DAVID MASLANKA: HIS LIFE, WORKS, AND AN ANALYTICAL OVERVIEW OF CROWN OF THORNS

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of
Texas State University-San Marcos
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements

for the Degree

MASTER OF MUSIC

by

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San Marcos, Texas

May 2011

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the endless pursuit of education, I have been exceedingly blessed to encounter many supportive people without whom this thesis wouldn't have been possible. I would like to thank my family first and foremost for teaching me to love music. Their boundless love and kindness has been my constant stronghold throughout my life. Thank you to my mom, dad, Chad, and Katie for inspiring me through your musical aspirations to choose this career path. I would also like to thank my friends, mentors, and educators who gave me the confidence to seek a graduate degree: Mark Crim, Fred J. Allen, Dr. Brian R. Utley, Sesha Wallace, and Mark Saldana.

Finally, I would like to offer my sincere appreciation for the School of Music at Texas State University-San Marcos for the many opportunities made available to me and the guidance of the talented faculty. Thank you to my thesis advisor, Dr. Cynthia I. Gonzales, as well as Dr. John C. Schmidt, Dr. Dimitar Ninov, and Dr. Nico Schüler for your much-appreciated feedback.

This manuscript was submitted on April 12, 2011.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

I first became a fan of David Maslanka's music upon performing several of his works during my undergraduate studies at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas. I found that his music has a real, perceptible sense of energy and forward drive, with haunting melodies and emotionally provocative harmonies. Though I am not a percussionist, the keyboard percussion ensemble *Crown of Thorns* sparked my interest when I listened to it for the first time in spring of 2010 and decided to use the piece for a class project. As I researched the piece, I discovered that writings on this piece were few, and I could find none that provided an in-depth harmonic analysis. This being the case, I set out to examine the harmonic structure and language of *Crown of Thorns*, aiming to answer the following questions: What is the nature of the harmonies used, how are harmonies in succession related, and what properties are present that cause the piece sound definitively tonal despite of the lack of "functional" harmony? This thesis is not intended to be a measure-by-measure analysis, but rather to find a suitable explanation for harmonic relationships and to identify aspects of "function" distinct from functional tonality of the Common Practice Era. In the initial chapter, an overview of biographical information is included, as well as a complete works list organized categorically and alphabetically. Devices from both diatonic tonal music and post-tonal music will be discussed in Chapter 2 in preparation for the subsequent analytical discussions of *Crown of Thorns* presented in Chapters 3 and 4.

CHAPTER 1

DAVID MASLANKA: LIFE AND WORKS

1.1. Biographical Notes

David Maslanka was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts, on 30 August 1943. Though his parents were not musicians, Maslanka's grandfather was a violinist and even built violins as a hobby. Following in the footsteps of his great uncle, a clarinetist, Maslanka was drawn to the clarinet at a young age. He advanced quickly, participating in regional and all-state bands in Massachusetts as well as in the Greater Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra. Maslanka went on to attend the Oberlin College Conservatory from 1961-1965, where he studied with Joseph Wood and earned a Bachelor of Music Education degree. As part of his Oberlin curriculum, he studied for a year at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria, in 1963. While attending graduate school at Michigan State University, Maslanka studied composition with H. Owen Reed, theory with Paul Harder, and clarinet with Elsa Ludwig-Verder. After receiving both his M.M. and Ph.D. from MSU, Maslanka composed as much as possible and supported himself and his family by teaching college-level music courses at the following New York universities/colleges:

SUNY, Sarah Lawrence College, New York University, and Kingsborough Community College. In 1990, Maslanka left academia and moved to Missoula, Montana, where he now composes full time.

1.2. Compositional Process

Maslanka generates compositional ideas through a process described as "active imagining," which appealed to him after studying the concept in the work of psychologist Carl Gustav Jung (26 July 1875 – 6 June 1961). As Maslanka describes it,

> 'Active imagining' is a term used by the psychologist C. G. Jung. It is a way of moving the conscious mind into the space of the unconscious. The closest thing to it that most people do is daydreaming. The difference is in being aware that it is happening, and finding ways to deepen the experience. The result is that it is possible to approach the unconscious directly and to ask for the direction or energy that wants to become music. Every human has this capacity. Every good artist or thinker, every good performer, uses this connection whether they have identified it or not.[1]

Maslanka clarifies that before he realized he could initiate active imagining at will, he was dependent on inspiration striking him at random. Upon engaging in this meditative process, Maslanka does not merely write music about the images brought about, but rather focuses on hearing a very specific sound quality inspired by the images. Though many of his compositions utilize spiritual and religious elements, this is not necessarily due to his own beliefs. To Maslanka, these elements are the product of countless generations of "human seeding" and have about them an aura of depth and power.[2]

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[1]Thomas Wubbenhorst, "A Child's Garden of Dreams – Conversations with David Maslanka" (DMA diss., Unviersity of Missouri - Columbia, 1991), 4.

[2] David Maslanka, "Program Notes - Crown of Thorns," David Maslanka, http://69.16.233.70/percussion/crown-of-thorns/ (accessed October 22, 2010).

Maslanka has received many awards for his compositions, including five residence fellowships at the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, NH, the National Symphony Orchestra Regional Composer-in-Residence award, and three National Endowment for the Arts composer awards. To date, Maslanka has served as a guest composer for over 100 universities, music festivals, and conferences. In an interview with Thomas Martin Wubbenhorst, Maslanka stated that strong musical influences from his childhood include Bach's keyboard music and Chopin's piano works. "I admire Chopin's control of melody and harmony," he said. "I continue to play keyboard music by Bach almost every day, and its influence on me has grown steadily over the years." Maslanka goes on to list Brahms, Debussy, Schoenberg, and Stravinsky as other strong influences, as well as other Viennese and American 20th century composers.[3]

1.3. Complete List of Works by Genre[4]

1. Vocal and Choral
2. Orchestral
3. Wind Ensemble
4. Percussion
5. Solo and Chamber

Abbreviations to be used:

Y – Year of composition

I – Instrumentation

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[3]Thomas Wubbenhorst, "A Child's Garden of Dreams – Conversations with David Maslanka" (DMA diss., Unviersity of Missouri - Columbia, 1991), 4-10.

[4]All compositional information and program notes obtained from www.davidmaslanka.com

C – Commissioned for/by (if applicable)

Pr – Premier performance

D – Approximate duration

H – History or additional information

1. Choral and Vocal

A Litany for Courage and the Seasons

Y: 1988

I: Chorus, Clarinet, and Vibraphone

C: Robert Isgro and the Geneseo Chamber Singers

Pr: April, 1998. Premiered by the University of Connecticut Concert Choir under Peter Bagley, conductor

D: 25 minutes

H: Six songs on poems of Richard Beale

Anne Sexton Songs

Y: 1975

I: Mezzo Soprano and Piano

Pr: July, 1977. Premiered by Sheila Allen, soprano

H: Three songs on poems of Anne Sexton

City Tree

Y: 1973

I: SSAA Chorus and Harp

Pr: May, 1973. Premiered by the State University of New York – Geneseo Women's Chorus

D: 5 minutes

H: Single movement work with poem by William Matheson

Collected Chorale Settings

Y: 2006

I: SATB and alternatively for Winds, Brass, Percussion, and Strings.

D: Varies depending on chorale

H: From program notes:

"Instrument parts in all keys have been made for the collected chorales. The chorales can be played by any combination or number of instruments. My intent was to provide musically engaging chorale material for the purpose of ensemble development. I have found over many years that ensembles blossom when each individual is completely engaged (strange idea!), and that the chorales provide each player with a beautifully formed melody within the four-part texture. Dramatic improvements in tone intonation, and ensemble awareness have been achieved through imaginative use of these chorales."[5]

Four Lullabies

Y: 1987

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[5]David Maslanka, "Program Notes - Collected Chorale Settings," David Maslanka, http://69.16.233.70/choral-works/collected-chorale-settings/ (accessed January 9, 2011).

I: SA Chorus and Piano

H: Published by Neil Kjos co with tunes and lyrics by Barberi Paull

The Four Seasons

I: SATB Chorus

H: Published by Neil Kjos co with tunes and lyrics by Barberi Paull.

Hear My Prayer O Lord (Psalm 102)

Y: 1977

I: 2-part Choir, either men or women, and Piano.

D: 5 minutes

I Wake and Feel the Fell of Dark

Y: 1977

I: SATB Chorus.

Pr: May, 1977. Premiered by the State University of New York - Geneseo Chamber Singers under Robert Isgro, conductor

D: 12 minutes

H: A "dense and dark" piece on a poem by the English Catholic poet Gerard Manley Hopkins.[6]

Mass (revised 2005)

Y: 1996

I: SATB Chorus, Boys Chorus, Soprano & Baritone soli, Organ, and Symphonic Wind Ensemble.

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[6]David Maslanka, "Program Notes – I Wake and Feel the Fell of Dark," David Maslanka, http://69.16.233.70/choral-works/i-wake-and-feel-the-fell-of-dark/ (accessed January 9, 2011).

C: By a consortium headed by the University of Arizona Wind Ensemble and Gregg Hanson

Pr: April, 1996. Premiered at St. Thomas the Apostle Church, Tucson, AZ by the University of Arizona Wind Ensemble under Gregg Hanson, conductor

D: 105 minutes

H: A complete setting the Latin Mass, intercut with solo songs on poems of Richard Beale

Seven Lyrics from Sappho

Y: 1984

I: SATB Chorus

D: 10 minutes

H: Based on the writings of ancient Greek poet Sappho

The Hungry Heart

Y: 1996

I: SATB Chorus

C: The University of Montana Chamber Chorale

Pr: December, 1997. Premiered in Missoula, MT by the University of Montana Chamber Chorale, under Gary Funk, conductor.

D: 4 minutes

The Nameless Fear; or: The Unanswered Question Put Yet Another Way

Y 1973

I: SATB Chorus, Speakers, Harpsichord, Guitars, Flute, Bassoon, and Percussion

Pr: March, 1973. Premiered by the State University of New York - Geneseo Chamber Singers under James Walker, conductor

D: 20 minutes

The One and Only Book of Madrigals

Y: 1970-74

I: SSATB, SATTB

D: Varies depending on madrigal of choice

2. Orchestral

A Child's Garden of Dreams, Book 2

Y: 1989

I: Large Orchestra

Pr: October, 1987. Premiered by the Redlands Symphony Orchestra, CA, under Jon Robertson, conductor. The world premiere the work in its entirety was by the Appalachian Symphony Orchestra at Hayes School of Music on Dec 7, 2008.

D: 40 minutes

Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra

Y: 2008

I: Solo Saxophone and Orchestra, transcribed from original version for Wind Ensemble

D: 42 minutes

Death and the Maiden

Y: 1974

I: Chamber Opera

H: Story by Ray Bradbury, Libretto by John A. Wiles, Jr. This work is a chamber opera in three scenes. Never performed, but has been used as a source of music for a number of other pieces.

In Lonely Fields

Y: 1998

I: Seven Solo Percussionists and Orchestra.

C: Robert Hohner Percussion Ensemble in Mt. Pleasant, MI.

D: 13 minutes

Music for String Orchestra

Y: 1992

I: String Orchestra

C: The String Orchestra of the Rockies

Pr: May, 1992. Premiered in Missoula, MT by the String Orchestra of the Rockies

D: 17 minutes

Symphony No. 1

Y: 1970

I: Orchestra

D: 25 minutes

H: From program notes:

"Symphony No. 1 was written as part of my doctoral work at Michigan State University. It takes up certain ideas that were current in new music at the time, most notably the use of two separate ensembles, each with its own conductor. This is a technical challenge that has seriously impeded the life of this Symphony, to the point where it has never been performed! However I have used it as a source of musical material, and a number of ideas from this piece have found the light of day in my first Concerto for Piano, Winds, and Percussion.

Looking back from a perspective of nearly 40 years, I see the beginnings of many aspects of my later music: a high sense of drama, a tight continuity of musical line, and a natural instinct for instrumental color. This Symphony is music that I intend to recompose for an ensemble of winds, brass, and percussion, with a single conductor. I wish to give it its rightful place at the head of my symphony series."[7]

Symphony No. 6 (Living Earth)

Y: 2003

I: Orchestra

C: By James Allen and the Rho Tau Chapter of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia for the Appalachian Symphony Orchestra

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[7]David Maslanka, "Program Notes – Symphony No. 1," David Maslanka, http://69.16.233.70/orchestra/symphony-no-1/ (accessed January 9, 2011).

