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# Impersonations: Approaching a Clarinet Recital from a Semiotic Perspective

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IMPERSONATIONS: APPROACHING A CLARINET RECITAL FROM A SEMIOTIC  
PERSPECTIVE

by

Derek Emch

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A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Master of Music

Department of Music in the Graduate School  
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By

Derek Emch

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## AN ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH PAPER OF

Derek Emch, for the Master of Music degree in Music Performance, presented on April 1, 2013, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: IMPERSONATIONS: APPROACHING A CLARINET RECITAL FROM A SEMIOTIC PERSPECTIVE

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Eric P. Mandat

Using a semiotic approach as a unifying thread grew naturally out of the literature I chose for my recital. The first piece, Evan Ziporyn's solo clarinet work *Four Impersonations*, is a set of four transcriptions of music from other cultures. In each movement, the clarinet signifies a different set of cultural codes. The second piece, Louis Spohr's *Sechs deutsche Lieder*, op. 103, is for clarinet, piano, and soprano. In this work, Spohr uses the clarinet to signify emotions and characters alluded to in the text. Following the Spohr is another work including voice, though of a fundamentally different nature. Jacob ter Veldhuis' *GRAB IT!* for bass clarinet and boombox utilizes voice samples of life convicted prisoners. He generates melody and rhythm from speech, and creates a narrative by weaving together electronics and bass clarinet. Fourth on my recital is Darius Milhaud's *Duo Concertant*, op. 351. This work is unlike the others in that it does not have a specific program or text attached to it. Instead, *Duo Concertant* becomes a study in music's ability to signify itself. Ending my recital is Eric Mandat's *The Moon in My Window*. A work overflowing with individuality borne out of Mandat's improvisations, *The Moon in My Window* illustrates music's ability to signify not only performance experience, but even personality traits of the composer. Semiotic concepts are introduced and then applied throughout, including a general semiotic theory conceived by Umberto Eco, and a music semiotic theory developed by Jean-Jacques Nattiez.

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## INTRODUCTION

Umberto Eco, one of the foremost living semioticians, in his theory of semiotics defines a *sign* as “everything that, on the grounds of a previously established social convention, can be taken as something standing for something else.” Eco’s definition is founded on the writings of Charles Sanders Peirce, in which a sign is made up of a tripartition formed by the *representamen*, or the form the sign takes, with the *object*, the thing a sign represents, and the *interpretant*. The interpretant is not the physical being who ‘interprets’ the sign, but rather “that which guarantees the validity of the sign, even in the absence of an interpreter.”<sup>1</sup> In Peirce’s theory, the interpretant is itself a sign that requires an interpretant, and so on, which creates an infinite chain in which one sign references another.

Peirce divided signs into different categories, depending on the relation between the three parts: icons, indices, and symbols. A sign is iconic when it is similar to, or resembles the object. A sign is indexical when there is a causal relation between it and the object. In the case of symbols, the object and sign have no direct or indirect relation except that which is determined by a culture. For example, consider the English word *airplane*. The culturally accepted vocalization of this word bears no resemblance or causal relation to the object to which it refers; neither does the image of the letters grouped together inherently invoke the image of an airplane. This idea of acculturation is naturally applied to the symbolic category. It is less naturally applied to icons and indices.

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<sup>1</sup> Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), 68.

Interestingly, however, Eco stresses that similarity, and therefore iconism, is also a learned concept. He suggests provocatively that “maybe an ‘iconic’ solution is not conventional when it is proposed, but it becomes so step by step, the more its addressee becomes acquainted with it. At a certain point the iconic representation, however stylized it may be, appears to be more true than the real experience.”<sup>2</sup> Eco, in making this statement, has arrived at a central tenet of art. In the words of fiction writer Tim O’Brien, “A thing may happen and be a total lie; another thing may not happen and be truer than the truth.”<sup>3</sup>

In music semiotics, Jean-Jacques Nattiez describes three processes existent in music: the poietic process, the trace, and the esthetic process.<sup>4</sup> These can be translated into creative process, the physical object, and receptive process, respectively. This tripartition bears a striking resemblance to Peirce’s representamen, object, and interpretant, though it may also be understood by applying Eco’s code theory. Indeed, Nattiez spends several pages’ worth of his book discussing and criticizing Eco’s formulation of said theory.<sup>5</sup> His critique can be summed thus: “He [Eco] could not state more clearly that there will be a different code for every new pairing of signifier and signified. If this is true, the codes would be as infinite in number as the interpretants: *and this is a contradiction in terms if one wishes to propose a structural theory of ‘codes.’*”<sup>6</sup> Nattiez ends by noting that Eco has since retreated from a structuralist perspective to more metaphorical grounds.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 204-205.

<sup>3</sup> Tim O’Brien, *The Things They Carried* (Broadway Books, New York, 1990), 83.

<sup>4</sup> Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse* (Princeton University Press, Princeton), 15.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 19-28.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 23-24.



Nevertheless, Eco's codes are very useful for a semiology of music. He writes that "codes provide the rules which *generate* signs as concrete occurrences in communicative intercourse."<sup>7</sup> They are preconceived by the interpreter and govern the reception of a sign, or the esthetic process. Moreover, he divides them into *denotative* and *connotative* codes, which govern respectively, denotative and connotative semiotics.<sup>8</sup>

"There is a connotative semiotics when there is a semiotics whose expression plane is another semiotics."<sup>9</sup> Eco uses this definition to describe an infinite network of interrelated signs, likening it to molecular structures that go on and on. Put simply, a sign is denotative when the *representamen* directly expresses the content. A connotative sign expresses another sign, or multiple signs, depending on the codes at play.

As any good title should, "Impersonations" has multiple intended meanings. First, it is a direct reference to the first work on my program, Evan Ziporyn's *Four Impersonations*. The second meaning is an implication of the nature of *Four Impersonations*, as well as the other works on my program. Ziporyn writes that "in these pieces the voices of three different cultures... speak through the clarinet."<sup>10</sup> His description of the act of impersonation at work in his music is eloquent, even if

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<sup>7</sup> Eco, *Theory of Semiotics*, 49.

<sup>8</sup> In defining and discussing denotative and connotative meaning, Eco bases his work on Louis Hjelmslev, who himself adapted his theories from Ferdinand de Saussure. Saussure is along with Peirce one of the founders of semiotics. Where Peirce developed the concept of the sign as being a tri-relation between *representamen*, object, and interpretant, Saussure excluded the object, instead preferring a dyadic relationship between signifier and signified wherein each term is approximately analogous to representamen and interpretant. To that end, in the ensuing discussion, Hjelmslev's terms *expression* and *content* will refer to the representamen and the interpretant, rather than to the signifier and the signified.

<sup>9</sup> Eco, *Theory of Semiotics*, 55.

<sup>10</sup> Evan Ziporyn, *Four Impersonations*, 2.

impersonation itself seems to be at best a surface level denotative act. It is, however, worthy of deeper analysis.

Each work on my program comprises a different method of sign production and reveals different glimpses of the poietic and esthetic process. Chapter 1 discusses Ziporyn's *Four Impersonations*. This work consists of four transcriptions of music from other cultures. Such an act amounts to translation from one musical language to another. Questions arise. No translation is perfect, and information is ultimately lost or adapted to fit the new language. What has Ziporyn lost in comparing these works to their original counterparts? What codes will determine the audience reception?

In Chapter 2, Louis Spohr's *Sechs deutsche Lieder*, Op. 103, a work for clarinet, soprano, and piano, will be discussed. This piece introduces a new element not encountered in the previous work—poetic text—that can influence the compositional choices in a way not otherwise possible. The introduction of a “voice” and possible “character” in the vocal part maps those qualities onto the clarinet.

Chapter 3 presents another work with “voice:” *GRAB IT!* by Jacob ter Veldhuis (Jacob TV) for bass clarinet and electronics<sup>11</sup>. For this work, the composer took audio samples from maximum security prison inmates featured on the documentary *Scared Straight!* and generated rhythmic and melodic content with them. As will be shown after an analysis of Jacob TV's treatment of the text, this work clearly demonstrates clearly the dividing lines between the poietic and esthetic.

Darius Milhaud's *Duo Concertante* for clarinet and piano is the subject of Chapter 4. Of all the works in my recital, this is the piece that can most closely fall under the

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<sup>11</sup> JacobTV originally wrote the work for tenor saxophone, but has since transcribed it for bass clarinet, electric guitar, big band, and numerous other instrumentations

category of “absolute music.” Milhaud’s uses of polymodality and a highly motivically oriented compositional style serve to create a dynamic work, and serves as an excellent introduction into music’s ability to be self signifying. Introduced in this chapter will be the concept of a “semiotic graph.”

Finally, Chapter 5 discusses Eric Mandat’s *The Moon in My Window*. Mandat’s compositional style is rooted in the clarinet and his intimate knowledge of its abilities. This work in particular is of a loosely programmatic nature. Each movement has a title that relates to a moment in the life of a child, and the title of the work itself is an allusion to a childhood book, *Harold and the Purple Crayon*. Mandat’s program ends with the titles, however, and it is left to his music to speak their stories to the audience. Including a program of any kind into music is a primary way the composer can cross the boundary from the poietic into the esthetic; while highly polarizing in the music community, it lays the groundwork of an interesting study in the relationship between creation and reception.

## CHAPTER 1

*FOUR IMPERSONATIONS*

Evan Ziporyn, born 1959, has been writing music since the age of 13. “By the end of high school he had composed for full orchestra, jazz ensemble, the high school musical (YAMO), and his basement prog rock band, Chronosynclastic Infundibulum.”<sup>1</sup> Ziporyn received his college education from Eastman, Yale, and University of California, Berkeley. He traveled extensively, first to Bali on the Yale Murray Fellowship and, before attending UC Berkeley for his MA and doctorate, through Asia and Africa. Ziporyn returned to Bali on a Fulbright Scholarship in 1987. In the same year, he played some of his own clarinet music at the First Annual Bang on a Can Festival, and continued his involvement in the festival for the next 25 years, co-founding the group Bang on a Can All-Stars. After joining the faculty at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Ziporyn founded the gamelan ensemble Galak Tika.

In his biography, Ziporyn refers to his music as being “at the crossroads between genres and cultures, east and west.”<sup>2</sup> *Four Impersonations* is a literal manifestation of this description. The four movements are as follows: “Honshirabe,” “Pengrangrang Gede,” “Thum Nyatiti,” and “Bindu Semara.” In his program notes to *Four Impersonations*, Ziporyn writes:

“In Balinese trance, as in many similar traditions throughout the world, subjects are inhabited by specific people or entities who speak through them. Their voice remains their own, but the words they speak are foreign to them, often in ancient or foreign languages they themselves do not understand. In these pieces the voices of three different cultures -

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<sup>1</sup> Evan Ziporyn, “About Evan Ziporyn,” Evan Ziporyn, <http://www.ziporyn.com/longbio.html> (Accessed March 4, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid (accessed March 10, 2013).

Japanese shakuhachi (Honshirabe), Balinese gamelan (Pengrangrang Gede and Bindu Semara), and East African nyatiti (Thum Nyatiti) - speak through the clarinet. As a rational westerner, I've transcribed and translated, found ways to play them, but as a trance subject-wannabe I leave the interpretation to others.”<sup>3</sup>

His unique position presents interesting semiotics. He admits to being a “rational westerner,” but his music is rooted in the music of another culture. This fundamentally alters many of the codes that would normally be at play when performing Ziporyn’s music for a Western audience.

This clear division also makes itself apparent in the work’s trace. Ziporyn’s Western style notation in these works is the physical manifestation of his translations, and the fundamental inaccuracy of this style of notation quickly becomes apparent. Each movement includes performance instructions in which Ziporyn indicates altered fingerings to achieve a certain tuning system or specifies an approach the performer should take in interpreting the notation.

