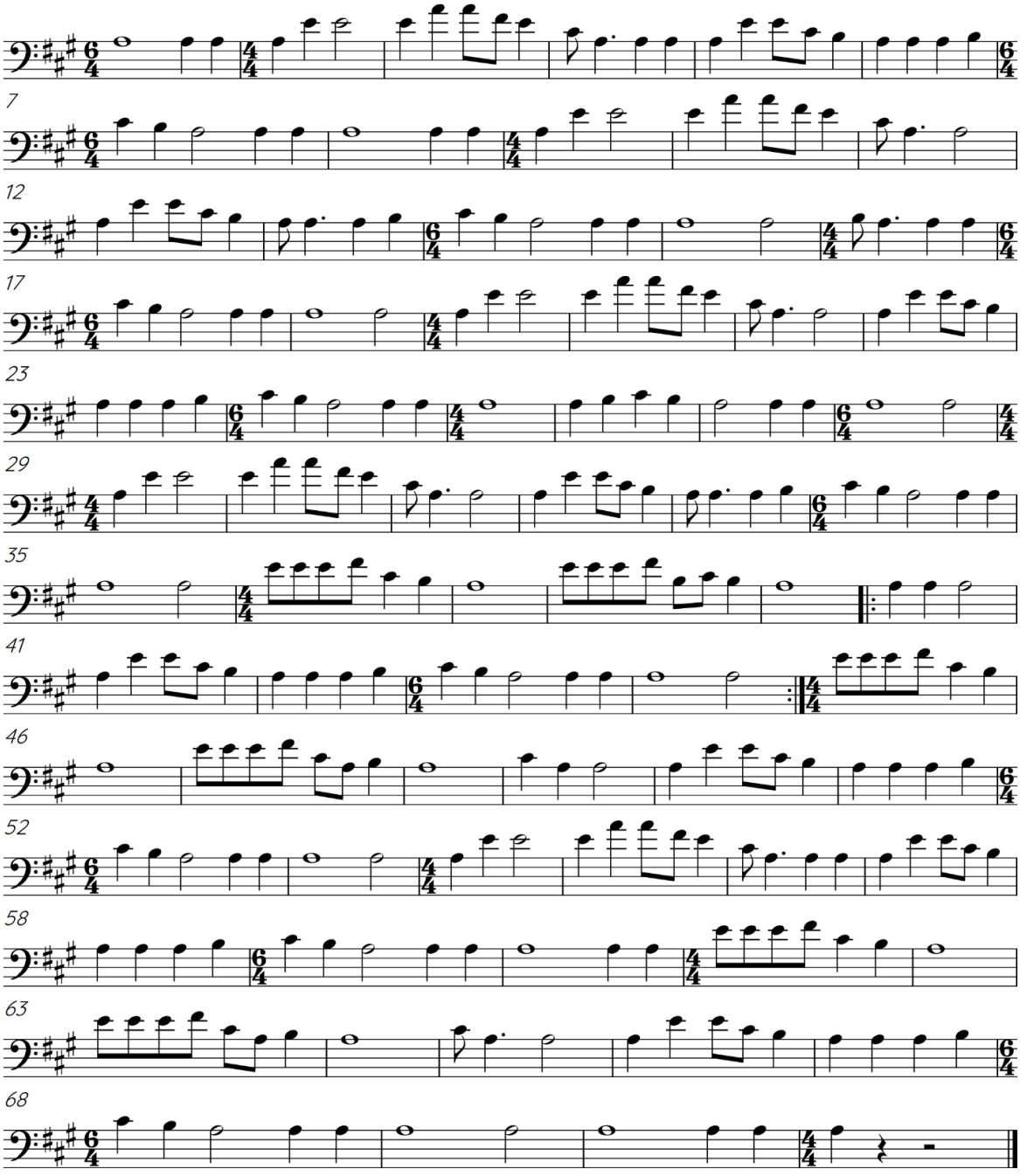


Figure A.6. Nidáá Song No. 2[225]