World Music

I: Orchestra

3. Wind Ensemble

A Tuning Piece: Songs of Fall and Winter

Y: 1995

I: Wind Ensemble

Pr: July, 1995. Premiered at the Kappa Kappa Psi National Convention by the Intercollegiate Honor Band under James Croft, conductor

D: 18 minutes

Alex and The Phantom Band

Y: 2001

I: Wind Ensemble and Narrator

C: Lansing, Michigan Community Band for its annual children's concert

D: 10 minutes

H: Intended as an introduction to the instruments of the band for children

A Carl Sandburg Reader

Y: 2007

I: Baritone and Soprano Soloists with Wind Ensemble.

C: Illinois State University Office of Advancement, Illinois State University Office of Student Affairs, Illinois State University

College of Fine Arts, Illinois State University School of Music, and the Illinois State University Band in honor of the Illinois State University Sesquicentennial Celebration.

D: 40 minutes

A Child's Garden of Dreams

Y: 1981

I: Wind Ensemble with Harp, Piano, and Electric Organ.

C: John and Marietta Paynter

Pr: February, 1982. Premiered by the Northwestern University Wind Ensemble under John P. Paynter, conductor

D: 35 minutes

H: Based on five dreams of a young girl taken from a case study included in *Man and His Symbols* by Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung.

Collected Chorale Settings

I: Winds, Brass, Percussion, and String Instruments

Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Wind Ensemble

Y: 1999

I: Solo Alto Saxophone and Wind Ensemble

C: By a consortium headed by the University of Texas at Austin under Jerry Junkin and the University of Arizona under Gregg Hanson

Pr: March, 2000. Premiered by the University of Arizona Symphonic Wind Ensemble under Gregg Hanson, conductor, with Joseph Lulloff, solo saxophone

D: 42 minutes

Concerto for Marimba and Band

Y: 1990

I: Marimba Soloist and Band

C: U.S. Air Force Band

Pr: November, 1990 at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention in Philadelphia, PA by the U.S. Air Force Band, under Steven Grimo, conductor, with Randall Eyles, marimba

D: 18 minutes

Concerto for Piano, Winds and Percussion

Y: 1976

I: Solo Piano and Wind Ensemble

Pr: February, 1979. Premiered by the Eastman Wind Ensemble under Frederick Fennell, conductor, with William Dobbins, piano

D: 20 minutes

Concerto for Trombone and Wind Ensemble

Y: 2007

I: Solo Trombone and Wind Ensemble

C: Gary Green for trombonist Timothy Conner and the University of Miami Frost Wind Ensemble

D: 36 minutes

Concerto No. 2 for Piano, Winds, and Percussion

Y: 2003

I: Solo Piano and Wind Ensemble

C: Steven Hesla, pianist

D: 27 minutes

H: From program notes:

"Steve wanted a piece for mature soloist, but with ensemble parts that could be managed by good high school players. It was his intention to have a piece that he could perform with various high school ensembles in the state of Montana."[8]

David's Book: Concerto for Solo Percussionist and Wind Ensemble

Y: 2006

I: Solo Percussionist and Wind Ensemble

D: 42 minutes

H: A concerto for an ensemble of 33 winds, brass and percussion, including harp, piano, and double bass, and solo percussionist who plays a wide variety of instruments, including a set of Tibetan Singing Bowls

Desert Roads: Four Songs for Clarinet and Wind Ensemble

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[8]David Maslanka, "Program Notes – Concerto No. 2 for Piano, Winds, and Percussion," David Maslanka, http://69.16.233.70/wind-ensemble/concerto-no-2-for-piano-winds-and-percussion/ (accessed January 9, 2011).

Y: 2004

I: Solo Clarinet and Wind Ensemble

D: 27 minutes

Give Us This Day: Short Symphony for Wind Ensemble

Y: 2005

I: Wind Ensemble

D: 7 minutes

Golden Light - A Celebration Piece

Y: 1990

I: Wind Ensemble

C: The South Shore Conservatory

Pr: August, 1990. Premiered at the Cohasset Music circus, Cohasset, MA by the Senior Wind Ensemble of the South Shore Conservatory under Malcom W. Powell Jr., conductor

D: 8 minutes

H: "Golden Light" was written for a high school wind ensemble.

Heart Songs

Y: 1997

I: Wind Ensemble (intended for a young band)

C: Harwood Junior High School Symphonic Band and Joe Green

Pr: April, 1998. Premiered in Bedford, TX by the Harwood Junior High School Symphonic Band under Christopher Ferrell, conductor

D: 12 minutes

Hell's Gate

Y: 1997

I: Three Saxophones and Symphonic Wind Ensemble

C: Hellgate High School Symphonic Band and John H. Combs

Pr: March, 1997. Premiered in Missoula, MT by the Hellgate High School Symphonic Band under John H. Combs, conductor

D: 17 minutes

In Memoriam

Y: 1989

I: Wind Ensemble

C: The University of Texas at Arlington and Ray Lichtenwalter

Pr: February, 1990. Premiered at the Texas Music Educators Association annual conference, San Antonio, TX by the University of Texas at Arlington Wind Ensemble under Ray Lichtenwalter, conductor

D: 13 minutes

H: Composed for Ray Lichtenwalter in memory of his wife Susan

Laudamus Te

Y: 1994

I: Wind Ensemble

C: Mount St. Charles Academy Symphonic Band and Marc Blanchette

Pr: April, 1995. Premiered in Woonsocket, RI by the Mount St. Charles Academy Symphonic Band under Marc Blanchette, conductor

D: 12 minutes

Liberation

Y: 2010

I: Symphonic Wind Ensemble and Chorus

Pr: March, 2010. Premiered in Okazaki, Japan at the Japanese Wind Ensemble Conductors Conference. United States Premiere 04/18/2010 by the Illinois State University Symphonic Winds Stephen K. Steele, Conductor

Mass (revised 2005)

Mass (revised 2005)

Y: 1996

I: SATB Chorus, Boys Chorus, Soprano & Baritone soli, Organ, and Symphonic Wind Ensemble.

C: By a consortium headed by the University of Arizona Wind Ensemble and Gregg Hanson

Pr: April, 1996. Premiered at St. Thomas the Apostle Church, Tucson, AZ by the University of Arizona Wind Ensemble under Gregg Hanson, conductor

D: 105 minutes

H: A complete setting of the Latin Mass, intercut with solo songs on poems of Richard Beale

Montana Music: Chorale Variations

Y: 1993

I: Symphonic Wind Ensemble.

C: Bishop Ireton High School Band

Pr. May, 1993.Premiered in Alexandria, VA by the Bishop Ireton High School Band under Garwood Whaley, conductor.

D: 16 minutes

H: Embodies a hymn tune: "O Sacred Head"

Morning Star

Y: 1997

I: Symphonic Wind Ensemble

C: Grand Ledge High School Wind Symphony

Pr: May, 1997. Premiered in Grand Ledge, MI by the Grand Ledge High School Wind Symphony under Michael Kaufman, conductor.

Mother Earth - a Fanfare

Y: 2003

I: Wind Ensemble

D: 3 minutes

O Earth, O Stars: Music for Flute, Cello, and Wind Ensemble

Y: 2010

I: Double Concerto for Flute, Cello and Wind Ensemble

Pr: November 18, 2010. Premiered by the Illinois State University Wind Symphony under Stephen K. Steele, conductor; with Kimberly Risinger, Flute; and Adriana La Rosa Ransom, Cello

Prelude on a Gregorian Tune

Y: 1981

I: Wind Ensemble (intended for young band)

D: 4 minutes

H: The melody is evolved from a piece of Gregorian chant.

Procession of the Academics

Y: 2007

I: Wind Ensemble

D: 5 minutes

H: Written as an academic processional march for the Illinois State University for their sesquicentennial celebration

Rollo Takes a Walk

Y: 1980

I: Wind Band

D: 5 minutes

H: Taken from program notes:

"Rollo is a fictional character created by the American composer Charles Ives who lived from 1875 to 1953. Ives used Rollo in his writings about music as the model of an average person with conservative musical tastes. Ives would say 'Rollo would really like that tune!' or 'Rollo wouldn't like that one at all!' Rollo was Ives' measuring stick for a level of American popular taste. The irony was that Rollo wouldn't have liked most of Ives' own music. So, 'Rollo Takes a Walk': he moves about among tunes that he likes, and some stuff that's hard for him. Finally, 'Rollo' is simply a quirky little bit of fun, a bit of a musical cartoon."

Sea Dreams: Concerto for two Horns and Wind Ensemble

Y: 1997

I: Two Horns and Wind Ensemble

C: By a consortium headed by Thomas Bacon

Pr: April, 1998. Premiered by the Arizona State University Wind Ensemble under Richard Strange, conductor, with Thomas Bacon and James Graves, horns

D: 32 minutes

Song Book

Y: 2001

I: Flute and Wind Ensemble

D: 45 minutes

H: The title Song Book comes out of the intimate nature of the music, and the voice-like quality of the flute.

Symphony No. 2

Y: 1985

I: Concert Band

C: Big Ten Band Directors Association

Pr: February, 1987. Premiered at the College Band Directors National Association National Convention, Evanston, Ill., by Northwestern University Symphonic Band and Wind Ensemble under John P. Paynter, conductor

D: 30 minutes

Symphony No. 3

Y: 1991

I: Symphonic Wind Ensemble

C: The University of Connecticut Research Council and Gary Green.

Pr: November, 1991. Premiered at the University of Connecticut (Storrs) by the University of Connecticut Wind Ensemble under Gary Green, conductor

D: 49 minutes

Symphony No. 4

Y: 1993

I: Symphonic Wind Ensemble

C: By a consortium headed by the University of Texas at Austin Symphonic Wind Ensemble and Jerry Junkin.

Pr: February, 1994. Premiered at the 1994 Texas Music Educators Association convention, San Antonio, TX, by the University of Texas at Austin Symphonic Wind Ensemble under Jerry Junkin, conductor

D: 29 minutes

Symphony No. 5

Y: 2000

I: Symphonic Wind Ensemble

C: By a consortium headed by Illinois State University Wind Symphony and Stephen K. Steele

D: 40 minutes

Symphony No. 7

Y: 2004

I: Wind Ensemble

Symphony No. 8

Y: 2008

I: Wind Ensemble

C: By a consortium headed by Stephen K. Steele

Pr: November, 2008. Premiered at the Illinois State University Center for Performing Arts, Normal, IL, by the Illinois State University Wind Symphony under Stephen K. Steele, conductor

Tears

Y: 1994

I: Wind Ensemble

C: The Wisconsin Music Educators Association

Pr: October, 1994. Premiered at the Wisconsin Music Educators Association, Madison, WI by the Intercollegiate Honor Band under Allan McMurray, conductor

D: 12 minutes

Testament

Y: 2001

I: Symphonic Wind Ensemble

C: L.D. Bell High School Band in Hurst, TX, Joseph Grzybowski, and consortium

H: Written in response to the events of 9/11.

Traveler

I: Wind Ensemble

UFO Dreams: Concerto for Euphonium and Wind Ensemble

Y: 1998

I: Euphonium solo and Wind Ensemble.

C: Commissioned by the Hellgate High School Wind Ensemble and John H. Combs

Pr: March, 1999. Premiered in Missoula, MT by the Hellgate High School Wind Ensemble, under John H. Combs, conductor, and Matthew Maslanka, solo euphonium

D: 17 minutes

Unending Stream of Life: Variations on "All Creatures of Our God and King"

Y: 2007

I: Wind Ensemble

D: 22 minutes

Variants on a Hymn Tune

Y: 1994

I: Euphonium solo and Young Wind Ensemble

C: The Missoula All-City Winds

Pr: February, 1995. Premiered at the Music Educators National Conference Northwestern Convention in Spokane, WA by the Missoula All-City Winds under John Schuberg, conductor, with Matthew Maslanka, euphonium soloist

4. Percussion

Arcadia II: Concerto for Marimba and Percussion Ensemble

Y: 1982

I: Solo Marimba and Percussion Ensemble

Pr: December, 1987. Premiered by the Central Michigan University (Mt. Pleasant) Percussion Ensemble under Robert Hohner, conductor

D: 30 minutes

H: Arcadia represents the Garden of Eden, a mythical land of origins. This piece is unrelated to *Arcadia* for Cello Quartet.