## HONSHIRABE

“Honshirabe” is a traditional work for shakuhachi, or Japanese flute. Ziporyn based his transcription on a recording by Kohachiro Miyata. In the performance instructions, he translates the title into English as “*Central Investigation*.”<sup>4</sup> He also writes that “shakuhachi is a meditative practice; as such, and as the title indicates, attention should be paid to sound in its broadest sense.”<sup>5</sup> How does the title indicate this, exactly? As stated, Ziporyn included the translation “central investigation,” but it is important to explore other possible translations of *honshirabe*. “Honshirabe” is two words, *hon* and *shirabe*. *Hon* is also found in the term *honkyoku*, meaning “inside

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<sup>3</sup> Ziporyn, *Four Impersonations* (Lexington, MA: Airplane Ears Music, 2002), 2.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

music,” referring to the shakuhachi’s basic repertory.<sup>6</sup> *Shirabe* designates a test piece or exercise, and is written using a Chinese character meaning “melody.”<sup>7</sup>

The final key to understanding the link between shakuhachi, meditation, and the meaning of the title lies in culturally coded shakuhachi aesthetics. Yûkô Kamisangô writes in his history of the shakuhachi about the *komusô*,<sup>8</sup> traveling beggar monks who played the shakuhachi as a meditative practice during the Edo Period.<sup>9</sup> Richard Hamilton Keeling adds that “the practice of Zen art [including calligraphy as well as music] is directed towards spiritual discipline. The art itself... is inseparable from the Truth which precedes it, the ‘emptiness’ which characterizes it, and the multitude of truths which proceed from it.”<sup>10</sup>

With the work properly framed in the aesthetic goals of its genre, the meaning of the title becomes clearer. Zen meditation being an introspective practice, “inside” and “central” take on a connotative as well as denotative meaning. “Central” is analogous to “primary,” though framed in Zen Buddhism, connotes “looking inward.” Thus “Central Investigation” or “Inner Test” becomes endowed with the implications of meditation.

Ziporyn writes that “there should be no sense of pulse whatsoever, no need for consistency in interpretation of rhythmic values” and that “attention should be paid to sound in the broadest sense.”<sup>11</sup> With these statements he immediately sets about deconstructing the performer’s conception of simple proportion signified by the notation. The music is unmetered, a feature found in the original. More important is the simplicity

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<sup>6</sup> Richard Hamilton Keeling, “Shakuhachi Music of the Kinko School: Techniques and Melodic Embellishment” (MA thesis, University of California Los Angeles, 1975), 27.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Translated as “monks of nothingness”

<sup>9</sup> Christopher Yohmei Blasdel and Yûkô Kamisangô, trans., Christopher Yohmei Blasdel, *The Shakuhachi: A Manual for Learning* (Tokyo: Ongaku No Tomo Sha Corp., 1988), 106.

<sup>10</sup> Keeling, *Shakuhachi Music of the Kinko School*, 10.

<sup>11</sup> Ziporyn, *Four Impersonations*, 3.

of the melody. In a book recounting his journey in learning shakuhachi, Christopher Yohmei Blasdel quotes a Zen axiom: “Attaining Enlightenment in a Single Tone.” He elaborates: One doesn’t need much to enter the gates of enlightenment—only the awareness that the world already exists in one tone.”<sup>12</sup> The phrases of “Honshirabe” are vastly simple. Out of eighteen separate phrases written in seven lines on a single page, twelve contain only one primary pitch. Four phrases contain two primary pitches, and the remaining two contain three.

This paucity of activity belies the simple complexity of each event, however. The inclusion of embellishments is a key component to shakuhachi music, and “Honshirabe” is no different. These embellishments range from turns and microtonal neighbors to a variety of attacks and decays. Sustains are treated differently as well with sudden dynamic shifts or vibrato.

The first five phrases gradually raise the music in pitch from  $e_1$  to  $b_1$ .<sup>13</sup> The music then “resets,” returning to the opening phrase, though this time at the octave above. At this point, the physical center of the trace has been reached, and in performance it should approximately correspond with the halfway point of the music. The two phrases occupying the center of the trace are reflective in nature, approaching  $b_1$  first from above, and then from below. The next two lines detail a descent back down to  $e_1$ . When this pitch is reached, it is in a restatement of the opening phrase. The final line sees the music drop to and center around  $b$ , where it ends after one last restatement of the opening phrase.

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<sup>12</sup> Blasdel, *The Single Tone: A Personal Journey into Shakuhachi Music* (Tokyo: Printed Matter Press, 2005), 41-42.

<sup>13</sup> Clarinet being a transposing instrument, unless otherwise stated, this document will refer to the notated pitches rather than the sounding pitch

## PENGRANGRANG GEDE

The rhythmically complex *gamelan*<sup>14</sup> music of Bali has had a marked impact on many composers, including Evan Ziporyn. Bali, a small island off the coast of Java in the Indonesian archipelago was described by its former Lieutenant Governor Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles as behind the Javanese in artistic development, but ready to leap forward dramatically.<sup>15</sup> He was right, for *gamelan* music flourished in Bali during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It grew into a completely separate entity from the neighboring Javanese state.

Ziporyn provides the translation for “Pengrangrang Gede” as “Big Lullaby.” *Gede* is translated by Colin McPhee as “large” or “deep in pitch.” In context, McPhee writes, “Only the [metallophones] with a wider range are actually distinguished by the name, *gendèr*. Two sizes are made, pitched an octave apart, the *gender gedé*, or large *gender*, and the *gender barangan*, or following [small] *gendèr*.”<sup>16</sup> McPhee only uses the term *pengrangrang* once in his study: “A less frequently employed... form of composition is the *gending* [instrumental composition] in which an unusually expanded section called the *pengrangrang* is inserted between the *pengawak*<sup>17</sup> and *pengechèt*<sup>18</sup>, and forms the main part of the *gending*.<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately, McPhee declines to translate *pengrangrang*. His description of the section deserves mention, however: “With the *pengrangrang* time suddenly seems to stand still.”<sup>20</sup> This matches the nature of the

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<sup>14</sup> A gamelan is an ensemble of instruments, primarily pitched percussion, but also employing non-pitched instruments, and wind and string instruments.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas Stamford Raffles, *The History of Java*, Vol 2, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1830), cxxxviii.

<sup>16</sup> Colin McPhee, *Music in Bali* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1966), 31.

<sup>17</sup> The first movement.

<sup>18</sup> The second movement.

<sup>19</sup> McPhee, *Music in Bali*, 128.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 128.



movement, as well as Ziporyn's application of the term "ametric." Michael Tenzer provides a definition for *pengrangrang* by explaining that it is an alternate name for the *gineman*, a free rhythm section used in gamelan *pelegongan*.<sup>21</sup> Ziporyn's performance instructions confirm this, describing "Pengrangrang Gede" as an "oft-used ginoman."<sup>22</sup>

Returning now to McPhee, it is revealed that the primary function of gamelan *pelegongan* is to accompany the *lègong* dance, a dramatic form similar to ballet. McPhee analyzes a play from the traditional *lègong* repertory dramatizing an old Javanese myth.<sup>23</sup> At the end of the prologue the start of the *gineman* is signaled by a unison note struck repeatedly, gradually picking up speed. This gesture is repeated three times. The *gineman* itself is characterized by the half-improvised phrases played by the two leading *gendèrs*.<sup>24</sup>

McPhee's description and notation of the *gender* solo very closely resemble the melodic content of Ziporyn's transcription of "Pengrangrang Gede," though Ziporyn's source treats the music differently than how McPhee describes. The group that released the album containing "Pengrangrang Gede" is located in Binoh Village, a locality of Denpasar, Bali. It is attributed to I Wayan Lotring, a highly respected Balinese composer well known by McPhee, though this particular *gineman* is not mentioned in McPhee's writings. The album was released in 1990, half a century after McPhee compiled his field research. While the music has retained some amount of similarity, the function seems to have changed. Oxford Music Online's entry on form in *gamelan* music indicates that a *gineman* functions as an opening, followed by the *pangawak*, and then

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<sup>21</sup> Michael Tenzer, *Gamelan Gong Kebyar* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 209.

<sup>22</sup> Ziporyn, *Four Impersonations*, 5.

<sup>23</sup> McPhee, *Music in Bali*, 182-189.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, 184.

the *pangecet*. Certainly in a music tradition transmitted primarily by oral methods, changes in function are more likely to occur than in a primarily notated tradition. Such a presumption does not change the fact that Oxford Music Online and McPhee are contradictory.

The scale used in “Pengrangrang Gede” is a five-tone *pélog* scale. It differs from the five-tone *slendro* scale—used in the fourth movement of *Four Impersonations*—in intervallic distance. In *slendro* each scale degree is approximately equidistant, whereas five-tone *pélog* has unequal intervals. Though *pélog* can have two extra tones, the scale is still considered complete without them.<sup>25</sup> The closest Western equivalents are E, F#, A#, B, and D#. Any of these pitches can become the tonal center.

Ziporyn’s first poietic challenge lay in translating the *gamelan* tuning to the clarinet. He achieved this as he did in “Honshirabe”—by introducing altered fingerings. f#<sub>1</sub>, e<sub>2</sub>, f#<sub>2</sub>, and b<sub>2</sub> are raised; d#<sub>2</sub> is lowered. His second challenge lies in instrumentation. The original scoring as listed by Ziporyn is “gender rambat (a resonating metallophone), suling (bamboo flutes), and rebab (bowed spiked fiddle), with jegogan (large, low-pitched metallophones) punctuating the arrival tones.”<sup>26</sup> Each of these instruments possess distinct characteristics that, when combined, create a sound envelope that the clarinet will not be able to easily impersonate. The *gender rambat* provide a bright and metallic timbre. The *rebab* and *suling* follow the *gender rambat*’s phrasing and often lag slightly as a result. This lag causes adjacent pitches to melt into each other, an effect which contrasts the clarity created by the sharp attack of the

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<sup>25</sup> McPhee, *Music in Bali*, 38.

<sup>26</sup> Ziporyn, *Four Impersonations*, 5.

*gender rambat*. Finally, at the arrival tones, the *jegogan* is struck, creating a deep undercurrent wave.

Ziporyn signals the most important characteristic by writing that “there is an underlying but very fluid sense of pulse” and “phrases moving toward goal notes should accelerate slightly, subtly, and gravitationally, as if rolling down a gentle hill.”<sup>27</sup> The *fluid* pulse and the *gravitationally* moving phrases relate to the leader/follower relationship mentioned earlier between the *gender rambat* and the *rebab* and *suling*.

Figure 1-1. Comparison of McPhee’s *gineman* (top) and Ziporyn’s “Pengrangrang Gede” (bottom).



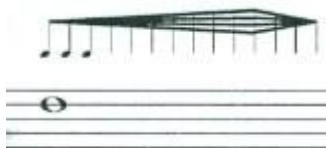
<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 5.

Ziporyn's other poietic concern, creating the trace for a musical culture that does not traditionally utilize traces, bears some mention. McPhee also notated a melodically similar gineman in his *Music in Bali*. Figure 1-1 compares portions of the gineman, with "Pengrangrang Gede."

Each is notated using similar gestures, particularly the eighth- sixteenth- thirty-second gesture. McPhee introduces an additional component in his notation: under some figures, he indicates quarter note triplet notations. In each instance these triplets occur almost directly before the arrival tone of the phrase. With the proper coding established, these triplets connote the fluid and gravitational sense of pulse Ziporyn described. In Ziporyn's transcription, he maintains an economy of notation, placing responsibility instead on the performer to shift cultural codes and ignore certain denotative meanings (the constant proportional values of Western music notation, for example) and apply the correct connotative meanings (knowing when to *accelerando*).

Other notations Ziporyn uses have a high degree of iconism. Many phrases in "Pengrangrang Gede" begin with gestures that resemble the sounding call described by McPhee and mentioned earlier. Ziporyn notates these as indicated in figure 1-2. The effect matches the image. The player associates the gradual increase in beams with an accelerating rhythm, and replicates this phenomenon acoustically.

Figure 1-2. Accelerating indication in "Pengrangrang Gede."



## THUM NYATITI

“Thum Nyatiti” is “a generic name for a type of East African plucked string playing, whether on a traditional instrument or guitar.”<sup>28</sup> Ziporyn transcribed this work from an anonymous 1950s recording on the album “The Sound of Nairobi.” Everett Shiverenje Igobwa, in his master’s thesis, defines thum nyatiti as “an eight-stringed bowl-lyre of the Luo ethnic group of Kenya, East Africa.”<sup>29</sup> Thum nyatiti playing has traditionally been passed down orally from father to son.<sup>30</sup> The oral tradition existent in Bali therefore has a parallel in the oral tradition of the Luo people of Kenya.