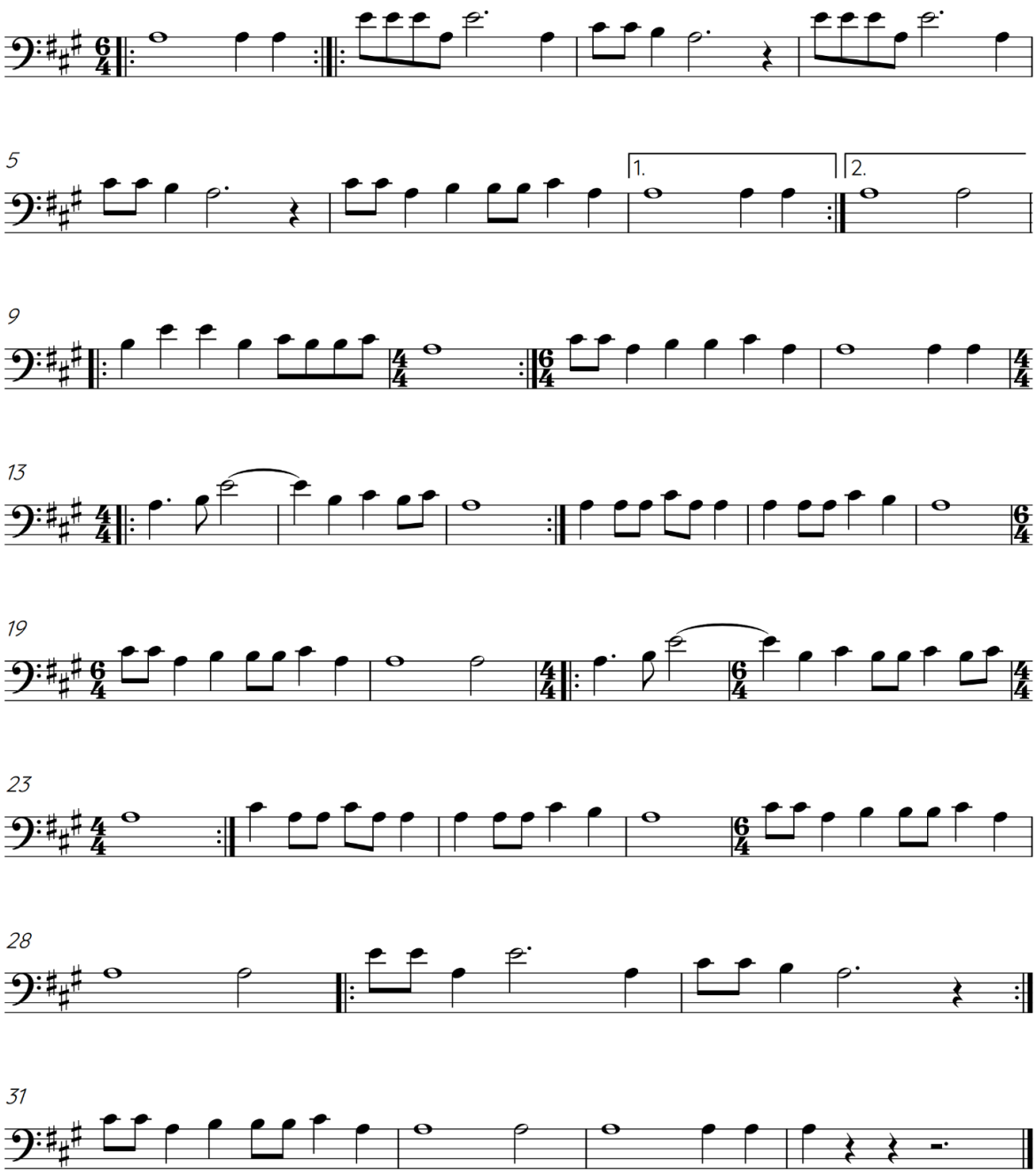
[224] Ibid., Track 7.
[225] Ibid., Track 19.

Figure A.7. Nidáá Song No. 3[226]



[226] Ibid., Track 21.

Figure A.8. Nidáá Song No. 4[227]



[227] Ibid., Track 23.

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