Arcadia: Transcribed for Marimba Quartet by Jeffery A. White

I: Marimba Quartet

D: 12 minutes

Concerto for Marimba and Band

Y: 1990

I: Marimba soloist and Band

C: U.S. Air Force Band

Pr: November 1990 at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention, Philadelphia, PA by the U.S. Air Force Band under Steven Grimo, conductor, with Randall Eyles, marimba

D: 18 minutes

Crown of Thorns

Y: 1991

I: Keyboard Percussion Ensemble

C: The University of Oklahoma Percussion Ensemble and Richard Gipson

Pr: November, 1991. Premiered by the University of Oklahoma (Norman) Percussion ensemble under Richard Gipson, conductor

D: 15 minutes

Hohner

Y: 2001

I: Large Percussion Ensemble.

D: 14 minutes

H: Written in memory of Robert Hohner

In Lonely Fields

Y: 1998

I: Seven Solo Percussionists and Orchestra

C: By the Robert Hohner Percussion Ensemble (Mt. Pleasant, MI)

D: 13 minutes

Montana Music: Fantasy on a Chorale Tune

Y: 1993

I: Transcribed for Vibraphone and Marimba by Jeffery A. White

D: 11 minutes

Montana Music: Three Dances for Percussion

Y: 1992

I: Percussion Ensemble

C: Central Michigan University Percussion Ensemble and Robert Hohner

Pr: December, 1993. Premiered at the Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic, Chicago by the Central Michigan University Percussion Ensemble under Robert Hohner, conductor

D: 24 minutes

My Lady White

Y: 1980

I: Marimba

C: Harvey Vogel

Pr: May, 1980. Premiered in Dallas, Texas, by Lauren Vogel, marimba

D: 10 minutes

H: "My Lady White" is a reference to a poem of that name by Chaucer.

Time Stream

Y: 2002

I: Steel Drum Band

D: 8 minutes

H: Based on the Bach Chorale "Christ lag in Todesbanden."

Variations on 'Lost Love'

Y: 1997

I: Marimba

C: The New York State Music Educators Association

Pr: October, 1977. Premiered at Ithaca College, by Leigh Howard Stevens, marimba.

5. Solo and Chamber

A Litany for Courage and the Seasons

Y: 1988

I: Chorus, Clarinet and Vibraphone

C: Robert Isgro and the Geneseo Chamber Singers

Pr: April, 1988. Premiered by the University of Connecticut Concert Choir under Peter Bagley, conductor.

D: 25 minutes

Anne Sexton Songs

Y: 1975

I: Mezzo Soprano and Piano

Pr: July, 1977. Premiered by Sheila Allen, soprano

H: Three songs on poems of Anne Sexton

Arcadia

Y: 1982

I: Cello Quartet

D: 12 minutes

H: A single-movement work that was pronounced too difficult by the people for whom Maslanka wrote it, and which has never been performed

Arise!

I: Brass Quintet

D: 4 minutes

H: Written for the Aries Brass Quintet of Denver, CO

Black Dog Songs

Y: 1996

I: Tenor Voice and Piano

Pr: March, 1997. Premiered at the State University of New York – Geneseo by Jeff Tabor, tenor, and Alan Case, piano

D: 20 minutes

Blue Mountain Meadow

Y: 1998

I: Wind Quintet and Piano

C: John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the National Symphony Orchestra of Washington D.C., and Leonard Slatkin, Music Director, in honor of the 1996 American Residency Program in Montana and Wyoming

D: 8 minutes

Cello Songs

Y: 1978

I: Piano and Cello

Pr: October, 1978. Premiered at the State University of New York – Geneseo by James Kirkwood, cello, and James Willey, piano

D: 22 minutes

Duo

Y: 1972

I: Flute and Piano

Pr: December, 1972. Premiered at the State University of New York – Geneseo by Leone Buyse, flute, and Joseph Dechario, piano

D: 20 minutes

Five Songs

I: Soprano Voice and Orchestra

Pr: April, 1977. Premiered by the Sarah Lawrence College Orchestra and Katharine Rowe, soprano

H: Funded by the National Endowment for the Arts. Poetry by Robert Graves

Fourth Piece

Y: 1979

I: Clarinet and Piano

C: Meyer Kupferman

Pr: April, 1980. Premiered at the Carnegie Recital Hall by Meyer Kupferman, clarinet

D: 7 minutes

Heaven to Clear When Day Did Close

Y: 1981

I: Tenor Saxophone and String Quartet

Pr: February, 1982. Premiered by the Eastman School of Music by Ramon Ricker, saxophone, and Bel Canto String Quartet under Sydney Hodkinson, conductor

D: 22 minutes

Images from "The Old Gringo"

Y: 1987

I: Violin, Clarinet, and Piano

Pr: October, 1987. Premiered at the State University of New York – Geneseo by Richard Balkin, violin, Ernest Lascell, clarinet, and James Willey, piano

D: 20 minutes

Songbook for Marimba and Alto Saxophone

Y: 1998

I: Marimba and Alto Saxophone Duet

C: The Lawrence Conservatory

Pr: November, 1998. Premiered at Lawrence University Conservatory, Appleton, WI by Steve Jordheim, saxophone, and Dane Richeson, marimba

1.4 History and Background: *Crown of Thorns*

The piece to be analyzed, *Crown of Thorns*, is a single-movement piece for mallet percussion ensemble. *Crown of Thorns* was premiered in 1991 by the University of Oklahoma Percussion Ensemble under the direction of Richard Gipson. Maslanka describes the titular reference in his program notes:

> The title "Crown of Thorns" is an obvious reference to Christ's crown of thorns, but the name first came to me as a possible title for a piece from seeing a plant called "Crown of thorns" at the New York Botanical Gardens. Crown of thorns is a rambling, thorny desert plant from the Middle East, with small green leaves, and small, pretty red flowers. The rambling, interweaving, vine-like stems suggested music to me.[9]

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[9]David Maslanka, "Program Notes - Crown of Thorns," David Maslanka, http://69.16.233.70/percussion/crown-of-thorns/ (accessed October 22, 2010).

Maslanka further states that "As I meditated on the words 'Crown of Thorns,' and on the plant, and on the idea of a work for keyboard percussion ensemble, the following image[s] arose: a darkening sky, seven stars are visible: the seven-starred halo, the golden light, [and] the hands of blessing."[10] Maslanka further clarifies that though the imagery is Christian, the experience of suffering is universal, and goes beyond religion.

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[10]David Maslanka, "Program Notes - Crown of Thorns," David Maslanka, http://69.16.233.70/percussion/crown-of-thorns/ (accessed October 22, 2010).

CHAPTER 2

ANALYTICAL METHODOLOGY AND DISCUSSION ON FUNCTION

2.1. Functional Harmony

If contemporary music must be classified as either tonal or atonal, Maslanka's compositions are tonal; however, many twentieth-century practices occur in the music that render traditional diatonic analytical tools useless. Though many of the chromatic harmonic successions are not "functional" according to the standard definition of the term, it would be incorrect to say that these harmonies do not have function or relationships within the music. Examination of techniques in twentieth-century practice combined with traditional analytical tools will enable the identification of relationships within Maslanka's composition *Crown of Thorns* to be analyzed.

Functional harmony, a term attributed to Hugo Riemann, is a theory of tonal harmony in which each chord within a tonality represents one of three functions: tonic, dominant, or subdominant.[11] These functions are referred to as the "three pillars of

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[11] Arnold Whittall, "Functional Harmony." in *The Oxford Companion to Music,* http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e2730 (accessed February 10, 2011).

harmony," and each chord in music of the Common Practice Era, even secondary and seventh chords, are categorized under one of the three functions based on their "logical use."[12] Involving this hierarchy of chords and related keys, functional harmony specifically refers to the Western system of keys that developed from the modal music of the Renaissance to prevail in the 17th century. Though Riemann is generally identified as the source for much of our fundamental knowledge on the function of chords, "Riemann never claimed to have created the idea of three fundamental chords—tonic, dominant, and subdominant—in their logical succession. Natural truths are not created, only discovered," remarks Mickelson in his book *Hugo Riemann's Theory of Harmony and History of Music, Book III.*

Riemann actually credits Rameau for the identification of the tonic-dominant relationship. Rameau also established the notion of both an upper and lower dominant in 1726 upon recognition of the subdominant chord, which he compared to the dominant, as both are fifth-related to the tonic pitch. Harmony that is functional according to Riemann's definition is goal-driven towards the tonic pitch, typically through common chord progressions including root movement up by 2nd, down by 3rd, up by 4th, or down by 5th. Though this is a general overview of the term, questions arise as to what "function" specifically involves. "Function is one of those words that everyone understands, yet everyone understands a little differently. Although the impact and pervasiveness of function in tonal theory today is undeniable, a single, unambiguous definition of the term has yet to be agreed upon," remarks John Miller in his 2008

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[12]William Mickelson, *Hugo Riemann's Theory of Harmony: A Study* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1977), 60.

dissertation. In addition to the notion of "three pillars of harmony," many leading theorists have different understandings of the nature of the term function, and have used it to denote a variety of concepts; for example, the function of a chord can be defined by its behavior, rather than its structure, or function could refer to the grouping together of harmonies that share scale degrees.[13] The function of all music that retains tonal properties can be assessed in reference to behavior, but tonal music of the Common Practice Era in particular should be assessed in reference to the three pillars of harmony.

2.2. Decline of Functional Harmony

The popularity of diatonicism waned after the 18th century, as the desire for originality spawned an increased interest in chromatically altered sonorities, including, but not limited to chords sharing a chromatic mediant relationship or a doubly chromatic mediant relationship (discussed in 2.3.). Chromatically altered pitches are not uncommon in diatonic tonal music, but the altered tones are usually distinct from the diatonic pitches, allowing the listener to maintain "tonal bearings."[14] Chromatic tonal music, however, differs from diatonic-music-with-chromatically-altered-pitches in that the music is so "saturated" with chromaticism that a diatonic structure is no longer obvious. This type of extremely chromatic music often maintains many of the harmonic structures and

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[13]John Miller, "The Death and Resurrection of Function" (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2008), 25-37.

[14] Stefan Kostka, *Materials and Techniques of Twentieth-Century Music.* (New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006), 121-143.

conventional cadences of diatonic tonality. For this reason, analysts often attempt to approach such music with tools designed for diatonic tonal music, yet music of this type does not respond well with such analytical techniques.[15] Assigning a category label to this type of chromaticism in music is difficult. Richard Cohn argues that the term "chromatic tonality" often misleadingly points toward pitch-centric music, but the term "triadic chromaticism" is too all-inclusive, as it can also be used to describe chromatic harmony in diatonic music as well. "Triadic atonality" does not adequately describe music of this type either, as true atonality avoids compositional devices that aid in the implication of tonality (which music of this type does not do). For this reason, Cohn prefers to use the term "triadic post-tonality" to describe music fitting this description, and this term will hereafter be used to describe Maslanka's composition *Crown of Thorns*.[16]

2.3. Concepts Drawn From Neo-Riemannian Theory

Some analytical tools for post-tonal triadic music fall under the category of Neo-Riemannian theory, which arose in response to analytical problems posed by chromatic music that is triadic but not altogether tonally unified. Such characteristics are seen in music of Wagner and Liszt, but are also represented in passages from Mozart, Schubert, and other pre-1850 composers.[17] Neo-Riemannian theory initially developed from the

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[15] Robert Morris, "Voice-Leading Spaces," *Music Theory Spectrum* 20, no. 2 (Fall 1998): 175-208.

[16] Richard Cohn, "Introduction to Neo-Riemannian Theory: A Survey and a Historical Perspective," *Journal of Music Theory* 42, no. 2 (Autumn, 1998): 167-80.

[17] Cohn, "Introduction to Neo-Riemannian Theory: A Survey and a Historical Perspective," 169.

theories of harmonic dualism suggested by Hugo Riemann and the resulting, adapted concepts of other twentieth-century theorists. The idea of harmonic dualism stems from the idea that major and minor tonalities are the "antithesis" of each other. Riemann agreed that the basis for major harmony is the overtone or harmonic series, shown as the following fractions representing division of a string:

$$1/2 \quad 1/3 \quad 1/4 \quad 1/5 \quad 1/6$$

Riemann theorized that just as the harmonic series is the source of major harmony, an undertone series must also exist to serve as the basis for minor harmonies. Furthermore, according to Riemann's concept, if the overtone series can be understood as the division of a string according to the aforementioned fractions, the undertone series logically must be represented by the numerical sequence 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6; each number represents the lengthening of a string rather than its division.[18] Though the physical existence of an undertone series or undertones in a single pitch has been disproven, theorists such as David Lewin, Brian Hyer, and Richard Cohn have drawn from Riemann's concepts to develop analytical tools for music primarily comprised of major and minor sonorities that contain harmonic language involving chromatic alteration that is distinct from tonic-dominant tonality.