The scale used in “Thum Nyatiti” is a pentatonic scale, G–B–C–D–F–G. Relating the scale to C major, it is missing the third and sixth scale degrees, though all intervals are still represented, most importantly the minor second and the tritone; this relates the scale very strongly to the major scale. The minor second and tritone together give this particular pentatonic scale iconic properties, following Peirce’s definition requiring similarity. In this case, it is an acculturated icon of a major scale because it represents all intervals found in a major scale, and therefore can achieve key tendency tone movements including leading tone–tonic movement. Such a relationship only becomes apparent after one is introduced to the major scale and its tendencies, thus it is acculturated.

Figure 1-3. “Thum Nyatiti” primary motive



<sup>28</sup> Ziporyn, *Four Impersonations*, 7.

<sup>29</sup> Everett Shiverenje Igobwa, “Thum Nyatiti: a study on the transformation of the bowl lyre of the Luo people of Kenya” (M.A. thesis, York University, 2004), 1.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, 61.

“Thum Nyatiti” can be divided into six sections, each one beginning with the primary motive, shown in figure 1-3. The first eight measures of Ziporyn’s transcription contain a good cross section of the rhythmic factors at work throughout the piece. It opens with the primary motive and two altered versions thereof, and then finishes with an extended section comprised mainly of two differing ostinati. One ostinato, referred to as ostinato A, alternates between C and G, while the other, ostinato B, plays C–C–G–G↓.<sup>31</sup> Figure 1-4 illustrates these two ostinati.

Figure 1-4. “Thum Nyatiti” ostinati.



Ostinato A illustrates the shifting rhythmic accents present throughout the work. G is played on the first and third parts of the beat, then a D appears in the pattern, displacing it by one sixteenth note and shifting the G to the second and fourth parts of the beat. This idea of accent displacement is expanded upon later in the movement, particularly in mm. 16–18. There a triple pattern (G–D–C) is superimposed over the quadruple subdivision. This in itself displaces the accent through a cross rhythm, though intermittently a single duple pattern is inserted, further displacing natural accents.

Ziporyn’s poietic concerns in translating this work manifest themselves in several ways, each related to the nature of the *thum nyatiti* as an instrument. First, because it is a string instrument, it is capable of playing long phrases without rest. Second, it has the

<sup>31</sup> ↓ refers to the pitch down an octave

ability to play two notes at one time. Both of these, Ziporyn solves by deferring to the performer. He only requires that it be “gentle and legato.”

The *thum nyatiti*, as stated before, is an eight-stringed instrument which plays a pentatonic scale. By necessity, some strings will play the same pitch, though only in the case of one doubling (G) is there a difference in octave. The strings sound these pitches: C, D, F, G, G↓, C, D. Fittingly, the only notes to be repeated consecutively in “Thum Nyatiti” are C and D. Articulating these repeated notes would have disrupted the “gentle and legato” flow Ziporyn hoped to achieve, so he introduced two altered fingerings resulting in a sharp C and a flat D, indicated respectively by an ‘up arrow’ and a ‘down arrow.’ The primary motive, for example, begins with a repeated D, and so Ziporyn alternates between the regular fingering on the strong subdivisions and the altered fingering on the weak subdivisions. The primary motive signaling the final section introduces another accent shift in which the altered fingerings are placed on the strong subdivisions of the beat.

## BINDU SEMARA

For the final movement, Ziporyn returns to Bali. He writes that “‘Bindu Semara’ (‘Semar’s Sadness’) is manisan (‘sweet style’) accompaniment for wayang kulit, the Balinese shadow play.<sup>32</sup> In Bali, Semar is the Love God, for whom the Semar Pegulingan *gamelan* is named.<sup>33</sup> Ziporyn learned this piece from I Wayan Suweca of Kayu Mas, Denpasar, who learned it from his father, I Wayan Konolan.

Of these four movements, “Bindu Semara” is the only one Ziporyn learned via oral transmission; this has several semiotic implications. Most importantly, the path the

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<sup>32</sup> Ziporyn, *Four Impersonations*, 11.

<sup>33</sup> McPhee, *Music in Bali*, 13.

music took is different. Whereas with “Pengrangrang Gede,” the other Balinese piece, Ziporyn transcribed the music from an album recorded by a group working from unknown source material attributed to I Wayan Lotring, “Bindu Semara” was directly passed to Ziporyn by another person. Figure 1-5 shows the transference path for each movement. The shortest, most traceable paths are found in the outer movements.

“Honshirabe”

Kohachiro Miyata → Audio recording → Ziporyn

“Pengrangrang Gede”

I Wayan Lotring → ? → Gamelan Semar Pegulingan of Binoh Village → Audio recording → Ziporyn

“Thum Nyatiti”

Unknown → Audio recording → Ziporyn

“Bindu Semara”

I Wayan Konolan → I Wayan Suweca → Ziporyn

Figure. 1-5 Transference paths for each movement.

Direct oral transmission also means that Ziporyn’s interpretation of the source cannot be easily compared or cross referenced. It becomes the authoritative text not just of an original work by Ziporyn, but also of the original. Colin McPhee addresses this issue of musical authority in an essay he wrote on *wayang kulit*:

Musical versions differ with the various localities. This is not only to be expected in a culture where music is preserved by memory only, for no notation whatsoever exists for the gender *wayang* music, but also makes possible, by means of comparisons, the fuller understanding of what is musically essential.<sup>34</sup>

Luckily for the non-traveler, McPhee includes an excerpt of “Bindu Semara”, and from the outset, it confirms an important point: that “Bindu Semara”, like “Pengrangrang Gede”, is intended for multiple instruments.

The *gamelan* ensemble used to accompany *wayang kulit*, the *gender wayang*, is small; it is comprised of two *gender gede* (large *gender*) and two *gender chenik* (small

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<sup>34</sup> McPhee, “The Balinese Wayang Kulit and Its Music,” in *Traditional Balinese Culture*, ed. Jane Belo. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 163.



*gender*). Moreover, the *gender chenik* primarily serve to double the *gender gede* at the higher octave, meaning there is a much simpler sound envelope with which to contend when translating the music to a solo instrument.

About *gender wayang*, McPhee writes, “perhaps the highest, and certainly the most sensitive form of musical expression existing in Bali is revealed in the music which accompanies the *wayang kulit*.”<sup>35</sup> McPhee quotes *Bendu Semara* [sic] when discussing a similar piece, *Rebong*, the music for love episodes. The voice of the *dalang*, or puppeteer, in *Rebong* and *Bendu Semara* is high pitched, “seductive,” and florid. McPhee also adds that these slow movements, “freed of any emotion, have a sober and abstract beauty,” and that they “create an atmosphere completely static, where all sense of time is lost.”<sup>36</sup>

McPhee’s excerpt consists of two lines, a florid upper line moving in counterpoint to a less active lower line. In Ziporyn’s “Bindu Semara”, the lower line exists in part as grace notes to the upper line. Ziporyn also uses bar lines as indicators of phrase length, placing them after arrival tones. Such a deliberate placing of the bar lines illustrates the breadth of the phrases, especially the longest phrases.

The form of Ziporyn’s transcription of “Bindu Semara”, when played through as indicated, is as follows:

Introduction—First Section—Unmeasured Bridge—Second Section—First Section—  
Unmeasured Bridge—Second Section—First Section—Unmeasured Bridge—Coda

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 146.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 167.

The introduction, first section, bridge, and coda all end conclusively on a long arrival tone. The long second section ends on an interrupted phrase, implying that the player can loop endlessly if desired.

The range and melodic content of “Bindu Semara” deserve mention. The principal melody once falls below  $c_1$  to a  $b^b$  and reaches the top of its range,  $c_2$  only in the unmeasured bridge. A majority of the melody serves as embellishment of the primary tones. An excellent example of this is in the second phrase of the second section, shown in Figure 1-6. After encircling and then pausing on  $g^{\#}_1$ , the first primary tone, the melody leads to  $b^b$ , the second primary tone, and continues to return there. Activity increases, always leading to  $b^b$  until the activity slows and the melody finally comes to repose on  $b^b$ .

Figure 1-6. “Bindu Semara,” second section, second phrase. The phrase begins at the bar line near the end of the first line and ends at the bar line in the middle of the third line.



## CONCLUSION

Ziporyn's *Four Impersonations* carries with it a high degree of semiotics. The work is iconic and programmatic. Each movement has a specific "meaning," in that they are transcriptions of specific pieces of music. Uncovering the meaning for each movement begins with the titles. Researching the cultural context of the titles and their meaning only reveals the first semiotic level, however. The content of Ziporyn's expression—the original music, whether it be accessed via direct oral transmission or audio recording—carries all the cultural signs discussed above. Ziporyn loses many of these signs in his transcriptions, often due to condensed instrumentation. What is left to be transferred to the audience, for esthesis to occur, is determined by the strength of the composer's intent and the performer's impersonation.

## CHAPTER 2

*SECHS DEUTSCHE LIEDER, OP. 103*

*“I received a letter from Hermstedt, wherein, by request of the Princess von Sondershausen, he commissioned me to write some soprano songs for her with pianoforte and clarinet accompaniment. As this task was much to my liking, I composed in the course of a few weeks six songs of this kind which by the express desire of the Princess I dedicated to her, and for which I received from her the present of a very costly ring.”<sup>1</sup>*

According to Spohr’s own life story, it was with this work that he ended the year 1837. He was 53, and had well over 100 works to his name, including four clarinet concertos and three concert pieces for the clarinet. These works were all written for one clarinetist, as is often the case when composers write for the instrument. That clarinetist was Johann Hermstedt.

Johann Simon Hermstedt was the court clarinetist for Prince Günther I of the Schwarzburg-Sondershausen principality from 1801–1839. He was considered, along with Heinrich Baermann, to be the greatest of clarinetists. Pamela Weston describes the rivalry between the two: “Frankfurt-on-Main had the unique experience of hearing them both play concertos within a fortnight of each other in 1819; the whole town divided into two over the event and Hermsetdt came out victor.”<sup>2</sup> The Prince commissioned from Spohr the first clarinet concerto for Hermstedt in 1808.<sup>3</sup> Hermstedt himself approached Spohr for the next concerto, interrupting the composition of an opera. Spohr complains

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<sup>1</sup> Louis Spohr, *Autobiography* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1878), 208-209.

<sup>2</sup> Pamela Weston, *Clarinet Virtuosi of the Past* (London: Robert Hale, 1971), 78.

<sup>3</sup> Clive Brown, *Louis Spohr: A Critical Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 50.

that “although sorry to be disturbed in my studies, I allowed myself to be persuaded, and finished it in sufficient time for Hermstedt to practice it well under my direction.”<sup>4</sup> The third and fourth concertos were both, like the second, requested by Hermstedt, though neither was published in Spohr’s lifetime.

Hermstedt requested the six German songs on the behalf of the Princess Von Sondershausen. The Princess—the daughter-in-law of Hermstedt’s employer—paid Spohr’s commission by giving him a valuable ring. Hermstedt did not perform the work publicly until after retiring in 1839.<sup>5</sup>

Spohr’s Opus 103 was part of a compositional period that saw a high output of lieder, numbered by Clive Brown at around 40.<sup>6</sup> It was fitting then that the task of composing it was “much to his liking.” His lieder were not apparently to everyone’s liking, however. A review written by Ludwig Rellstab about the Op. 105 songs reads “It is not difficult to find the weakness of Spohr’s songs: one can show that the master repeats himself, that he remains true to his old manner, to certain forms and phrases especially loved by him to the point of boredom.”<sup>7</sup> This was a sentiment that would be echoed long after Spohr died, causing the main body of his works to fall into obscurity. Among the works to remain in the repertory are those for clarinet, including his contribution to the genre of clarinet and voice, Op. 103.

This piece, with the added variable of text, carries with it connotative meaning as Spohr depicts various aspects of the text through the melodic and harmonic structure. To successfully convey these connotations, Spohr must set parameters the listener is

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<sup>4</sup> Spohr, *Autobiography*, 140.

<sup>5</sup> Weston, *Clarinet Virtuosi of the Past*, 98.

<sup>6</sup> Brown, *Louis Spohr*, 236-237.

<sup>7</sup> Ludwig Rellstab, trans. Clive Brown, *Iris im Gebeite der Tonkunst* (Berlin: Verlag von Trantwein, 1841), 106.

able to discern and synthesize. Also present are examples of Eco's acculturated iconism discussed in the introduction of this paper. Over the course of the six songs, Spohr builds a repertory of signs native to the work as a whole, so that by the end, the work becomes self referential.

Each song but the last is strophic in nature. Only those verses performed in the recital complementing this document will be listed. The songs are: "Sei still mein herz," "Zwiegesang," "Sehnsucht," "Wiegenlied," "Das heimliche Lied," and "Wach auf."

### SEI STILL MEIN HERZ

Ich wahrte die Hoffnung tief in der Brust,  
Die sich ihr vertrauend erschlossen,  
Mir strahlten die Augen voll Lebenslust,  
Wenn mich ihre Zauber umflossen,  
Wenn ich ihrer schmeichelnden Stimme  
gelauscht,  
Im Wettersturm ist ihr Echo verrauscht,  
Sei still mein Herz, und denke nicht dran,  
Das ist nun die Wahrheit, das Andre war Wahn.

I once harbored hope deep in my breast  
Which, trusting, unlocked to her;  
My eyes were radiant with joie de vivre  
While her magic encircled me.  
But when I harkened to her beguiling  
voice  
The echo died away in the storm.  
Be still, my heart, and give it no thought:  
This now is reality, the rest was delusion.

Die Erde lag vor mir im Frühlingstraum,  
Den Licht und Wärme durchglühte,  
Und wonnetrunken durchwallt ich den Raum,  
Der Brust entsproßte die Blüte,  
Der Liebe Lenz war in mir erwacht,  
Mich durch rieselt Frost, in der Seele ist  
Nacht.  
Sei still mein Herz, und denke nicht dran,  
Das ist nun die Wahrheit, das Andre war Wahn.

Earth lay before me in a spring dream  
Suffused with warmth and light,  
And drunk with joy I wafted through space,  
Blossoms burst forth from my breast;  
Love's springtime awakened in me.  
Now frost shudders through me; in my soul it is  
night.  
Be still, my heart, and give it no thought:  
This now is reality, the rest was delusion.

"Sei still mein Herz" is attributed to Carl Schweitzer, and translated by Allen Shearer.<sup>8</sup> The mood of this poem is set entirely by the opening line. "I *once* harbored hope deep in my breast." There was a time where the speaker was hopeful, but he is now broken by unrequited love. He speaks briefly of the one he loves, but quickly reminds himself that "this is now reality, the rest was delusion."

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<sup>8</sup> The Lied, Art Song, and Choral Texts Archive, "Sei still mein Herz," Rec Music Foundation, [http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get\\_text.html?TextId=14713](http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=14713) (Accessed February 2, 2013).

Spohr frames the song similarly. The introduction, only in clarinet and piano, is comprised of fourteen chords in F minor, half of which are diminished. By the sixth measure, the clarinet has arpeggiated each of the three possible diminished seventh chords. When the voice enters, Spohr modulates to the parallel major. At the end of the verse, he modulates back to the F minor.

The most palpable moment of text painting occurs in measure 28. When the speaker hears the echo of his love's voice "die away in the storm," the clarinet suddenly ascends in a chromatic scale to  $f_2$ ,<sup>9</sup> only to come crashing down again, effectively simulating a storm in the *Sturm und Drang*<sup>10</sup> style.

This serves as a good illustration of sign production in music. *Sturm und Drang* was intended to stun or frighten the listener. For an exterior example, the Act II Finale of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* works well. At the entrance of the statue, the music recaps the minor opening of the overture. This music is characterized by drastic dynamic changes and intensely chromatic lines. This musical code was firmly established by composers, especially in theatrical works like *Don Giovanni*. Spohr's use of the style here as a form of text painting would have been an easily recognizable sign to contemporary audiences.

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<sup>9</sup> In this work, because the clarinet plays with a nontransposing instrument, all notes are referred to by sounding pitch rather than notated pitch.

<sup>10</sup> Storm and Stress

## ZWIEGESANG

Im Fliederbusch ein Vöglein saß  
 In der stillen, schönen Maiennacht,  
 Darunter ein Mägdlein im hohen Gras  
 In der stillen, schönen Maiennacht.  
 Sang Mägdlein, hielt das Vöglein Ruh',  
 Sang Vöglein, hört' das Mägdlein zu,  
 Und weithin klang  
 Der Zwiegesang  
 Das mondbeglänzte Thal entlang.

Was sang das Vöglein im Gezweig  
 Durch die stille, schöne Maiennacht?  
 Was sang doch wohl das Mägdlein gleich  
 Durch die stille, schöne Maiennacht?  
 Von Frühlingssonne das Vögelein,  
 Von Liebeswonne das Mägdlein.  
 Wie der Gesang  
 Zum Herzen drang,  
 Vergess' ich nimmer mein Lebelang!

In a lilac bush sat a little bird  
 In the quiet, lovely May night,  
 Below in the high grass sat a girl  
 In the quiet, lovely May night.  
 The girl sang: if only the bird would be quiet,  
 The bird sang: if only the girl would listen,  
 And far and away  
 rang their duet  
 The length of the moonlit valley.

What was the bird singing in the branches  
 Throughout that quiet, lovely May night?  
 And what, too, was the young girl singing  
 Throughout that quiet, lovely May night?  
 Of spring sunshine sang the little bird,  
 Of love's delight sang the young girl  
 How that song  
 pierced my heart  
 I shall never forget my whole life long.

“Zwiegesang” is attributed to Robert Reinick and translated by Ruth Rainero.<sup>11</sup>

The speaker in the poem refers to two characters, a little bird in a bush and a girl in the high grass. Both are singing and desiring the other to listen. There is little conflict in their interactions, however, because the speaker still refers to their singing as a duet.

Spohr completely changes the clarinet's role in the second song. In the first song, the clarinet accompanied the voice and was almost always secondary. He contrasts that role with the clarinet's role in the second song. Here the clarinet's phrases are short, melodious, not more than two measures in length, and primarily using one of two motives: a syncopated repeated pitch ending in a trill, or an unfolding sixteenth-note line. It quickly becomes apparent that clarinet and soprano function as separate characters. Each line is independent of the other.

Only at the end of the song do both characters align with each other, the clarinet harmonizing the voice at a third below for only half a beat. The characters then meet

<sup>11</sup> The Lied, Art Song, and Choral Texts Archive, “Zwiegesang,” Rec Music Foundation, [http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get\\_text.html?TextId=13360](http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=13360) (Accessed February 2, 2013).



briefly for a single sixteenth note on the leading tone  $e_1$ , at the end of the next measure before the clarinet leaps to the dominant.

## SEHNSUCHT

Ich blick' in mein Herz und ich blick' in die Welt,  
Bis vom Auge die brennende Träne mir fällt,  
Wohl leuchtet die Ferne mit goldenem Licht,  
Doch hält mich der Nord, ich erreiche sie nicht.  
O die Schranken so eng, und die Welt so  
weit,  
Und so flüchtig die Zeit!

O hätt' ich Flügel, durch's Blau der Luft  
Wie wollt' ich baden im  
Sonnenduft!  
Doch umsonst! Und Stunde auf Stund' entflieht,  
Vertraure die Jugend, begrabe das Lied!  
O die Schranken so eng, und die Welt so  
weit,  
Und so flüchtig die Zeit!

I look in my heart and I look at the world  
Til out of my burning eyes a tear falls.  
Though the distance glows with golden light,  
The north wind tells me I shall not reach it.  
Ah! How narrow our confines, how wide the  
world,  
And how fleeting is time!

If I had wings to fly through the blue  
How I would wish to bathe in the sun's  
fragrance!  
But in vain! Hour flees upon hour;  
Pass your youth in mourning, bury your song.  
Ah! How narrow our confines, how wide the  
world  
And how fleeting is time!

“Sehnsucht” is attributed to Emanuel Geibel and translated by Allen Shearer.<sup>12</sup>

Sehnsucht, translated as longing, makes a fitting title for this poem. The speaker sees a “golden light” in the distance. The speaker does not long for love, but rather for a full and fulfilling life, free of “confines.” Unfortunately, he “shall not reach” this enlightened state.

The form of “Sehnsucht” is similar to the first song: strophic with an introduction in the clarinet. In this introduction the harmonic language is less dissonant than in “Sei still mein Herz,” the piano accompaniment more sporadic, and the clarinet line freer. Strongly similar however, are the clarinet’s use of arpeggios. These arpeggios continue to appear past the introduction.

With these arpeggios, Spohr is establishing a code to generate signs within his songs. Nearly every phrase in “Sehnsucht” has at least one arpeggio, often with a

<sup>12</sup> The Lied, Art Song, and Choral Texts Archive, “Sehnsucht,” Rec Music Foundation, [http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get\\_text.html?TextId=6025](http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=6025) (Accessed February 2, 2013).

strong dynamic change. “Zwiegesang” had no such arpeggiations, and was a light affair with little to no strong emotional content. “Sei still mein Herz,” a song overflowing with unsatiated emotion, used clarinet arpeggios often. Spohr is signifying these emotional outbursts with the clarinet arpeggios, creating a connotative sign.

## WIEGENLIED

Alles still in süßer Ruh,  
 Drum mein Kind, so schlaf auch du.  
 Draußen säuselt nur der Wind,  
 Su, su, su, schlaf ein mein Kind!

All is still in sweet repose,  
 Therefore, my child, you, too, must sleep.  
 Outside is but the rustle of the wind,  
 Sh, sh, sh, go to sleep, my child.

Schließ du deine Äugelein,  
 Laß sie wie zwei Knospen sein.  
 Morgen wenn die Sonn' erglüht,  
 Sind sie wie die Blum' erblüht.

Close your little eyes,  
 Let them be two little buds.  
 Tomorrow when the sun shines,  
 They will blossom like flowers.

“Wiegenlied” is attributed to August Heinrich Hoffman von Fallersleben and translated by Ruth Rainero.<sup>13</sup> In this poem, the speaker is focused only on her child and lulling him to sleep. Spohr reflects this sentiment by composing a simple strophic, lilting lullaby. The soprano melody gently rocks back and forth between the first three pitches of a B<sup>b</sup> major scale. The clarinet is gentle and unobtrusive, quietly harmonizing the soprano, imitating the “rustle of the wind,” or providing an interlude between verses.

Only once does the music rise to a forte dynamic, at the soprano’s only text repetition in the song: *schlaf ein mein Kind*, go to sleep my child. Merging the single repeated line and the single forte dynamic has strong connotative meaning. It suggests some frustration in the speaker—perhaps the child does not want to sleep. If this is the case, it is a sign not present in the poem, rather it is manufactured entirely by Spohr. It demonstrates simply how a composer can treat a textual source to signify extra meaning.

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<sup>13</sup> The Lied, Art Song, and Choral Texts Archive, “Wiegenlied,” Rec Music Foundation, [http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get\\_text.html?TextId=8212](http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=8212) (Accessed February 2, 2013).

“Wiegenlied” is rife with other connotative signs. The clarinet’s portrayal of wind in measures 13-16 is an obvious example. Spohr writes a winding line in the low range of the clarinet’s chalumeau register suffused with chromatic neighbor tones to coincide with the soprano’s line *Draußen säuselt nur der Wind*, “Outside is but the rustle of the wind.”

A more prevailing sign exists in this song, present in the accent. The song, in 3/8 time, has a strong down beat, a weak second beat, and a less weak third beat. This pattern, common in dance patterns, suggests to the listener a rocking motion one might use to rock a child to sleep.

### DAS HEIMLICHE LIED

Es gibt geheime Schmerzen,  
Sie klaget nie der Mund,  
Getragen tief im Herzen  
Sind sie der Welt nicht kund.

There are secret pains  
Whose lament is never tongued;  
Borne deep in the heart  
They are unknown to the world.

Es gibt ein heimlich Sehnen,  
Das scheuet stets das Licht,  
Es gibt verborgne Tränen,  
Der Fremde sieht sie nicht.

There is a secret longing  
That always shies from the light;  
There are hidden tears  
A stranger does not see.

Es gibt ein still Versinken  
In eine innre Welt,  
Wo Friedensauen winken,  
Von Sternenglanz erhellt,

There is a quiet sinking  
Into an inner world  
Where peaceful meadows beckon,  
Lit by the gleam of stars,

Wo auf gefallen Schranken  
Die Seele Himmel baut,  
Und jubelnd den Gedanken  
Den Lippen anvertraut.

Where, all boundaries fallen,  
The soul raises Heaven  
And with jubilation  
Confides its thoughts to the lips.