Though conventional cadences are not uncommon in post-tonal triadic music, inclusion does not guarantee that the music in which they are contained is coherently

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[18] William Mickelson, *Hugo Riemann's Theory of Harmony: A Study* (n.p.: University of Nebraska Press, 1977), 23-26, 60-62.

tonal (or follows one identifiable tonal plan through the piece). In reference to Wotan's monologue from *Die Walküre*, Carolyn Abbate states that "...the cadence points are detached from the musical matter that they punctuate: they are not integral to it. It is as if these cadences are laid over unstructured harmonic improvisations; the cadences create local wrinkles, but only draw a few instants into their tonal sphere."[19] Neo-Riemannian theorists recognize the potential for "tonal disunity" in music that uses classical harmonies and cadences and have sought to establish tools for discovering "function" within. Cohn goes on to ask "If this music is not fully coherent according to the principles of diatonic tonality, by what other principles might it cohere?" Neo-Riemannian analytical techniques actually include a number of concepts, six of which are mentioned in Cohn's article: voice-leading parsimony, common-tone maximization, mirror/dual inversion, enharmonic equivalence, triadic transformations, and the table of tonal relations or *Tonnetz*.[20]

Observation of voice-leading procedures in tonal music is typical. Even simple, single-line melodies have general "rules" for how a melody should progress. Stemming from counterpoint of the 16th century, these voice-leading rules are not arbitrary, as they enable the listener to "parse the ongoing musical fabric into meaningful units."[21] Many theorists have searched for a generalization of tonal voice-leading procedures that can be

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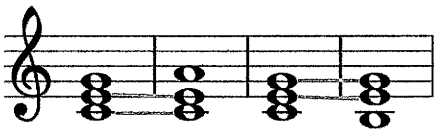
[19] Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices - Opera And Musical Narrative In The Nineteenth Century*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 192.

[20] Cohn, "Introduction to Neo-Riemannian Theory: A Survey and a Historical Perspective," 171-172.

[21] Morris, "Voice-Leading Spaces," 197.

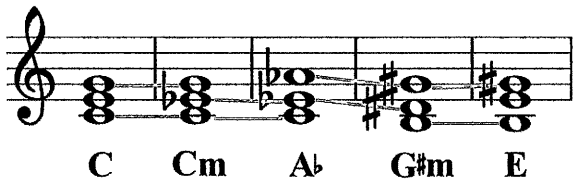
used in post-tonal triadic music as well. In non-functional/post-tonal chord successions, tertian properties such as major and minor sonorities remain, but succession from one chord to the next often includes particular voice-leading procedures that fall outside the parameters of diatonic tonality. Movement between voices is usually stepwise and often chromatic. The voice-leading procedure that moves as few voices in as few steps as possible is referred to as "parsimonious voice-leading." Used in the strict sense, this term indicates voice-leading between chords that retains two common tones and moves the remaining voice by step, as seen in Example 1 (diatonic) and Example 2 (chromatic). In a chromatic context, harmonic successions that focus predominantly on horizontal linear movement between "voices" are resultantly non-functional in nature and often cannot be practically labeled with roman numerals. Chord successions employing parsimonious voice-leading may also, at times, retain only one common tone while the other two voices move by step (as in Ex. 3 and 4). Examining voice-leading between chord structures in post-tonal music can be useful for identifying relationships of harmonies in succession, in both a diatonic and chromatic context.

Ex. 1: Diatonic Parsimonious Voice-Leading

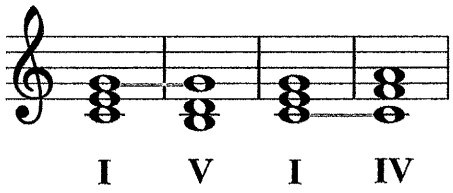


—— Indicates common-tone retention in Ex. 1-6

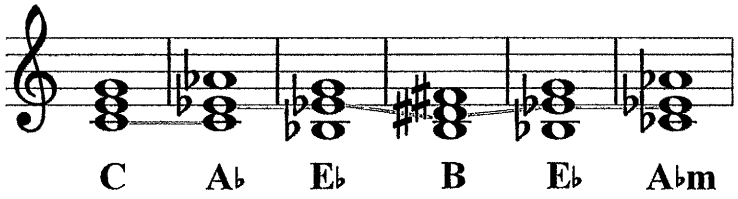
Ex. 2: Chromatic Parsimonious Voice-Leading



Ex. 3: Voice-Leading Retaining One Common Tone



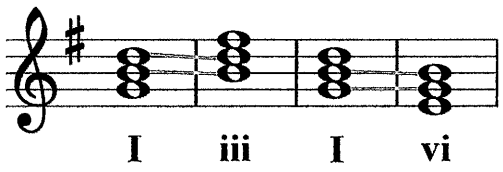
Ex. 4: Chromatic Voice-Leading Retaining One Common Tone



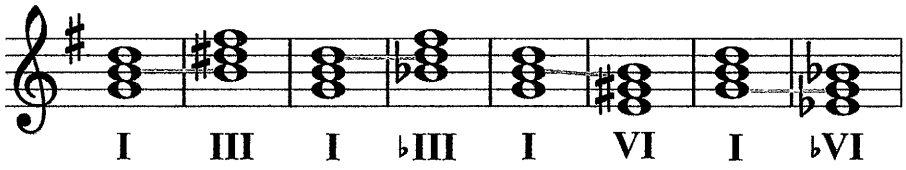
Many post-tonal or chromatic successions can include parsimonious voice-leading, such as harmonies with a chromatic mediant relationship. Twentieth-century composers often included this variant on traditional harmonic function, as well as the doubly chromatic mediant relationship, both of which are to be described shortly. The traditional mediant relationship occurs between two chords whose roots are a major or minor 3rd apart and contain no chromatically altered pitches (see Ex. 5). This relationship can be identified via roman-numeral analysis as follows: I – iii or I - vi (sub-mediant) in

major keys, and i – III or i –VI in minor. Chords with a mediant relationship to each other can easily be written parsimoniously by retaining two common tones and moving the remaining pitch by step (in the case of Ex. 5, the pitch G could move down by step to F, or the D could move up by step to E).

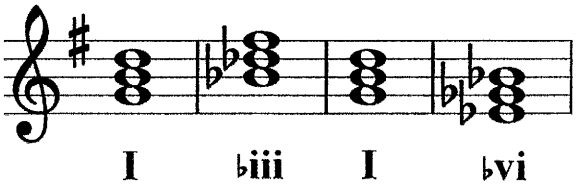
Ex. 5: Traditional Mediant/Submediant Relationship



Ex. 6: Chromatic Mediant/Submediant Relationship



Ex. 7: Doubly Chromatic Mediant/Submediant Relationship



A chromatic mediant relationship between two chords is identified as two triads or keys of the opposite quality (major or minor) that are a major 3rd or a minor 3rd apart, as seen in Example 6. The resulting pitches of the two chords will share one common pitch

class, and if the composer so desired, the remaining two voices could move parsimoniously by step, whether half or whole.[22]

The term "parsimonious voice-leading" may also be used in a more general sense, meaning any tone in a chord may remain a common tone, move by semitone, or move by whole tone. The doubly chromatic mediant relationship (Ex. 7), defined as two triads with roots a 3rd apart of opposite quality sharing no pitch classes, could also easily be written parsimoniously according to the more general use of the term.[23] The G major chord of Example 7 could move parsimoniously by moving the G to F, B to B♭, and D to D♭. Both chromatic mediant relationships and doubly chromatic relationships are spelled enharmonically at times, but nevertheless, the relationship remains regardless of spelling.[24] In his dissertation, Miller suggests the examination of chromatic harmonies with respect to one of the many aspects of function termed "behavior." Linear voice-leading chords—including, but not limited to augmented sixths, common-tone diminished sevenths, chromatic mediants, and other chromatic harmonies—can all be examined according Rameau's concept of behavior-as-function. This could refer to how a chord is resolved as well as the particular voice-leading, if any, that takes place.[25]

Common-tone maximization, another subject mentioned in Cohn's article, is closely related to the subject of voice-leading parsimony. The term *Klang* or *Klänge* used hereafter refers to consonant triads. Klänge that are closely related or in close proximity

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[22]Justine Shir-Cliff, Stephen Jay and Donald Rauscher, *Chromatic Harmony* (New York: Free Press, 1966), 120.

[23]Schoenberg, Arnold. *Theory of Harmony*. 2 ed. Pacific Palisades: Belmont Music Publishers, 1983. 39.

[24]Kostka, *Materials and Techniques of Twentieth-Century Music*. 45-77.

[25] Miller, "The Death and Resurrection of Function." 35.

to each other often contain the maximum number of common tones possible (usually two) while still producing a different, second Klang. Voice-leading parsimony and common-tone maximization are closely related, as the former often relies on the latter.

The remaining Neo-Riemannian topics mentioned by Cohn include mirror/dual inversion, enharmonicism, triadic transformations, and the table of tonal relations, or *Tonnetz*. "Mirror" or "dual inversion" refers to the axis by which sonorities are inverted. "The inversional axis is defined in relation to the triad's component pitch classes rather than a fixed point in pitch-class space" states Cohn. Triadic transformations are described as "something one does to a *Klang* to obtain another *Klang*." Enharmonic equivalence and equal temperament are standardly used when dealing with Neo-Riemannian analysis, and theorists such as Hyer and Lewin favor enharmonically "neutral" integers.

The final aspect of Neo-Riemannian theory to be discussed here is the table of tonal relations, or *Tonnetz,* which can only be created when equal temperament and enharmonic equivalence are assumed.[26] The *Tonnetz* is a geometrical representation of consonant triads (major/minor) in pitch-class space commonly used by Neo-Riemannian theorists to identify and describe the relationship between triads, and can be quite useful when examining chromatic, post-tonal harmonies. Early representations of a graphical web date as far back as 1739, when Swiss mathematician, physicist, and music theorist Leonhard Euler included a similar concept in his book *Tentamen novae theoriae musicae*

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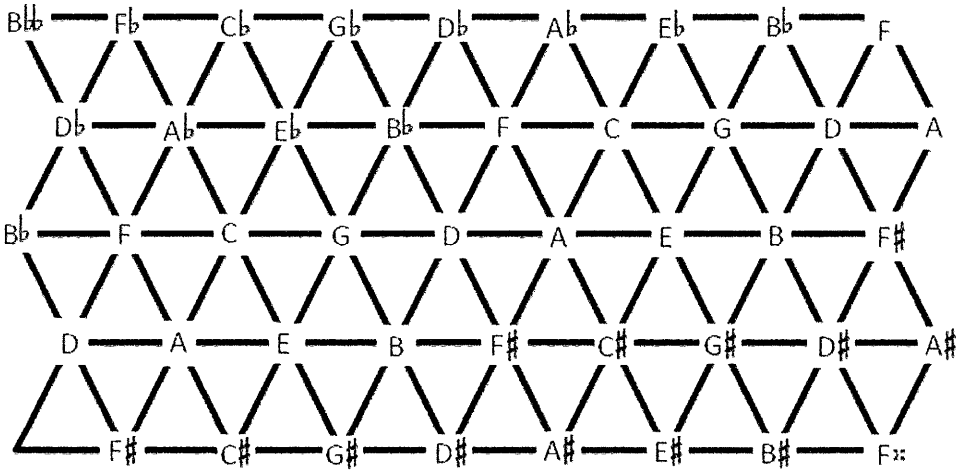
[26] Cohn, "Introduction to Neo-Riemannian Theory: A Survey and a Historical Perspective," 170-173.

ex certissismis harmoniae principiis dilucide expositae.[27] A table that closely resembles our current version of a two-dimensional *Tonnetz* was used to map relationships between triads in Arthur von Oettingens' book *Harmoniesystem in dualer Entwickelung*, from 1866.[28] Oettingen also was among the first to present the concept with purely tuned intervals, which allows the model to extend infinitely.[29] The *Tonnetz* has been utilized by subsequent generations of music theorists in order to identify and describe the relationships between major and minor chords, and can be quite useful when examining chromatic, post-tonal harmonies.