“Das Heimliche Lied” is attributed to Ernst Koch and translated by Allen Shearer.<sup>14</sup> Spohr begins the fifth song in g minor with the clarinet and voice trading phrases. Back are the clarinet’s arpeggiated lines, and if Spohr has composed consistently, the object should remain the emotions expressed in the text. “There are

<sup>14</sup> The Lied, Art Song, and Choral Texts Archive, “Das heimliche Lied,” Rec Music Foundation, [http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get\\_text.html?TextId=9459](http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=9459) (Accessed February 2, 2013).

secret pains... There is a secret longing.” These are not emotions directed outward; rather, the focus of the poem is inward. Spohr’s sign production in the first four songs has been focused on creating a representamen/object relationship between the clarinet arpeggios and intense emotion. Now, in the fifth song, there is only a secret longing hidden from the world, allowing the arpeggio representamen to function more independently of the object.

Spohr introduces a tonal shift halfway through the song to the parallel major. This abrupt shift signifies a change in the tone of the poem as well. Past the secret pain and turmoil lies a “peaceful meadow lit by a gleam of stars.” In a grand climax that coincides with the word *jubilnd*, “jubilant,” the clarinet arpeggiates on a dominant function triad from the bottom of its range to  $a_2$ , bringing the soprano to her final cadence in a moment of sublime harmonization. The clarinet ends the song with a short closing melody derived from the soprano’s melodic material.

## WACH AUF

Was stehst du bange  
Und sinnest nach?  
Ach! schon so lange  
Ist Liebe wach.

Hörst du das Klingen  
Allüberall?  
Die Vöglein singen  
Mit süßem Schall.

Aus Starrem sprießet  
Baumblättlein weich,  
Das Leben fließet  
Um Ast und Zweig.

Das Tröpflein schlüpfet  
Aus Waldesschacht,  
Das Bächlein hüpfet  
Mit Wallungsmacht.

Der Himmel neiget  
In's Wellenklar,  
Die Bläue zeigt  
Sich wunderbar.

Ein heit'res Schmiegen  
Zu Form und Klang,  
Ein ew'ges Fügen  
Im ew'gen Drang!

Was stehst du bange  
Und sinnest nach?  
Ach! schon so lange  
Ist Liebe wach.

Why do you stand there  
brooding with fear?  
Ah, so long  
does love stay awake!

Do you hear the ringing  
all around?  
The birds are singing  
with such sweet sounds.

Soft leaves are sprouting  
from the rigid branches,  
Life is flowing  
through bough and twig.

Little drops are gliding  
from the forest hollows,  
The brook leaps  
with abundant strength.

The heavens bow  
towards the clear waves,  
The blueness  
is wondrously revealed,

A bright flourish  
of shape and sound,  
An endless yielding  
to endless impulse.

Why do you stand there  
brooding with fear?  
Ah, so long  
does love stay awake!

“Wach auf” is attributed to Rudolf Kulemann and translated by Ruth Rainero.<sup>15</sup>

Spohr chose for the last song an anthem to hope and to lasting love. The speaker begins with a question: *Was stehst du bange/Und sinnest nach*, “Why do you stand there/Brooding with fear?” Why is it absurd to even ask this question? *Ach! Son so lange/Ist Liebe wach*, “Ah! So long does love stay awake!” The speaker spends the rest of the poem describing the wonders of nature, inferring a natural relationship between love and nature.

<sup>15</sup> The Lied, Art Song, and Choral Texts Archive, “Wach auf,” Rec Music Foundation, [http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get\\_text.html?TextId=1681](http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=1681) (Accessed February 2, 2013).

The role and motivic content of the clarinet are strikingly similar to “Zwiegesang.” Immediately identifiable in the clarinet part are the winding sixteenth note lines and trills. The trills in particular should signify to the listener the bird in the lilac bush. Indeed, soon after the clarinet first begins its trills, the speaker asks *Hörst du das Klingen/Allüberall?/Die Vöglein singen/Mit süßem Schall*, “Do you hear the ringing/all around?/The birds are singing/with such sweet sounds.” Spohr reminds the listener of the bird signs he created in “Zwiegesang,” and then uses them in “Wach auf” often. Another feature that finds its way into “Wach auf” is the syncopated repeated pitch that accompanied the trills in “Zwiegesang.”

Spohr then expands on the trill motive in mm. 35–56. While the soprano sings increasingly vibrant and energetic descriptions, the clarinet matches the build with a slow, measured trill, first in sixteenth notes. Little by little, the clarinet line rises in pitch. As the soprano sings of the heavens bowing towards the leaping brook, the clarinet breaks into sixteenth triplets. Finally, *Ein heit'res Schmiegen/Zu Form und Klang/Ein ew'ges Fügen/Im ew'gen Drang!* “A bright flourish/of shape and sound,/an endless yielding/to endless impulse!” The clarinet finally begins to fully trill at the apex of the pitch ascension. Spohr is able to get a lot of use out of this extended trill sign. It simultaneously recalls the birds of this and the second song, depicts the leaping brook, matches the growing intensity in the soprano, and as a whole strongly signifies the line “endless yielding to endless impulse.”

## CONCLUSION

Examined as one single work, Spohr’s Op. 103 is revealed to have a cohesion resulting from a measured application of semiotic gestures. Songs 1, 3, and 5 are

intensely emotional, if not *Sturm und Drang*, at least *Drang*. Spohr expresses this content through the clarinet's ability to arpeggiate. In the first song, he writes all three distinct diminished seventh chords into the clarinet's part, immediately and easily signaling emotional distress. "Sehnsucht" refines this sign by restricting the clarinet to tonic and dominant seventh arpeggios, though adding large dynamic changes. "Das heimliche Lied" continues with this sign, but because the text is devoid of the intensity found in the other odd numbered songs, it stands on its own, signaling the strength of the secret. "Zwiegesang" introduces bird-like trilling and syncopation, both later heard in "Wach auf." "Wiegenlied" provides a welcome reprieve from the emotional intensity of the surrounding songs, though even in this simple song, Spohr invents new textual meaning by implementing a simple compositional device: repetition.

In "Wach auf," Spohr treats the signs established in "Zwiegesang" as in "Das heimliche Lied" he treated the signs of "Sehnsucht." He built on them and expanded their meaning, for example, by expanding a short trill into a long trill and making it an icon of a river. These are all demonstrative of the malleability of a sign, and how performing one operation, elongation for instance, transforms the interpretant.

## CHAPTER 3

*GRAB IT!*

Jacob ter Veldhuis,<sup>1</sup> aka Jacob TV, born 1951, is a self described “avant pop composer.”<sup>2</sup> He began as a rock musician, and studied composition and electronic music at Groningen University in the Netherlands. There, he was awarded the Dutch Composition Prize in 1980. About growing up in post World War II Europe, Jacob TV says that “Europe was a grey place and everything that was colorful at that time came from this country [the US].”<sup>3</sup> This fascination with American culture manifests itself very clearly and provocatively in his music. *Body of Your Dreams* is a work for piano and infomercial; *Heartbreakers* draws from an episode of Jerry Springer; *Pimpin’* uses audio samples of New York pimps and prostitutes. Sometimes the subject matter has proven too controversial for audiences, leading TV to be accused of perpetrating “musical terrorism.”<sup>4</sup>

Jacob TV’s style is difficult to define. His music has a rhythmic drive that resembles the post minimalist movement typified by the recent works of John Adams and Steve Reich. Harmonically, TV’s language is tonal and signifies popular music and jazz. In describing his compositional process, he betrays his rock roots, “I pick out all the samples that I like; I put all the samples under the keys. All 88 keys of my electronic keyboard have one sample—can be a word, can be a syllable, or even a complete

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<sup>1</sup> Pronounced Yah-kob ter Feld-house. His last name translated is “the field house”

<sup>2</sup> Jacob ter Veldhuis, *GRAB IT!* (Netherlands: Boombox Holland, 1999), 3.

<sup>3</sup> Philadelphia Music Project, “New Frontiers in Music: One on one with Jacob TV,” The Pew Center for Arts and Heritage, <http://www.pcah.us/music/resources/pmp-pd-symposia-and-seminars-new-frontiers-in-music12/one-on-one-with-jacob-tv/> (Accessed March 26, 2013).

<sup>4</sup> JacobTV, “The Music of JacobTV,” Jacob ter Veldhuis, <http://www.jacobtv.net/bio/articles.html> (Accessed March 26, 2013)



sentence—then I start playing around with this. I just press these keys, and I get a groove, and the groove is so beautiful... I push on the record button and record the groove. That's how I start working—it's a trial and error... I don't want to see music at all.”<sup>5</sup> In other words, Jacob TV is a rocker listening for what sounds good.

## GRAB IT!

*GRAB IT!* is a work originally scored for tenor saxophone and boombox. TV wrote it for Arno Bornkamp. Soon the work became wildly popular, prompting TV to make several adaptations. In addition to the version for bass clarinet, there are also versions for electric guitar, electric violin, percussion, and big band and string orchestra.

About *GRAB IT!*, JacobTV writes:

Growing up in the sixties with blues, jazz and rock, American music had a strong impact on my work. In *GRAB IT!* I tried to explore the “no-man’s-land” between language and music. I believe that language is one of the origins of music. So in my opinion, the roots of a lot of Afro-American music can be found in the spoken word. The musical quality of speech increases by the power of emotion, which is one of the reasons I use audio from... life sentenced prisoners. Their world, on the fringe of society, with its heartbreaking verbal assaults moved and inspired me.”<sup>6</sup>

Knowing the text is important when analyzing a work that utilizes voice. Following are the lyrics for *GRAB IT!*, as provided by Jacob TV:

SPEAK UP... I SAID SPEAK IT UP MICKEY MOUSE, SPEAK UP!  
GRAB IT MOTHER I SAID  
I STILL HEAR'M RING  
GRAB IT MOTHERFUCKER, GRAB IT!  
FIFTY GIMME  
AND I WANT YOU TO HAVE THAT SAY NOW  
WHEN YOU WALK OUT THAT DOOR GOING DOWN HERE  
'CAUSE I'LL BE SQUADIN' ON YOU  
IT'S A NO- LE IT'S A NO- LE  
MOTHERFUCKER PUNCH  
OH MAN, HA HA HA HA

<sup>5</sup> Philadelphia Music Project, “New Frontiers in Music: One on one with Jacob TV,” The Pew Center for Arts and Heritage, <http://www.pcah.us/music/resources/pmp-pd-symposia-and-seminars-new-frontiers-in-music12/one-on-one-with-jacob-tv/>.

<sup>6</sup> Veldhuis, *GRAB IT!*, 3.

SEE THIS  
 NOBODY  
 WHAT'S YOUR NUMBER  
 FOR EVER  
 54 936 LIFE AND FROM MOTHERFUCKING NOW ON  
 ANY TIME WHEN YOU GO  
 I – HOW – KEEP – YOU LOSE  
 TAKE OFF  
 I STILL HEAR'M RING  
 HOW MOTHERFUCKING TOUGH COULD I HAVE BEEN  
 YOU TAKE THAT  
 YOU GET A KICK OUT OF THAT?  
 DO YOU GET A KICK OUT OF THAT?!  
 WON'T YOU TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK  
 DRUGS HU HU HU HU  
 GET YOUR SHOES  
 I BITE YOUR FUCKING NOSE OFF  
 TELL ME DON'T WASTE MY TIME TELL ME  
 WHAT'S YOUR NUMBER  
 GRAB IT MOTHERFUCKER GRAB IT!  
 GET THE FUCK OUT... GET UP AND GET OFF THE STAGE WHILE...  
 54 936 LIFE AND FROM MOTHERFUCKING NOW ON  
 HIS MOTHERFUCKING MANHOOD MIGHT JUST BEEN TESTED  
 REPRISE: GRAB IT! MOTHER I SAID (ETC.)  
 WHAT'S YOUR NUMBER?!  
 JUST REMEMBER THIS  
 I PERSONALLY DON'T GIVE A FAT RAT ASS  
 WHAT YOU DO WHEN YOU LEAVE HERE TODAY;  
 YOU LOSE EVERYTHING  
 HE WENT OUT THE BACKDOOR RAPPED UP IN A GREEN SHEET  
 WITH A TAG ON HIS TOE  
 TIED ONE END AROUND THE PIPE  
 AND HE HUNG HIMSELF  
 AND WHEN THEY STUCK HIS DUMM ASS IN THE GROUND  
 TO GIVE HIM THAT LITTLE WOODEN GRAVEYARD MARKER  
 SO HE WAS PROBABLY THE ONE THAT KEEPS THE PARTY GOIN'  
 JUST STANDING ON THE CORNER, PUT LIPSTICK ON YOUR LIPS  
 SMOKER A LITTLE REEFER, DRINK A LITTLE WINE  
 I GOT A VERY SERIOUS PROBLEM, I'VE SEEN IT A THOUSAND TIMES  
 YOU GONNA WALK AROUND THIS JOINT – OR ANY JOINT YOU MIGHT BE IN  
 YOU LOSE EVERYTHING... AND FOR YOU TOUGH MOTHERFUCKERS LIKE YOU  
 TIE ONE END AROUND THE PIPE  
 I WILL TELL I...  
 EVERY MAN YOU SEE BEHIND ME IS DOING OVER 25 YEARS OR LIFE  
 EVERY MAN YOU SEE BEHIND ME, HE'S GOT ALL THE RESPECT IN THE WORLD  
 WHAT'S YOUR NUMBER?  
 IT STOPS RIGHT HERE MY LIFE STOPS THIS IS IT  
 NEVER NEVER NEVER, ALRIGHT, YOU SHOULD STAY COOL, YOU TOO!  
 TIE ONE END AROUND THE PIPE  
 AND FOR YOU TOUGH MOTHERFUCKERS LIKE YOU: YOU LOSE EVERYTHING!  
 GRAB IT MOTHERFUCKER GRAB IT!  
 54 936 LIFE WHAT'S YOUR NUMBER  
 I SAID: SIT UP!!<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Veldhuis, *GRAB IT!*, 4.