Ex. 8: *Tonnetz*



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[27]Leonhard Euler, *Tentamen Novae Theoriae Musicae Ex Certissismis Harmoniae Principiis Dilucide Expositae.* (St. Petersburg: Academy of Sciences, 1739), 147.

[28]Arthur von Oettingen, *Harmoniesystem in Dualer Entwickelung* (Dorpat and Leipzig: W. Glaser, 1866), 29.

[29]Cohn, "Introduction to Neo-Riemannian Theory." 173.

As seen in Example 8, each triangle on the *Tonnetz* graph represents a consonant triad, or *Klang*, and chords sharing common tones are easily identifiable. Constructed of horizontal perfect 5ths cross-sectioned with major and minor 3rds, the pitches and triads present in a *Tonnetz* begin to repeat and are spelled enharmonically in some cases. Theoretically, the *Tonnetz* graph could expand out infinitely in all directions, though for the purpose of this analysis, only the represented portion is necessary. There are three main "operations" that, when employed, change an initial sonority to a different, closely-related sonority. These three operations are standardly termed P, R, and L, and each can be represented on the *Tonnetz*.[30]

The first operation, P, exchanges a triad for its parallel major or minor. If the initial *Klang* is a major triad, the third of the triad would be lowered by a semitone when applying P; alternately, if the intial *Klang* is minor, the third would be raised by a semitone in order to produce the parallel major, as demonstrated in Example 9, where P is applied to a G major chord. Applying operation R to a triad produces the relative major or minor (Ex. 10) and operation L, or leading-tone exchange, moves the root of a major triad down a semitone or the fifth of a minor triad up a semitone. The resulting triad will have a mediant/sub-mediant relationship to the initial (Ex. 11).

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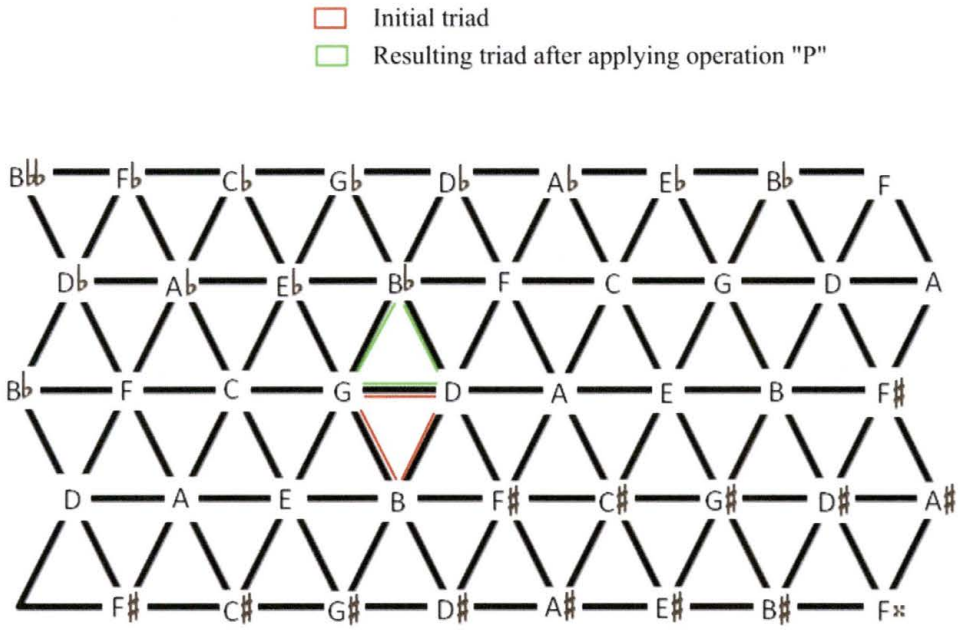
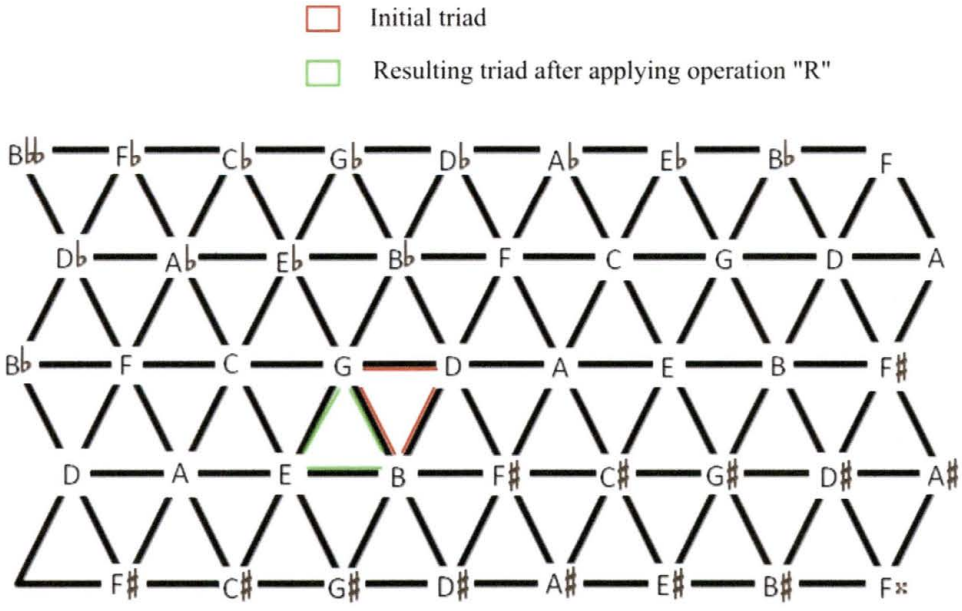
[30] David Lewin, "Neo-Riemannian Operations, Parsimonious Trichords, and Their Tonnetz Representations," *Journal of Music Theory* 41, no. 1 (Spring, 1997): 1-66.

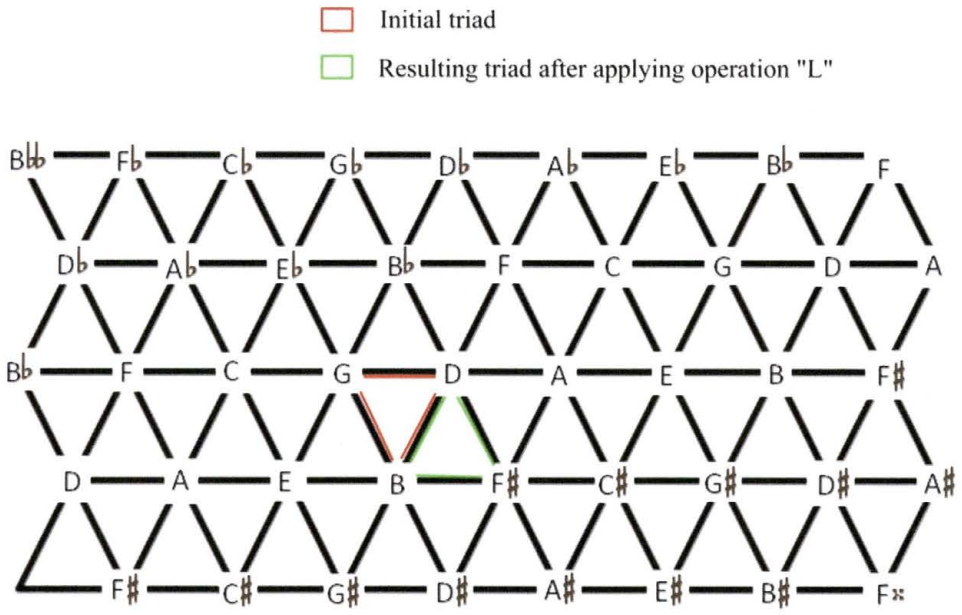
Ex. 9: Operation P applied to a G major triad



Ex. 10: Operation R applied to a G major triad



Ex. 11: Operation L applied to a G major triad



It is important to note that applying the same operation to the resultant triad would cause a reversion back to the initial triad; in other words, if one were to take the resulting B minor triad from Example 11 and apply the L operation again, the G major triad would result. More than one operation can be applied successively, and these are typically referred to as secondary operations.

Use of chromaticism, chromatic mediant relationships, and chord successions based on voice-leading often leads to passages or sections of suspended tonality, or tonally ambiguous material. This, however, differs from atonal music, which by definition has no tonal center. Atonal music systematically avoids devices that could be used to define a tonal center, such as tertian harmonies, dominant-tonic relationships, resolution of dissonant sonorities to consonant ones, and pedal points or ostinato-like

gestures that emphasize tonic. Though post-tonal harmonic language can, at times, seem to lack a tonal center in the traditional sense, some root movement by fifth and leading tone resolution may remain. In areas that lack harmonic evidence to support a tonal center, composers often establish tonal center by assertion. This may be done through reiteration, pedal point, ostinato, accent, formal placement, register, and other techniques aimed at drawing the listener's attention to a particular pitch class. Music of this type may be referred to pitch-centric. Similarly, music that lacks a clear tonal center can still sound resultantly tonal due to the frequent return to or reiteration of a particular harmony. Attempting to establish tonality in music that contains post-tonal/non-functional harmonic language requires attention to detail of the contour of melodic motives as well.

All subsequent analyses of "Crown of Thorns" will draw from nineteenth and twentieth-century devices applied as appropriate in an effort to identify relationships between harmonies in succession and properties within the music that contribute to the tonal essence in the absence of functional harmony.

CHAPTER 3

HARMONIC STRUCTURES, RELATIONSHIPS, AND SUCCESSIONS

3.1 Introduction to Harmonic Structures within *Crown of Thorns*

Harmonic language in Maslanka's "Crown of Thorns" can be difficult to approach with traditional analytical techniques. Though roughly 95% of the sonorities present are major or minor chords, the majority in root position, the order of the harmonic successions are not considered "functional" by the standard definition of the term.[31] The chords present do not progress according to the "three pillars of harmony" identified by Riemann as tonic, dominant, and subdominant, though the music is certainly tonal; furthermore, harmonic successions in "Crown of Thorns" move through seemingly distant chords, making identification of a tonic pitch based on harmonic successions alone impossible, as they cannot practically be labeled with roman numerals. This piece can adequately be described as "triadic post-tonality" according to Cohn's definition of the term. Triadic, post-tonal music retains many of the sonorities of diatonic tonal music, though the music itself is not tonally unified, or following an identifiable tonal plan. As mentioned

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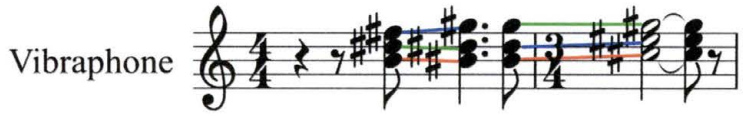
[31] Estimate based on author's analytical study of the piece.

formerly, standard roman-numeral-analysis is no longer applicable for harmonic successions in post-tonal music; therefore, identification of sonorities in "Crown of Thorns" must revert to naming the chord based on its root and quality alone, and identifying relationships distinct from diatonic tonal music. Despite the seemingly distant relationship, harmonies in succession maintain a strong sense of forward drive toward a resolution much like functional progressions in diatonic tonality. Subsequent sub-chapters will discuss harmonic relationships and devices present that allow the harmonies to "progress" towards a resolution and contribute to the tonal nature of the piece.

3.2. Parsimonious Voice-Leading

Observing voice leading tendencies is expected when moving from one chord to the next in both diatonic tonal and post-tonal music. Parsimonious voice-leading, in which voice leading follows the "law of the shortest path" between successions of chords, occurs frequently in "Crown of Thorns." Individual pitches included in the harmonies often move stepwise, whether half or whole and common tones are maintained where possible. By observing these principles in certain passages, Maslanka achieves a sense of forward propulsion and an aural "resolution," though the harmonies move through seemingly distant chords. In Example 12, parsimonious voice-leading can be seen in the harmonic succession, which takes place in Vibes I (mm. 22-23).

Ex. 12: Parsimonious Voice-Leading in *Crown of Thorns* mm. 22-23



The initial root-position B major triad becomes a G♯ major chord by retaining the D♯ as a common tone, while the pitch B ascends by semitone to B♯ and the F♯ ascends by whole tone to G♯. The G♯ chord then moves to a C♯ major chord by retaining G♯ as a common tone and moving D♯ to E♯ and B♯ to C♯; both of which are movement by whole tone. Though some may argue that these three chords could be labeled with the roman numerals bVII, V, and I, it is necessary to examine the surrounding harmonies in order to determine if there is a coherent tonal plan present during this passage. This passage begins after a fermata in m. 15, and moves through the harmonies F♯ minor, D, E, B, D Phrygian (in m. 19 melodic motive), and D minor directly before the material in Example 12 enters. As vibes linger on the C♯ major harmony in 23, Marimba II, III, IV, and Bass Marimba enter immediately with a D minor chord followed by G major and C major in mm. 24 and 25. This low-voice gesture also includes root movement by fifth, which, when separated from the musical context of the piece, could be labeled with roman numerals; however, when taken in the context of the passage, one can see that the order of the harmonic succession does not establish a unified tonal plan. Root-movement-by-fifth/cadential material provides a brief tonicization, but cannot be used for the definition of a key or tonic pitch for the entirety of the passage. As discussed previously, cadences in this type of music create "local wrinkles," and only draw a few musical

instants into their tonal sphere.[32] These brief tonicizations are common in Maslanka's music and chromatic harmony in general.

Another instance of parsimonious voice-leading can be seen in mm. 39-40 (Ex. 13), beginning on an E minor chord with an added second (F♯). The F♯ resolves down to E by whole tone movement, joining the remaining pitches of the E-minor chord. The pitch E then moves to D (whole tone movement) while the B and G are held as common tones, creating a G major chord. The pitches B and G are held as common tones yet again, while the D of the G major chord moves down by semitone to C♯, creating a C♯ half-diminished seventh with the third omitted (E).

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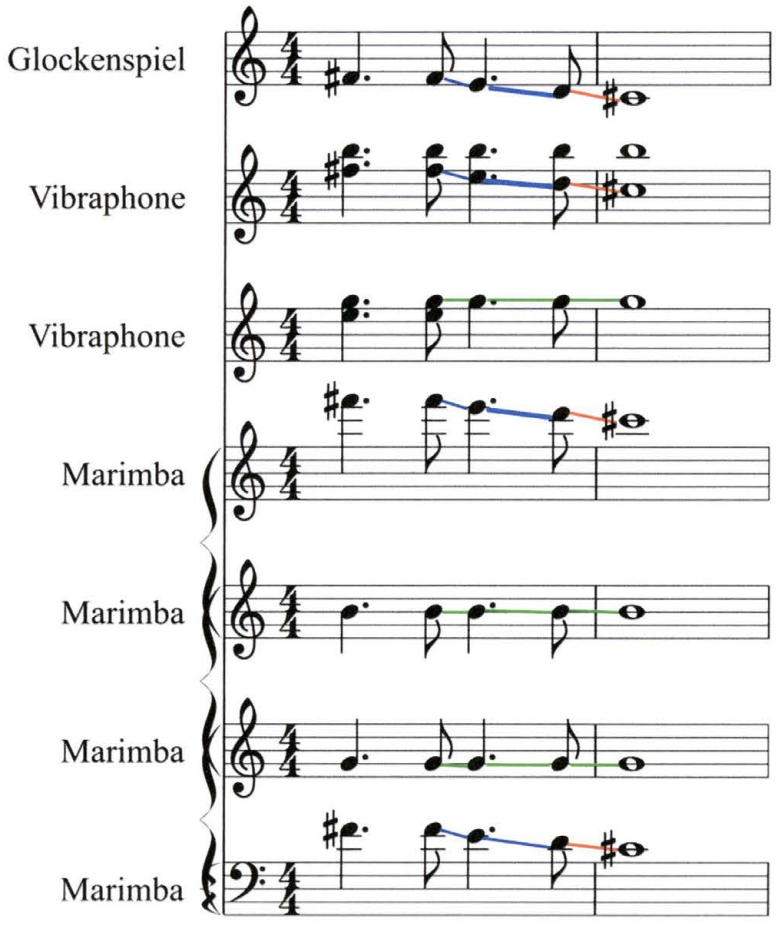
[32] Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, 192.

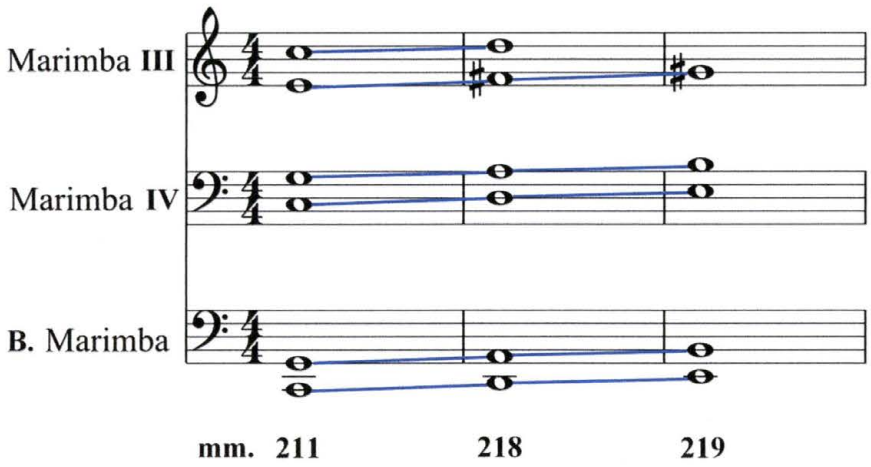
Ex. 13 Parsimonious Voice-Leading mm. 39 – 40



As the general definition of parsimonious voice-leading signifies, any voice in a chord may move by whole tone, semitone, or common tone, and twentieth century techniques such as planing or parallelism between chord successions can also occur in a parsimonious way. Example 14, taken from mm. 211-219, shows an instance of parallel voice-leading in which the quality of the chord is retained for each subsequent harmony. Also referred to as chromatic planing, the voice-leading is also parsimonious in nature, as each voice moves by step, following the shortest path between two sonorities. If the

parallel voice-leading present in the example had occurred in a diatonic context, then the quality of each chord in the succession would have been determined by the prevailing diatonic key. As seen in the example, Marimba III, IV, and Bass Marimba (melodic material in other voices has been excluded from the example) begin on a C major chord, that, after several measures, moves up by parsimonious, parallel voice-leading to a D major chord, and then to an E major chord in the same manner.

Ex. 14: Parallelism and Parsimonious Voice-Leading



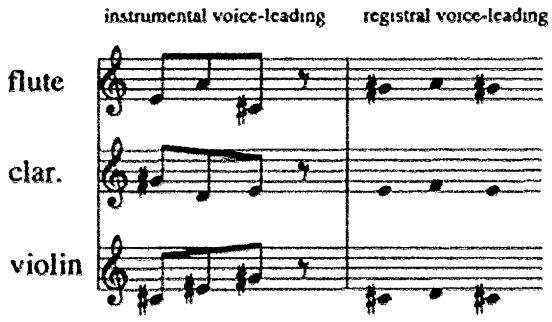
3.3. Relationships Between Harmonies in Succession

Throughout the entirety of the piece, chords in succession are related to each other through the common tone, whole tone, and semitone motion between voices; however, not all of these successions include parsimonious voice-leading. When orchestrated in an instrumental context, each instrumental line may move variously from chord tone to chord tone, though the chord members remain related by semi-tone, common tone, or

whole tone. In his article "Voice-Leading Spaces" in *Music Theory Spectrum 20* no. 2, Robert Morris provides the example taken from Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* (Example 15).

Ex. 15: From Robert Morris's article "Voice-Leading Spaces"[33]

Example 1b. Instrumental versus registral voice-leading in Schoenberg, *Pierrot lunaire*, "Eine blasse Wäscherin," m. 4



The example shows three instrumental lines, played by flute, clarinet, and violin. The chords present are written in an instrumental manner with no particular voice leading, and are then re-written as note heads to show the pitches of the chord written with parsimonious voice-leading. Morris states: "We may hear the succession of chords form three parallel lines in spite of the instrumental lines, which are also audible."[34]

Maslanka, who names Schoenberg as a compositional influence, also often incorporates chord successions that remain related by semitone, whole tone, or common tone, but are written in an instrumental manner, rather than observing any particular voice-leading procedures (Ex 16).

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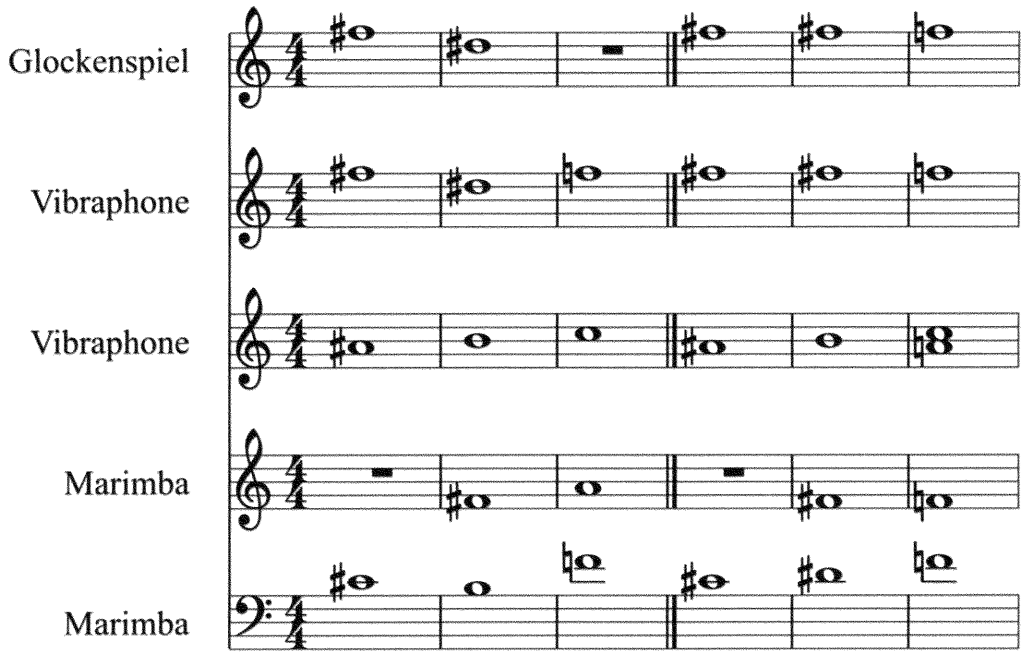
[33] Robert Morris. 178.

[34] Ibid.

Ex. 16: Instrumental versus Registral Voice-Leading mm. 243-245

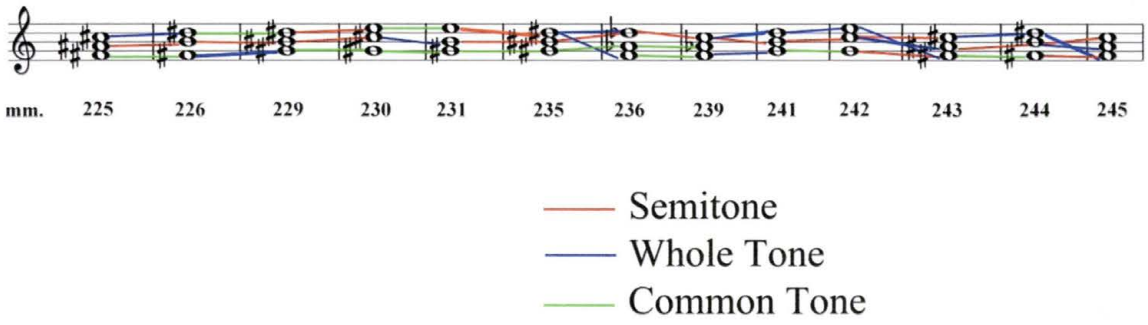


In this example, mm. 243-245 are represented in the first three measures as they are orchestrated in the music, with rhythmic repetition removed. The above instruments sustain the pitches of an F♯ major chord before moving to B major and F major, as shown before the double bar-line. Though the second vibraphone does move parsimoniously, the other instruments move variously through the chord tones, without adhering to any particular voice-leading tendencies. The three measures after the double line show the example written with parsimonious voice-leading, with no voice moving farther than a whole step. Note that the second vibraphone could either descend to A or ascend to C in the last measure. As pointed out by Morris, listeners may actually perceive the latter, regardless of the particular instrumentation of the passage.