*GRAB IT!* draws these lyrics and therefore its compositional material from an American documentary released in 1978 called *Scared Straight!* This documentary depicts teenage repeat offenders being taken into a prison in New Jersey to be “scared straight” by a group of inmates known as the “lifers.” The language is harsh and the subject matter is difficult to hear. Many prisoners orient their speeches around the theme of rape that occurs behind bars, and the severe trauma that results from it. In one particularly emotional moment, a prisoner describes a man who was raped regularly for over a year. Unable to take it anymore, the man commits suicide by hanging himself in his cell, and is carted out of the prison “with a tag on his toe.”<sup>8</sup>

Jacob TV treats his audio samples in five different ways, to varying effect. He can voice a word, phrase, or sentence in its entirety, unedited; he can voice a portion of a sentence or phrase; he can cut and paste unrelated syllables together to invent new beat patterns; he can heavily distort the voice; and he can combine multiple treatments of the same or differing types, creating a sort of counterpoint. These five different methods of audio sample treatment constitute a graduated level of textual clarity, in order from most clear to least clear.

The first treatment, untreated audio, Jacob TV reserves for important structural moments and emotional high points. Some of the audio samples he plays in their entirety are: “Grab it motherfucker, grab it!,” “What’s your number,” “54936 life and for motherfucking now on,” “How motherfucking tough could I have been,” “His motherfucking manhood might just been tested.” Additionally, from “Just remember this” to the end of the lyrics, the audio samples are basically untouched with the exception of “I will tell.”

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<sup>8</sup> Arnold Shapiro, *Scared Straight!*, DVD (New York: Docurama Films, 1978).

The lyric from which the piece gets its title, “Grab it motherfucker, grab it,” introduces to the listener the word “motherfucker,” a highly offensive word used by the prisoners when at their most emotional and aggressive. Jacob TV denotes its significance by ensuring its clarity when used in a sample. The phrase is also an imperative statement. The speaker is telling the listener to grab “it.” Grab what? In *Scared Straight!* the speaker is ordering a teen to grab the speaker’s belt loop. Removed from its context, however, the phrase expression loses this content, and it is left up to Jacob TV to assign new connotative meaning to the phrase.

He gradually reveals his intended meaning. Two lines: “what’s your number” and “54936 life and from motherfucking now on” are both repeated several times throughout the piece. They both appear for the first time near each other, measure 87 and 95 respectively. Linking these two phrases at their inception allows them to act as referents of each other—one signifies the other. “54936 life from motherfucking now on” returns in mm. 241–242 as a structural articulation point. “What’s your number” comes in measure 278 with a similar function, though this time doubled at the unison by the bass clarinet.

The very next section (lyrics: “Just remember this”) begins the story of a man who hung himself. The speaker ends the story stating “I’ve seen it a 1000 times. You gonna walk around this joint or any joint you might be in. You lose everything. And for you tough motherfuckers like you... tie one end around the pipe.” This story, told by an inmate in prison for life answers the question of what to grab. As Jacob TV writes, “life is worth living. Grab it!”<sup>9</sup>

A clear example of the second method of audio sample treatment comes in measures 17–22. In this excerpt, shown in figure 3-1, Jacob TV inserts the single word

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<sup>9</sup> Veldhuis, *GRAB IT!*, 3.



The fourth treatment occurs from measures 210–231. “Grab it motherfucker, grab it” is repeated twice in a highly distorted manner. Before this section, Jacob TV builds a multilayered extended phrase, demonstrating the fifth treatment, shown in figure 3-2.

Bass clarinet, represented by the bottom line, provides downbeats, a cross rhythm is created by the sixteenth notes and triplets sounding together, and above it all “grab it” and “grab it motherfucker grab it” are repeated. Represented in this example are the first, third, and fourth treatments.

Due to Jacob TV’s source material, a complication arises in the esthetic process. Many attempts to “scare straight” the teens focus on the threat of prison rape, which may affect the reception of *GRAB IT!* in the minds of some audience members. However, TV completely omits any mention of rape from his audio samples. The story of the man who hanged himself, for example, is incomplete as TV presents it. The man was regularly raped for over a year, and could no longer take it. What this demonstrates is the inherent disconnection between poietic and esthetic processes. Though TV inherently omitted any mention of prison rape, those who are familiar with the documentary may be able to reapply the original context of the audio samples. Therefore, an element not placed by TV in his music has the ability to exist there if present in the mind—in the interpretant—of the listener. There are ways the composer can directly affect the esthetic process. These will be explored in the course of Chapter 5.

## CHAPTER 4

### *DUO CONCERTANT*

Darius Milhaud, born 1892, was always a highly opinionated musician. In his autobiography he writes that as a child he “made [his] dear parents walk out of the concert hall at Dieppe in the middle of the first act of *Samson et Delila*.”<sup>1</sup> When Milhaud was a teenager, he saw *The Ring* in its entirety: “I shall never forget those four performances: the audience rapt in the depths of the music, silent and attentive as if in church, suddenly bursting into wildly enthusiastic applause at the end of each act, and I myself bored to tears.”<sup>2</sup>

His own music incited no such reaction in audiences. Milhaud describes a 1920 concert where his *Suite symphonique* was performed. Some in the audience shouted and made “animal noises” while others countered with applause and bravos. Eventually, a fight broke out, all with Milhaud watching from a box with his parents. He reflects contentedly on the whole affair, explaining how “I was extremely proud: this genuine, spontaneous, violent reaction filled me with boundless confidence. It is the indifference of the public that is depressing; enthusiasm or vehement protests prove that your work is *alive*.”<sup>3</sup>

Milhaud composed in nearly every genre available to him: symphonic, chamber, wind ensemble, solo, vocal, theatre, and film. He was influenced musically by his time in Brazil, and developed an interest in jazz. In the 1940s, he emigrated to the United States to teach at Mills College.

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<sup>1</sup> Darius Milhaud, *Notes Without Music* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), 18.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 106.

## DUO CONCERTANT, OP. 351

Milhaud's *Duo Concertant* was written in 1956 and was dedicated to Ulysse Delécluse, famed clarinet instructor of the Paris Conservatory. This work is unique in the program in that it has no obvious iconic sign associated with the work. It does not use text, nor is it a transcription. The piece also does not utilize a program. *Duo Concertant* is absolute music, and serves to illustrate how a musical work is self-signifying. Eco's definition of a sign becomes important to recall wherein he states that anything that can stand for something else can be called a sign. Heavily implied by this definition is the necessity of human perception. If a person perceives a transfer of information, sense must be made of that information transfer, and a sign is then created.

Included at the end of this chapter as figure 4-5 is a semiotic graph for *Duo Concertant*.<sup>4</sup> Reading and generating a semiotic graph can reveal aspects of music hidden to other styles of analysis, gestural organization for example. In a semiotic graph, a musical work is divided into the smallest gestures that can still be considered a single, repeatable event, each gesture then defined as a sign. What constitutes a gesture is variable from piece to piece, and a description of the chosen parameters should be included with the semiotic graph. This illustrates gestural organization at a more precise level than other forms of graphing.

*Duo Concertant* has accordingly been divided into its individual signs, indicated by the letters. Subscripts indicate the measure in which the sign begins; a number after a decimal indicates that the sign begins on a beat within a measure. Letters with an

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<sup>4</sup> This graphing style is attributed to Douglas Worthen in *A Semiotic View of the Flute Concerto Genre from Vivaldi to Mozart: A New Way of Understanding the Foundations of The Eighteenth Century Flute Concerto Genre* (Saarbrücken, Germany: VDM Verlag, 2008), 11–13; 57–59.



apostrophe indicate a sign variant. The rightmost column indicates form, and the leftmost column indicates key areas.

Figure 4-1 shows the beginning of *Duo Concertant* and the partitioning of the music into signs. Sign A is unified by similar rhythm, contour and character both in the clarinet and piano. Sign B and sign C both have similar dynamics, though the melodic content and contour differ to such an extent that they constitute distinct signs.

Figure 4-1. *Duo Concertant* statement of first three distinct signs.  
Sign A: 0.4–1.3; Sign B: 1.4–2.3; Sign A': 2.4–3.3; Sign C: 3.4–4.3.

The image displays the first four measures of the *Duo Concertant* score, featuring a Clarinet in B-flat and Piano. The tempo is marked 'Vif' at 92 beats per minute. The music is divided into four distinct signs: Sign A (measures 0.4–1.3), Sign B (measures 1.4–2.3), Sign A' (measures 2.4–3.3), and Sign C (measures 3.4–4.3). The Clarinet part begins with a melodic line in measure 0.4, marked *mp*. The Piano part enters in measure 1.4 with a chordal accompaniment, also marked *mp*. In measure 2.4, the Piano part changes to a more active melodic line, marked *p*. The Clarinet part continues its melodic development throughout the four measures, with dynamics ranging from *mp* to *p*.

Ordering signs in this way is an easy way to reveal the form of a work. As ordered by the column on the right, the form is ABA'. Closer inspection of the sign groups reveals *Duo Concertant* to be ternary, because the signs of section B are unique

and do not occur in the A sections, nor do any signs from the A sections appear in section B. Such is the case with ternary form.

The organization of the A section is similar to the organization of the entire work in that the A section is bookended by a subsection and an altered version of the subsection. Signs A–F occur in exactly the same configuration at the beginning and the end of the A section, likewise in the A' section. At this middle ground level, this subsection constitutes a sign aggregate. Within the sign aggregate are contained individual signs that do not appear under any other conditions and that only appear in that order. To better understand the concept of a sign aggregate, it can be likened to a galaxy. From far away, a galaxy is a single source of light, much like a star. Closer inspection reveals the galaxy to be made up of billions of separate and distinct stars. In the same way, a sign aggregate functions on a broader level as individual signs do, though it is still made up of smaller constituent parts.

Sign G has a transitional function. The first time it occurs in measure 9, it signals a key change and motion into the second subsection of A. When it occurs again in measure 46 as G,' an interesting transformation occurs, shown in Figure 4-2. G' lasts for two measures and is defined by the quarter notes in each hand offset from each other by one eighth note, creating a composite eighth note rhythm. Measure 48 continues the quarter notes in the right hand, but changes the rhythm of the left hand. Figure 4-2 shows this moment. The left hand, coupled with the *rallentando* and dynamic changes, alters G' so that it is no longer recognizable as a variant of G, and must be designated as a new sign, V.

Figure 4-2. Sign G' transformation into sign V at third measure of excerpt.



The B section is characterized by a slower tempo. Though the section only consists of ten distinct signs, Milhaud still creates a sign aggregate. W and X occur together three times, the last time as variants. Milhaud takes advantage of the slower tempo to sound some extended tertian and polytonal harmonies. Sign X for example contains a C triad with both a major and minor third on the third eighth note. In sign Y, Milhaud outlines an E<sup>b</sup> major triad in the clarinet while the piano voices simultaneously the E<sup>b</sup> major chord and an f minor chord. Signs X and Y are shown in Figure 4-3.

Figure 4-3. Signs X and Y, mm. 52–53 and mm. 54–55, respectively.

The image displays two separate musical excerpts. The left excerpt, labeled 'Sign X', spans measures 52 and 53. It features a piano part with dynamics *mp*, *pp*, and *p*, and a clarinet part with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. The right excerpt, labeled 'Sign Y', spans measures 54 and 55. It shows a piano part with *mp* and *pp* dynamics and a clarinet part with a *pp* dynamic. Measure 55 is specifically marked with a box containing the number 55.

Sign X

Sign Y

Sign EE is the only sign in the B section marked forte, signifying it as a climax point. Milhaud's motivic organization supports this conclusion. The B section is divided into three separate key areas, each begun with the sign aggregate W–X. EE occurs at the end of the second key area, A major. The second key area also boasts the highest number of signs in the B section, and the highest concentration of non-repeated signs, BB–EE.

Section A' is indicated as a variant of section A for two reasons. The first is that sign Q is varied slightly from the first. The second is that the progression of tonal centers, while matching the pattern of tonal centers from the first A section, allow Milhaud to place signs in different registers. For example, in measure 81, sign A signals the start of section A'. This time, because Milhaud is in E<sup>b</sup> major, sign A is a perfect fourth higher, placing the top note at a written f<sub>3</sub>, and two measures later at a written a<sub>3</sub>.

Another change takes place within sign Q. Figure 4-4 compares sign Q in section A with sign Q' in section A'. Differences in tonal center aside, each sign is the same except for the second measure in the clarinet part. Sign Q' elaborates the line with a change in articulation and the inclusion of upper neighbor tone. The shape and character of the gesture remain unchanged however, hence the decision to label the second gesture as a variant of Q.

Figure 4-4. *Duo Concertant*, sign Q (top) and sign Q' (bottom).



The semiotic graph amounts to a paradigmatic<sup>5</sup> and syntagmatic<sup>6</sup> analysis of a work of music. Each occurrence of sign A and its variants is followed by either sign B or sign C. These place signs B and C within the same paradigmatic axis. Likewise, signs V, FF, and GG all occur at the end of the major sections, signaling to the audience that an important structural change is about to take place, causing them to be placed on the same paradigmatic axis.

<sup>5</sup> Paradigmatic refers to the interchangeability of signs within a sign group, or a group of related signs. For example, *run*, *jump*, *sit*, *eat*, and other verbs all exist on the same paradigmatic axis.

<sup>6</sup> Syntagmatic refers to the ordering of sign groups within a structure, i.e., noun—verb—adverb, or noun—adverb—verb.

Syntagmatically, Milhaud is highly consistent, a blessing in a piece with such a high concentration of signs for the listener to process. His ordering of signs within section A' for example remains completely unchanged from section A. Had Milhaud introduced more sign evolution than he already did, the work faced the danger of becoming a jumbled mess. Instead, the sign evolution Milhaud introduced occurred primarily in the form of key or register changes. He retained his signs in related sections, allowing audiences to receive them more completely.

Key area	Section																A
	A <sub>0,4</sub>	B <sub>2</sub>															
B-flat	A' <sub>2,4</sub>	C <sub>4</sub>	D <sub>5</sub>	E <sub>6</sub>													
			3	F <sub>8</sub>	G <sub>9</sub>												
G					H <sub>10</sub>												
					G <sub>11</sub>												
					H' <sub>12</sub>												
					H'' <sub>13</sub>	I <sub>14</sub>											
					J <sub>15</sub>												
G-flat					J' <sub>16</sub>	K <sub>17</sub>											
					K' <sub>19</sub>												
A																	
F	A' <sub>37,5</sub>	B <sub>39</sub>															
	A''' <sub>39,4</sub>		C <sub>41</sub>	D' <sub>42</sub>	E <sub>43</sub>												
				D' <sub>44</sub>	F <sub>45</sub>	G' <sub>46</sub>											
E-flat																	
A																	
F																	
E-flat	A <sub>80,4</sub>	B <sub>82</sub>															
	A' <sub>82,4</sub>		C <sub>84</sub>	D <sub>85</sub>	E <sub>86</sub>												
				D <sub>87</sub>	F <sub>88</sub>	G <sub>89</sub>											
C						H <sub>90</sub>											
						G <sub>91</sub>											
						H' <sub>92</sub>											
						H'' <sub>93</sub>	I <sub>94</sub>										
						J <sub>95</sub>											
C-flat						J' <sub>96</sub>	K <sub>97</sub>										
						K' <sub>99</sub>											
D																	
B-flat	A'' <sub>117,5</sub>	B <sub>119</sub>															
	A''' <sub>119,4</sub>		C <sub>121</sub>	D' <sub>122</sub>	E <sub>123</sub>												
				D' <sub>124</sub>	F' <sub>125</sub>	G'' <sub>126</sub>											
																	GG <sub>128</sub>

Figure 4-5. Duo Concertant semiotic graph.

## CHAPTER 5

*THE MOON IN MY WINDOW*

Eric Mandat is Professor of Music and Distinguished Scholar at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois. There he teaches applied clarinet and graduate courses in analysis. In addition to his teaching, Mandat maintains a busy performance schedule. He is a member of the Tone Road Ramblers, a new music group that finds its influences in jazz, world music, and the avant garde;<sup>1</sup> a part of the Transatlantic Trio, an ensemble that began through connections Mandat made during a faculty exchange program between the Latvian Academy of Music and Southern Illinois University; and the Altgeld Chamber Players, a chamber ensemble composed of SIU faculty. Mandat also plays with the Chicago Symphony's MusicNOW ensemble. This ensemble was begun by Cliff Colnot, who worked with Mandat in the premiere of John Eaton's opera, *Antigone and Traveling with Gulliver*.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to receiving acclaim as a performer and teacher, Eric Mandat is also widely known for his compositions for clarinet. Many of his works have found a place on standard repertoire lists in college clarinet studios across the country. His first published work, *Tricolor Capers*, for solo clarinet, was composed while he was a graduate student at Yale, and was premiered on his master's recital.

*Tricolor Capers* contained many compositional elements for which Mandat would come to be known. The first movement, "Portent," makes heavy use of multiphonics.

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<sup>1</sup> Morgan Powell, "Tone Road Ramblers" Morgan Powell Music <http://www.morganpowellmusic.com/trr.php> (Accessed April 3 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Amanda Morrison, "Eric Mandat: His Musical Life, A Performer's Perspective of Preludes, Book 1 and RrOWZER!, and a Descriptive Catalog of His Published Clarinet Works (1980–2010)." (DMA diss., Florida State University, 2011), 9.



“Sway” is next, in which Mandat contrasts off-kilter and drunken lines with robotic undulations, all in a microtonal language. The final movement, “Bop” takes rhythmic drive from its jazz namesake. The large scale form for each movement is uncomplicated. About his use of form, Mandat said to Amanda Morrison in an interview,

I try to have a longer sense of direction than might be found in a traditional non-Western piece of music and use pretty traditional forms that I find ways to tweak. Because of the surface details I utilize such as extended techniques and microtones, the sound world is not always easy to grasp right away. So I tend to put it in a context that is a little safer so that there isn't too much to take in all at once.<sup>3</sup>

Put in semiotic terms, Mandat allows esthetic considerations to guide the poietic process in his music. He recognizes that, due to the specialized nature of the techniques he likes to employ, many audiences will lack the codes to immediately understand his music. By rooting his style in the ‘safer context’ of uncomplicated forms, it reduces acculturation process required to process the signs he creates.

Eric Mandat's poietics begin with improvisation. Though he does not improvise as often as he would like because “it takes time to relax and get the daily grind out of [his] mind,”<sup>4</sup> he always begins his compositional process with improvisation. Mandat explains:

Sometimes, if I'm writing for a specific event (which is usually the case), I'm thinking a little about who the audience might be, or I might be thinking about events in my life or things I've observed recently that I might like to keep in the forefront of my mind while I'm improvising. If I'm relaxed and allowing those thoughts to remain unmanipulated by my logical/analytical self, then usually something interesting improvisationally emerges.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Eric Mandat, interview by Amanda Morrison, October 29, 2010 in Amanda Morrison, “Eric Mandat: His Musical Life, A Performer's Perspective of *Preludes, Book 1* and *RrOWZER!*, and a Descriptive Catalog of His Published Works for Clarinet Works (1980–2010)” (DMA diss., Florida State University, 2011), 10-11.

<sup>4</sup> Eric Mandat, e-mail message to author, April 7, 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

He summates by saying, “Generally speaking, if my fingers feel happy, then I feel the surface structure of the notes is ‘correct.’”<sup>6</sup>

*The Moon in My Window* was written in 2007 and revised in 2010. He wrote it for Kelly Johnson of University of Central Arkansas. About the piece, Mandat writes “the basic premise of the work is to depict the daily activities of a child; waking, playing, eating, nap time, more play (always!), and finally, bedtime. A general innocence and lightness should therefore dominate the approach to performance.”<sup>7</sup> The work is programmatic, a naturally iconic style of music. “Technically, [he] wanted each of the movements to evoke moods and feelings [he] had during [his] carefree play days growing up on the mountain in Colorado.”<sup>8</sup> Mandat’s sonic imagery is highly creative and firmly rooted in his idiomatic knowledge of the clarinet’s capabilities. Within the framework of a six movement, ten minute long programmatic work, Mandat incorporates a startlingly high amount of characterization and development.

## BUTTERFLY MORNING

Before the music even begins, Mandat’s title signifies to the listener two concepts: a fluttering insect, and the beginning of the day. He gives musical form to these signs by using a wandering melody composed almost entirely of neighbor tones and passing tones (figure 5-1). The phrase construction of Mandat’s melody is simple. It is eight bars long, divided into two four bar subphrases. In the second phrase Mandat develops his melody immediately and with great subtlety; a passing tone where there was a neighbor tone and a skip where there was a passing tone, and suddenly the melody cadences an octave higher. The third phrase keeps the framework established

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Mandat, *The Moon in My Window* (Cirrus Music, 2007).

<sup>8</sup> Mandat, e-mail message to author, April 7, 2013.

in the first two phrases, but is further developed by introducing wider leaps between the middle and bottom register of the clarinet.

Figure 5-1. “Butterfly Morning” opening phrase.



Over the course of the first three phrases, Mandat has slowly stripped away elements that signal the original phrase. At the fourth phrase, he introduces the first multiphonics, shown in Figure 5-2 to be the weaving sign over a pedal point. If the repeats of these measures were written out, it would be clear that Mandat has remained faithful to his eight bar phrase. Any semblance of two subphrases has now been lost, however, replaced instead by four two bar subphrases.

Figure 5-2. “Butterfly Morning,” fourth phrase.



The fifth phrase is in two voices, the wandering melody shifting between voices every two measures. This is an especially complicated moment only made possible by a fusion of intimate idiomatic knowledge about the clarinet and compositional proficiency.

The sixth phrase introduces the second melodic idea of the movement, though this second idea still refers to the wandering melody. After a brief pause, Mandat tumbles back into a short recapitulation of the first phrase, extended and varied at the end. He ends the movement with a final wandering phrase that accelerates into a two bar phrase repeated *ad libitum*.

## YOU'RE IT

The symbolic child of *The Moon in My Window* plays a game of tag. Underneath Mandat's 184 beats per minute tempo marking, he writes the word 'scurrying.' Where the unifying element in "Butterfly Morning" was a gentle wandering melody, "You're It" is unified by the first gesture, shown by Figure 5-3 in the complete phrase.

Figure 5-3. "You're It," first gesture and first phrase.



A trilled  $a_1$ , snapped quickly to  $f\sharp_1$ , is also marked forte with an immediate decrescendo. This specific gesture occurs three times in a repeated phrase. Such heavy repetition in a short period marks the gesture as important. Indeed, by the end of the first section of the piece, Mandat has incorporated the gesture in three different ways. The first, already described, opens the movement. The second appears transposed down a third in the seventh measure. Mandat bookends the gesture, marked mezzo forte, with brief, piano arpeggios. The third occurs in the final phrase of

first section of the movement. In this occurrence, the gesture is repeated twice, once as  $f_1$  trilled to  $a_1$  and snapped to  $d^b_1$ , once as the original gesture.