Example 17 shows a harmonic reduction taken from mm. 225-245. Though the surface-level harmonies remain, all rhythmic ornamentation and repetition have been removed. The order or the harmonies in successions has not been altered, though

particular orchestration of instrumental voices is not pertinent, and some chords have been placed in inversion in order to best display their common tone, whole tone, and semitone relations.

Ex. 17: From *Crown of Thorns* mm. 225-245



When asked about the relationship of harmonies in succession, Maslanka replied,

> Your model is certainly useful in illustrating chord relationships. I don't have any method for the choice of harmonies. It is simple reliance on ear to say what feels right for the given moment. I do have an overall sense of harmonic movement around specific tonal center, but there is always freedom to move wherever the music seems to want to go…Many composers do start from a "system" point of view, and every composer lives to a degree within the parameters of musical language as it is known. In my opinion, a composer starting from a "system" point of view is already telling the music what it can't be. If I start writing thinking that I know what a piece is supposed to be, it will more often than not defeat me.[35]

Maslanka goes to explain that many people shy away from doing a theoretical analysis of his work, as a harmonic analysis can be painstaking, and often the findings are not intentional on the part of the composer. "Composing is about listening and following

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[35]David Maslanka. E-mail correspondence to author, 10 March 2011.

where the music wants to go, and analysis is about describing the journey in a systematic way," he states.

3.4. Harmonic Successions and their *Tonnetz* Representations

The relationship between harmonies in succession in "Crown of Thorns" can also be examined by mapping out said harmonies on the table of tonal relations. As seen in Examples 8-11, there are three basic operations termed P, L, and R that can be combined resulting in a sonority that is more distantly related. These secondary operations are comprised of basic operations applied successively. For example, three common secondary operations are N, which is defined as the application of R, L, and P successively; S, defined as the application of L, P, and R successively; and H, entailing L, P, and L applied successively.[36] There are numerous ways in which the basic operations can be combined to describe the relationships between triads that are distantly related, though too many successive combinations can lose practicality when attempting to clarify these relationships.

Basic operations and secondary operations can both be found in *Crown of Thorns.* In m. 230, the pitches of a C♯ minor triad are sustained in some voices and arpeggiated in others before the harmony shifts to E minor in m. 231. This is a prime example of the R operation that exchanges a triad for its relative major or minor, shown on the Tonnetz (Ex. 18). Representations on the Tonnetz do not necessarily imply any particular voice-leading but solely emphasizes relationships between sonorities, though parsimonious voice-leading can easily be utilized with most of these operations. In mm. 224-225, a C major triad moves to an F♯ major triad, as represented in Example 19. The F♯ major chord can be arrived upon by applying R, P (which exchanges a triad for its parallel

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[36] Richard Cohn, "Neo-Riemannian Operations, Parsimonious Trichords, and Their 'tonnetz' Representation," *Journal of Music Theory* 41, no. 1 (Spring, 1997): 1-3.

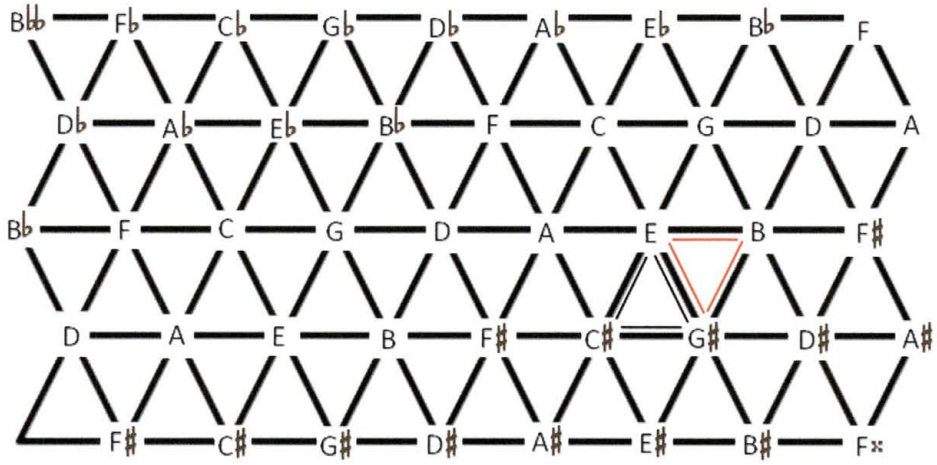
major/minor), and then both R and P again to the initial C major triad. Another harmonic succession that can be successfully mapped on the Tonnetz occurs in mm. 208-211. The harmonic succession moves from A♭ major to F minor and then to C major. The first chord change – A♭ to F minor – is mapped out as operation R (Ex. 20). The latter chord change – F minor to C – can be obtained by applying secondary operation N, defined as the successive combination of R, L, and P into one operation. An example of a more distantly related harmonic succession can be found in mm. 239-241, where an F minor triad shifts to a G major triad. Two triads that are distant from each other can be mapped on out the Tonnetz, though a larger number of operations will be necessary to demonstrate the relationship. To exchange an F minor triad for a G major triad, R, L, and N (secondary operation) must be applied successively to the F minor triad, as seen in Example 21.

Note: The following color guide is appropriate for examples 18-21.

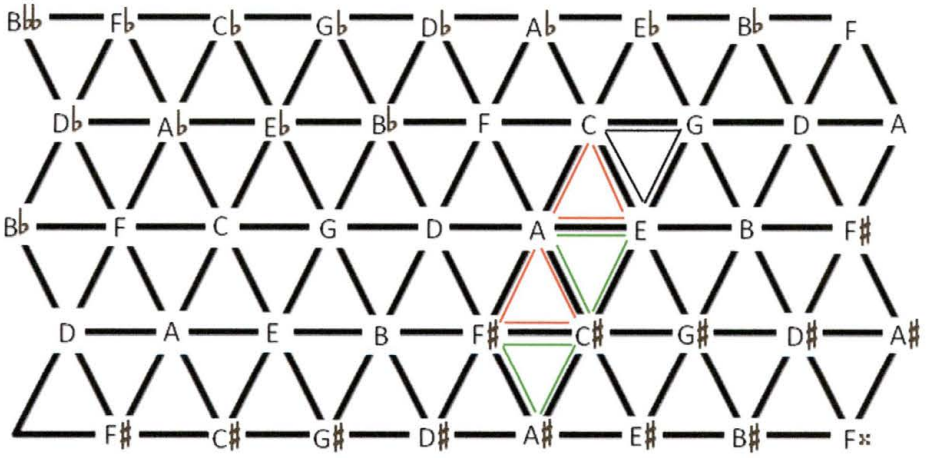
Initial triad ☐ Operation P ☐ Operation R ☐

Operation L ☐ Operation N ☐

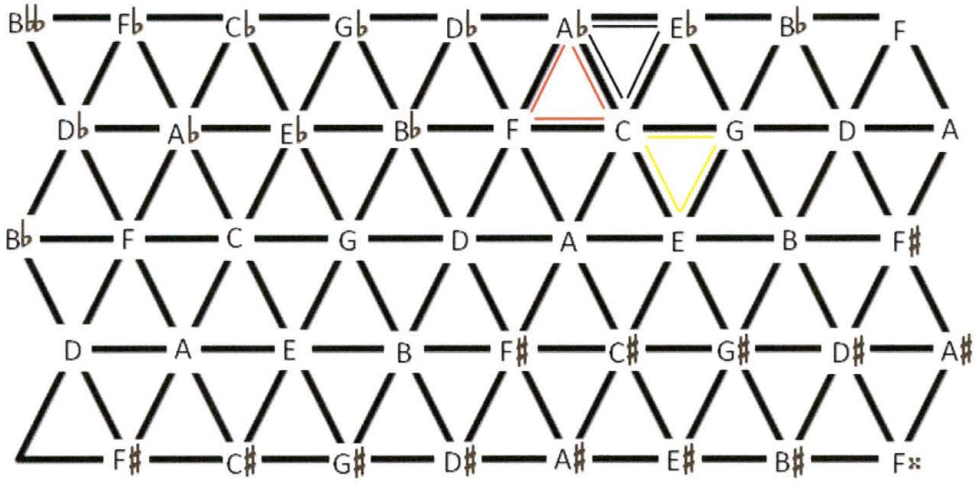
Ex. 18: Operation R mm. 230-231



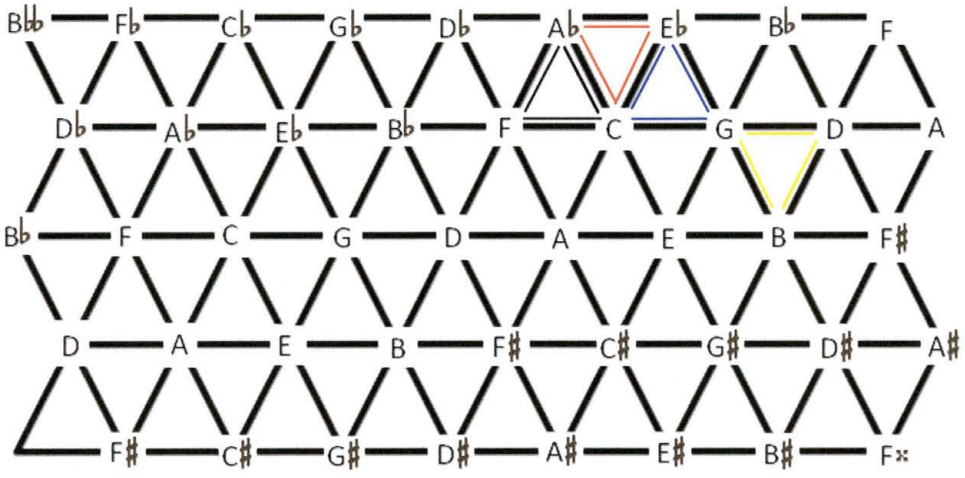
Ex. 19: Operations R, P, R, and P mm. 224-225



Ex. 20: Operations R and N mm. 208-211



Ex. 21: Operations R, L, and N mm. 239-241



CHAPTER 4

TONAL PROPERTIES IN POST-TONAL MUSIC

4.1. Overview of Tonal Properties in the Music

Music that contains harmonic successions without traditional tonic-dominant movement can, at times, seem tonally ambiguous; however, *Crown of Thorns* has been described as "overwhelmingly tonal" by the composer.[37] This is due to the inclusion of compositional devices that help establish a sense of tonality within the music. Tonal properties in post-tonal music can include basic techniques such as emphasis of and return to a particular sonority, resolution of dissonant harmonies to consonant ones, or melodic motives that have a diatonic sound. Though the music decidedly tonal, a single tonic pitch can be difficult to determine due to the fact that the order of the harmonic successions alone do not establish a tonic pitch. Other aspects of tonality present in the music include rhythmic or metric emphasis of a particular pitch class/chord and melodic motives that accentuate

[37] David Maslanka. E-mail correspondence to author, 10 March 2011.

the span of a perfect 5th. The inclusion of such tonal properties amongst post-tonal harmonies results in familiarity of sonorities that a listener can equate with tonality.

4.2. Emphasized Pitches, Sonorities, and Motives

One defining feature of the piece is the return of harmonies based on the pitches D and E. When asked about the duality of D and E as roots of frequently occurring triads and the significance thereof, Maslanka states "One use of tonal function in the piece is the thing you have noticed, which is the extended presence of single chords…[and] I do think that the very stable harmonic elements in 'Crown of Thorns' are familiar things for listeners."[38] The reiteration of D and E harmonies occur in both major and minor versions, often in rapid succession or simultaneously, until one emerges as the final sonority of the piece. The return to such harmonies gives the music tonal characteristics, and supports the notion of both D and E as tonal centers for a significant portion of the piece. The frequency of these harmonies/pitches can be seen in Examples 22 and 23.

The use of traditional forms combined with twentieth-century compositional practices is commonplace in Maslanka's music. "Study of his music reveals the use of forms such as sonata, ritornello, fantasia, and theme and variations," remarks Stephen Bolstad in his 2002 dissertation.[39] Even so, the forms included in his music often do not strictly adhere to Classical traditions in respect to section proportions and key relationships within the form. In reference to form in his music, Maslanka states:

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[38]David Maslanka. E-mail correspondence to author, 10 March 2011

[39]Stephen Bolstad, "David Maslanka's Symphony No. 4: A Conductor's Analysis with Performance Considerations" (DMA diss., The University of Texas - Austin, 2002), 48.

> The reason that the composer can succeed is that the language element (say, in this case, the idea of sonata form) is so deeply sublimated in the composer's mind that it is a natural channel for the free flow of a new piece. This is the nature of the old musical language for the composer: it is the sublimated "bed" over which the new river flows. The poet Robert Bly talked about form in poetry as rocks in a stream bed. The free flow of the river is shaped by the placement of rocks. Our brain construction and the deep, early learning of [the old musical] language provide the "rocks" of form.[40]

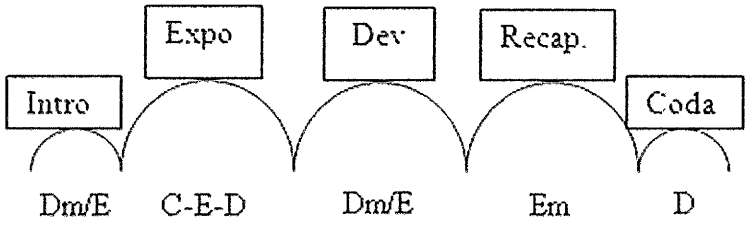
In Example 23, the general form of the piece (sonata form) can be seen as well as the key areas.

Ex. 22: Frequent Reiteration of D and E Harmonies

Reoccurring Pitch/Harmony	Location in Music (measure numbers only)
D	**1, 19, 95-100, 119-122, 127-130, 135-144, 147-148, 151-152, 155-156, 159, 163-173, 177 (in motive), 265-270, 287-290, 295-298, 304-338 (with D drone)**
E	**3 (in motive), 36-39, 65, 67, 69, 73, 75, 79, 81, 92, 101-102, 123-126, 131-134, 248-254, 257-264, 271-272, 291-294, 299-302**

[40] David Maslanka. E-mail correspondence to author, 10 March 2011.

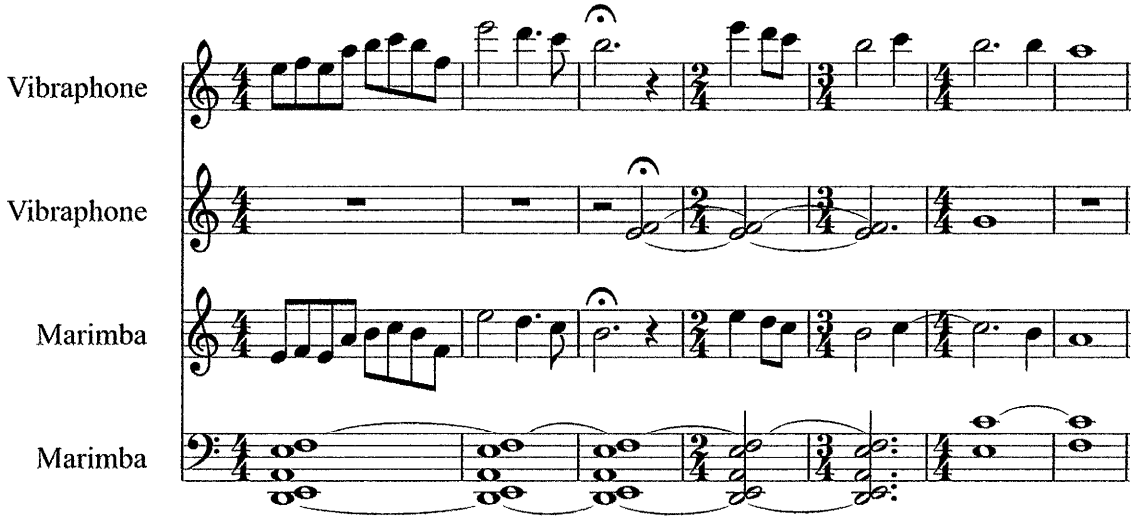
Ex. 23: Sonata Form Diagram for *Crown of Thorns*



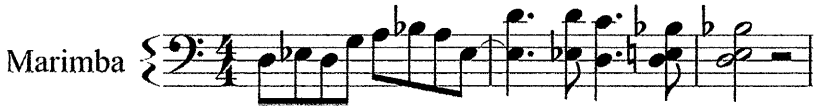
The initial sonority in the introduction is unstable and dissonant, beginning with a D minor chord with an added second, hereafter referred to as Dm+2. The pitches D, F, and A, set up the D minor harmony which will return often; however, the pitch E present in this first chord foreshadows the duality of D and E as frequent, vacillating tonal centers for the rest of the piece. Entering in m. 3 over the Dm+2 chord, the first melodic motive is begins on an E, ascends an octave, and descends to arrive on a fermata B in m. 5 (Ex. 24). The motive is distinctly Phrygian, and emphasis of the perfect 5th from E to B supports the notion of E as a tonal center, though the underlying Dm+2 harmony inhibits the absolute determination of the tonal center as either D or E. Melodic motives are typical of Maslanka's music in general, and often reappear in different guises, though a complete theme is rarely generated. The first melodic motive and the underlying harmony join forces in mm. 8 and 9, first forming a C major 7th chord and then F major, which is established in pitches of the lower voices. The intro continues on, moving through the major harmonies C, F, C, D, E, and B before the second statement of the melodic motive enters in m. 19, this time on the pitch D. The melodic motive, though rhythmically varied, is intervallically equivalent to the first statement of the motive and also outlines a perfect 5th between D and A (Ex. 25). This again highlights the frequent emphasis of D

and E in the piece. The third statement of the melodic motive occurs in m. 26, this time with the original E version of the motive harmonized with another statement of the motive a perfect 5th below beginning on the pitch A. Repetition of the harmonized E motive occurs in m. 33 with rhythmic variation.

Ex. 24: Dm+2 Harmony With E Phrygian Melodic Motive: mm. 3-9



Ex. 25: D Phrygian Melodic Motive: mm. 19-21

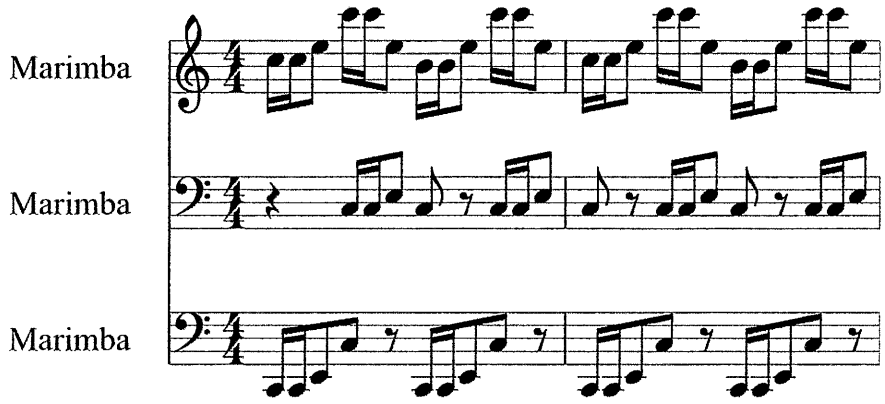


The exposition begins in C major at m. 47, using fast, rhythmic arpeggiation to expand upon this one sonority (see Example 26), until E minor takes over in m. 65. From mm. 65-119, the harmonies move around and through E minor, until the closing section of the exposition reestablishes the D major harmony. The development section begins in m. 163, and immediately there is a reestablishment as D as the tonal center, though now as part of D minor. By the end of the development, however, there is a return to E as a tonal center, implied by the inclusion of the E major material, as well as fragments of the

E melodic motive from the introduction section. The recapitulation begins in m. 257, making an abrupt change from E major to E minor, again with varied forms of motives from the introduction. As the piece comes to a close in the coda (mm. 287-338) all E harmonies are abandoned, and D major emerges as the final sonority of the piece.

Another tonal aspect briefly mentioned in reference to the exposition is the rhythmically-active arpeggiation of a single sonority for an extended amount of time. Often, entire passages will be comprised solely of this content (Ex. 26).

Ex. 26: Arpeggiation of a Single Sonority with Rhythmic Interest: mm 47 and 48



The example shows arpeggiation of a C major chord with rhythmic diversity taken from mm. 47 and 48, though the arpeggiation continues in this manner until m. 57. According to Maslanka, this is a means of giving a particular sonority weight and importance relative to other harmonies, stating "I think the key element in 'Crown of Thorns,' once you have determined chord relationships, is harmonic rhythm – how long each sonority lasts."[41] As discussed in previous chapters, the harmonic successions included in each

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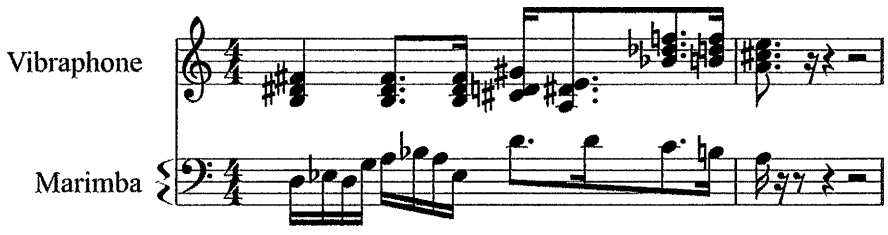
[41] David Maslanka. E-mail correspondence to author, 10 March 2011

section are comprised of tertian harmonies, but do little to define a tonal plan throughout the piece; instead, it is the familiarity of emphasized, reoccurring sonorities that contributes to the "profoundly tonal" essence of the piece.[42]

4.3. Dissonance vs. Consonance

Although the concept may seem obvious, another defining aspect of tonal music that can be seen in *Crown of Thorns* is the resolution of dissonant sonorities to consonant ones. Moments of mild-to-extreme dissonance are juxtaposed against passages of consonance like the one featured in Example 26. Dissonance occurs in various forms in the music, including added pitches in triads and polytonal gestures in which melodic motives which imply a different tonal center than the underlying harmonies (as seen in Ex. 24). Without exception, Maslanka resolves dissonant passages or sonorities to a consonant ones, at times accentuating the arrival of consonance with cadential material with root-movement-by-fifth. Example 27 shows another instance of melodic material that contrasts harmonically with the accompanying sonorities, taken from mm. 177-178.

Ex. 27: Contrasting Harmonic Material in Motives and Chords: mm. 177-178

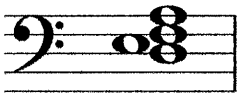


[42] Ibid.

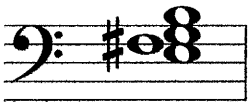
In this example, the D Phrygian melodic motive from the introduction reoccurs in unison marimba parts, while Vibes I and II enter on a B minor chord and move to B♭m at the end of the measure. This section moves through various altered melodic motive snippets and dissonant harmonies until resolution to a consonant sonority (B♭ major) occurs at m. 192.

Many harmonies included in *Crown of Thorns* have added pitches. This most commonly occurs in the form of added seconds, as seen in Examples 28 and 29.

Ex. 28: Dm+2 Chord: m. 1



Ex. 29: Em+2 Chord mm. 75 and 79



When combined, the devices of tonal music discussed in this chapter result in a strong sense of tonality based on familiarity of emphasized sonorities and resolution of dissonant sonorities. Though these devices are commonplace in diatonic tonal music, they are capable of implying tonality even amongst harmonies that are non-functional.

CLOSING REMARKS ON THE STUDY

Crown of Thorns includes post-tonal harmonic language that often does not yield to traditional analytical techniques and renders Roman-numeral analysis useless; however, the absence of functional harmony does not mean that the harmonic language does not "function" in some way within the music and that tonal properties are not retained. The harmonic structure and successions within the piece achieve a sense of continuity and forward "progression" due to the relationships between the chord tones that, though seemingly distant, are actually related by either semitone, common tone, or whole tone. The relationships between the chords are often displayed with parsimonious voice-leading, which further contributes to the smooth flow of the successions that drive toward a resolution. The tonality of the piece is defined by the familiarity of reoccurring sonorities, pitches, or motives combined with the interplay of consonance and dissonance.

In the absence of written work or harmonic analyses on *Crown of Thorns*, I hope that this thesis highlights aspects of function within the piece in an effort to clarify the intricate combination of post-tonal features within music that is still tonal. I would like to thank David Maslanka for his kind assistance with this project. His insight and feedback on my work has proved infinitely valuable in pursuit of this topic.

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