The creation and evolution of this trill gesture reveal Mandat's idiomatic advantage in writing music for the clarinet. As indicated by the fingering, to play this gesture the performer must use the left index finger to simultaneously vent the A key and cover the top finger hole. Mandat indicates that the keys to be trilled are the top two side trill keys, meaning the top trill pitch will be approximately  $a_{c2}$ . This pitch is above the standard range of the clarinet's fundamental register, but by using the top trill keys, he achieves the pitch he wants without shifting into the third partial range. With this accomplishment, Mandat unifies all the pitches in the gesture by limiting his use to one partial range. This is a simpler illustration of techniques related to register. In future movements, Mandat builds on this technique.

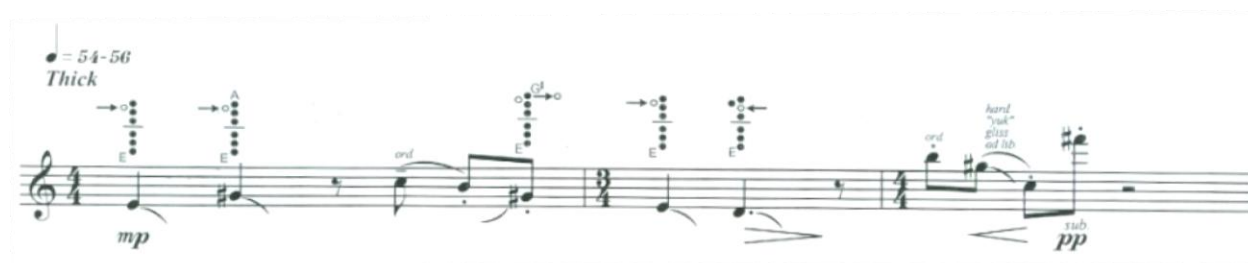
Additionally, from the single fingering in which the A key is depressed and the top finger hole is covered, Mandat can easily shift to  $f^\sharp$ , which he does; he can also easily vary the gesture as demonstrated by trilling the A key while covering the top finger hole. These subtle changes in finger motion to elicit developmental changes are a hallmark of Mandat's music; they allow him to create music that is highly self signifying by creating fundamentally related structures.

## P'NUT BUT'R

Mandat's program continues in the third movement, "P'nut But'r." The child is now eating, and as the title suggests, is having some trouble forming vowels. Mouth full, perhaps? Again, Mandat wastes no time in sonically describing the character of the movement. Underneath the tempo marking and the indication "Thick," he writes two

pitches,  $e_1$  and  $g\sharp_1$ , shown in Figure 5-4, both with downward trending lines indicating glissandi. Mandat's alternate fingerings for these two pitches are essentially *overshaded*<sup>9</sup> notes a half step higher than those notated. Through this process, Mandat creates a more *resistant* note that can be easily bent flat by slowly covering an open finger hole. The result is a highly connotative sign that Mandat evokes throughout the movement in various ways.

Figure 5-4. "P'nut But'r," first line.



He may bend up to a pitch by indicating that a finger be slid off a tone hole, as he does at the end of the first measure, indicated in Figure 5-4. Another iteration of the glissando occurs in the final measure of the figure, this time as a “hard ‘yuk’ gliss ad lib.”

With this direction, Mandat is injecting into the trace an artifact that directly informs the player's performance practice. The best way to achieve the “yuk” gliss is by reproducing the tongue motion created by speaking “yuk.” It is a moment of Mandat's poietics exerting influence on the esthesis of the performer in a simple and direct way. He exerts his influence on the performer in other helpful ways as well. For example, for every nonstandard pitch or multiphonic, he includes a reliable fingering.

<sup>9</sup> In normal practice, when a note is sharp, a player may choose to *shade* it by covering additional finger holes, thereby lowering the pitch.

## MUSIC BOX

“Music Box” is a lilting lullaby with a simple melody. It begins by alternating between  $b_2$  and  $g_2$  several times before moving to  $a_2$ . Mandat lulls it further by incorporating changes in partials on the same pitch. The first measure is shown in Figure 5-5.

Figure 5-5. “Music Box,” first measure.



The note head in parentheses indicates the fingering to be used, while the top note head is the sounding pitch. What results is a partial change. The first  $b_2$  is in the third partial with the fundamental  $e_1$ , and the second  $b_2$  is in the fifth partial with the fundamental  $g$ . Likewise, the first  $g_2$  is a third partial with fundamental  $c_1$ , while the second  $g_2$  is also a fifth partial with the fundamental  $e$ . What results from these partial shifts is a timbre change caused by the differing overtone structure. By coupling this effect with some microtones, Mandat creates a highly iconic sign of a music box, perhaps one that is old and creaky.

## ALL ABOARD

All the titles of *The Moon in My Window* have specific connotative meanings that are only properly received by an audience with the correct acculturation. The phrase ‘you’re it’ is part of the slightly larger phrase ‘tag, you’re it’ spoken during the game of tag. A music box is a small wind up device that has often been used to lull children to

sleep. The phrase ‘all aboard’ is a typical one used by train conductors to signal the train’s departure.

Mandat correlates the connotative meaning of the title “All Aboard” with the opening motive, shown in Figure 5-6, a fast articulated ostinato of low octave E’s followed quickly by a multiphonic that is acoustically similar to a train whistle.

Figure 5-6. “All Aboard,” opening gesture.



Mandat returns to this motive three times throughout the movement, each time raising either individual pitches or the entire motive. This developmental device results in a gradually shifting mood. Subtly varying gestures either rhythmically or melodically is a technique Mandat uses frequently.

The final gesture of “All Aboard” deserves mention. Using multiphonics, Mandat creates a two voice contrapuntal structure, shown by Figure 5-7. These five measures are repeated *ad libitum* by the performer. Gradually the bottom voice is phased out, leaving only a sustained top voice to diminuendo into silence—the train has disappeared in the distance.



Figure 5-7. “All Aboard,” closing gesture.

\* REPEAT ENTIRE 4-BAR PHRASE.  
GRADUALLY FADING LOWER NOTES  
AND ARTICULATIONS UNTIL ONLY  
THE UPPER NOTES REMAIN:

Tempo I

dim. poco a poco al niente

repeat ad lib.

dim. poco a poco al niente

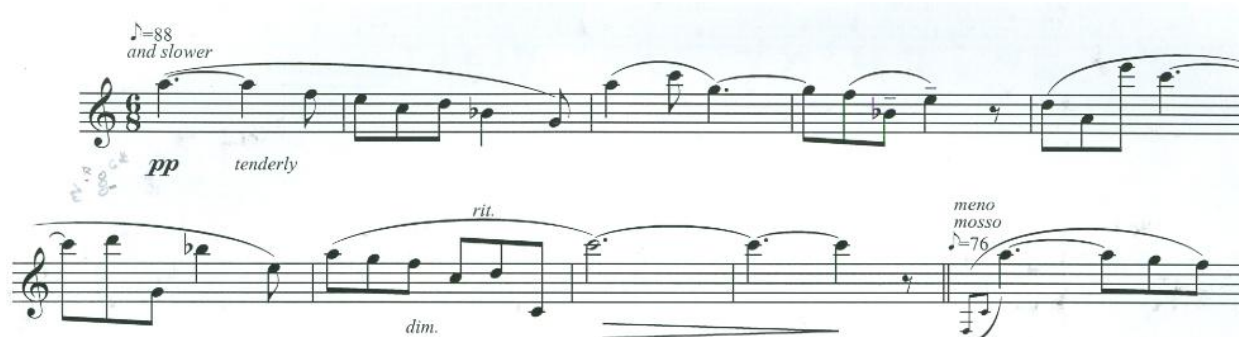
## THE MOON IN MY WINDOW

Mandat ends his work with the title movement, “The Moon in My Window.” The title is taken from a children’s book written by Crockett Johnson titled *Harold and the Purple Crayon*. In the story, Harold uses a magic crayon to draw all sorts of adventures. Eventually, he gets tired, and realizes he is lost. In trying to return to his bedroom, he attempts to draw his window, but he cannot draw the right one until he remembers the moon always being in his window. He draws the moon in his window, draws his bed and his covers, crawls in and falls asleep.

“With ‘The Moon in My Window’ I wanted something that repeated, gradually getting softer and softer until it completely disappeared, like a parent singing songs at bedtime, which my mother did a lot.”<sup>10</sup> The melody Mandat chooses to repeat is excerpted in Figure 5-8.

<sup>10</sup> Mandat, e-mail message to author, April 7, 2013.

Figure 5-8. “Moon in My Window,” melody to double bar line.



One of the first aspects to become apparent is the melody's traditional tonality. Mandat remains clearly in the key area of F major for the entirety of the movement. A single C<sup>#</sup> near the end is the lone nondiatonic pitch. The general downward trending contour of the melody remains a primary feature throughout all three of Mandat's melodic variations. Though Mandat has stated that the melody will get "softer and softer,"

In this movement as a whole, Mandat produces signs in three major ways. The first is through his tonal writing. While Mandat maintains 'tonal centers' in most of his music, he generally avoids common practice tonality. By using it only in this movement, it becomes a unique and immediate signifier to the audience. Using tonality as a sign in and of itself is advantageous because most Western audiences are coded to immediately comprehend Western tonality. Tonality is therefore a naturally efficient sign vehicle.

The second is the prevailing quiet dynamic. As in the other movements, he pushes the clarinet to its limits, though here he takes advantage of its ability to play softer than any other instrument. Mandat writes that the melody will get "softer and

softer,” a bold move considering that the movement begins with a pianissimo dynamic marking.

The third method of sign production occurs at the third repetition of the melody. Here, Mandat begins harmonizing and altering the melody using multiphonics. By adding this final parameter to the melody’s tonality and dynamic level, he allows the three signs to work simultaneously. This simultaneity of occurrence allows the extended techniques Mandat uses in this movement—multiphonics and arguably the ultra soft dynamics—to function in a standard practice way, much like the contrapuntal use of multiphonics in “Butterfly Morning.”

## CONCLUSION

*The Moon in My Window* is a depiction of a day in the life of a child. More than that, it can be seen as a depiction of a day in the life of Eric Mandat as a child. He has drawn from personal experiences and memories of childhood, pouring the resultant emotions into his improvisations. From these improvisations he generated highly representative music that is intensely idiomatic to the clarinet. What makes Mandat’s compositions ‘work’ more than his traditional formal structures or his colorful sound palette, is the source of his music: himself. *The Moon in My Window* is an autobiography.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS

From five works come five methods of sign production, all following the same basic process. In *Four Impersonations*, Ziporyn uses a Western coded style of composition to signify non-Western signs to audiences. The extensive analysis of each movement's title in Chapter 1 implies that the most important esthetic reaction belongs to the performer. If the performer studies the cultural context surrounding each movement, esthesis can occur in the form of enhanced interpretation for performance.

In Spohr's *Sechs deutsche Lieder*, music is deferential to text. The poetry Spohr uses allows him to text paint with the clarinet and to apply his own signs to musical gestures. The audience's reception of the signs Spohr creates depends on a certain amount of consistency from composer and performer. The Op. 103 is strongly unified, as established by the regular pairing across songs of the same *objects* and *representamens*. Such consistent pairing led to the creation of the same *interpretants*.

*GRAB IT!* presents a modern conception of music with text. Jacob TV creates narrative by piecing together his disparate samples, assigning graduated levels of importance to words and phrases by his treatment of them. The esthetic process in the audience is less predictable, however. A familiarity with the documentary from which TV extracted his samples will affect the audience's reception. Whether it is a positive or negative effect is dependent on other cultural codes. Clashing with cultural codes is not new to TV, however. As was cited in Chapter 3, he has been labeled a 'music Terrorist,' after all.

Darius Milhaud's *Duo Concertant* becomes the only work without a discernible program. Instead, Milhaud builds meaning by incorporating a concentrated number of signs and then reinforcing them in the listener. His poietic process makes the *Duo Concertant* an excellent work for semiotic graphing. Several paradigmatic axes were discovered.

*The Moon in My Window* is especially unique. Unlike the other four works, this is original music composed for clarinet by a clarinetist. Eric Mandat's poietic process is rooted in subtly directed improvisation, which means that his highly idiomatic writing is also highly personal. He also considers the esthetic process as he composes, preferring traditional forms in order to ease listeners into his sound world.

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