

LECTURE/DEMO at HUNTER COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL Wednesday April 11, at 1:20pm-2:25pm.

by Tamara Cashour, representing THE NEW YORK COMPOSERS CIRCLE, INC.

MUSICAL ARRANGEMENTS (for piano solo)

What is an Arrangement? Traditional Definition:

A musical composition for a certain instrument/voice or combination thereof, that is reworked (re-arranged) for a different body of instruments/voices than the original.

Two Types of Arrangements:

1. Traditional
2. Abstractionist/Technical (Music for its own sake)

I. The Composer as "Semiotic Magpie"

-brief discussion of Semiotics (in terms of: musical motive as tied to cultural meaning via semiotics. A sign gives meaning to an object/artifact; music, as a collection of signs (notes, etc.) sometimes conveys meaning based on that culture's broad-based knowledge of signs familiar to its cultural milieu.

II. WHY do an Arrangement of an Existing Piece?

1. **Gives the piece wider visibility** and 'shelf time' as more types of instruments and/or vocalists, ensembles and soloists can make use of it beyond the instrumentation it was originally written for. This idea engenders both creative and financial resonance, and so is practical.

2. Introduces piece to another medium and its listeners/practitioners (a classical Bach invention arranged for jazz SATB quartet)

3. Some composers think they can improve upon the original (Mozart/MESSIAH; Rimsky-Korsakov, operas of Mussorgsky!)

4. Physical disability (Cyril Smith, Leon Fleischer)

III. Traditional Arrangements of an Iconic Simple Tune (Compare/contrast):

1. Happy Fugue'N Birthday--Bob Cohen

2. Variation on Happy Birthday for Richard Brooks--"Johannes Goodman" (Jacob)

The Composer's Toolbox in traditional arranging:

- "In the style of" (Bach, Brahms), using similar or actual, musical and motivic material that is recognizable of a well-known composer's style (point these specifics out while playing through 1 and 2, play snippets the original Bach D minor invention and Brahms Op. 118 #2 Intermezzo to show style).

- Use of recognizable musical cliché to pun, support the general mood of the piece, "hook" the listener-- this can include insertion of other recognizable tunes which support the theme of the main tune or "showy" musical cliché, musical motivic "puns" (Cohen's use of the chord 'bang' clusters, "circusy" chromatic scales, riff on the D7 chord leading up to "This Old Man").

- "Gussy up" or "deconstruct" the main tune, via: rhythmic, pitch, harmonic, accompanimental, dynamic variation (show specific examples--ask students for others).

Both of the above arrangements of the simple, almost hackneyed tune "Happy Birthday" add spice, humour, flair and finesse to the original tune, in two very different arrangements--the first, a bright, cheeky 'party piece'

with added classical serious motif, and the second, a more somber, lyrical, lovely, somewhat pensive arrangement.

B. Traditional Arrangement of Orchestral Tune (compare/contrast to III-- 1,2 above)

3. *From Here to There*--Peter Michael von der Nahmer

How does this composer arrange this orchestral theme (Largo, from Dvorak's 9th Symphony) in order to give it a contemporary slant? (ask for specifics that we've been talking about, point out others). Mention "Goin Home", by William Arms Fisher, a pupil of Dvorak, who arranged this tune and added lyrics for vocalists to sing it, thereby adding a new level of meaning to the basic *Largo* tune. See the lyrics to this tune Goin' Home here:

<http://www.americanmusicpreservation.com/GoinHome.htm>. Listen to the entire symphony here:

<https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=mcafee&p=Dvorak+9th+Symphony+Largo+score#id=1&vid=27fa6f885bf2cf00147c7d34d018ec9d&action=view>

IV. Abstractionist/Technical "Arrangements" of Theoretical Musical Materials

1. *Pentachordal Etudes #2*--Hubert Howe

2. *Scenes from a Stranger*--Jinhee Han

Both of the above compositions include accompanying diagrammatical charts that will hopefully facilitate understanding of these compositions as you listen to them. I will explain the composer's *modus operandi* in terms of the theoretical tools they have used, and then play the compositions, pointing out how the tools are used as I go along (I will "talk through" the first 4 measures of Pentachordal Etudes, to show how the pentachordal cycle gets rolling.)

In both of these pieces, "meaning" is subservient to abstract representation of theoretical material, which in itself may be tied to cultural specifics (Turkish, in the case of Ms. Han's piece) but is ultimately non-representational.

V. Party piece/Piano Bar (an example of shelf-life extension that hopefully will benefit the original composers as well as the arranger!) I will play a bit of the original song arrangement by Herzog/Holiday prior to playing my arrangement)

GOD BLESS' THE CHILD--Tamara Cashour

END--WRAP UP--Take questions

Compositional Tools Used by Traditional Arrangers

(represented by Mr. Cohen's, Mr. Goodman's, Mr. Van der Nahmer's and Ms. Cashour's arrangements)

A composer must first have secure knowledge of the basic tune, or entire composition that s/he is arranging. Subsequently, knowledge of the harmonies supporting the melody, along with how the chords are distributed (voiced) among the original instruments, is also crucial. For a simple melody, such as Happy Birthday--the composer has great freedom in going beyond the originally devised I-V-I-IV-I-V-I undergirding harmony, and can freely devise new chordal patterns, accompanimental patterns alter pitches, rhythm, metrics, key signature, dynamics--even the basic familiar tune. With a basic knowledge of music theory and common practice period harmony and voice leading, simple arrangements of hymns, pop songs, classical art song, and solo instrumental compositions are easily accomplished.

A composer may play with semiotics by introducing new musical motif into the arrangement that has meaning in culture--such as Mr. Cohen does with his left hand chord cluster "bangs" in *Happy Fugue'n Birthday*.

For more complex arrangements of say, a complete song or instrumental composition that is being arranged for a large ensemble, such as an entire chorus or orchestra, with various levels of voicings and different instrumentations, this becomes a complex procedure. A composer must possess superior knowledge in orchestration, voice leading, ranges and capabilities of instruments and voices, and understand the genres in which s/he has chosen to arrange (for example, a composer who chooses to arrange Handel's Messiah in a contemporary jazz style will need fairly thorough knowledge of both classical Baroque and contemporary jazz stylings in order to secure the composition in the new style in which it is being arranged.)

Arranging for the piano is relatively easy if a composer has the above tools at his disposal, as there is just one keyboard, which can produce an array of musical motif and harmonic colors.

Compositional Tools Used by Abstractionist Arrangers

(represented by Dr. Howe's and Ms. Han's compositions)

A composer chooses a pre-existing, or a new theoretical body of material that may or may not have cultural significance. From that body of theory, the composer then creates a composition. Professor Howe has created his own system of pentachords and arranged them according to inversion and cycle of fifths relationships; Ms. Han has used scales and tetrachords that have pre-existed in Turkish music. (See explanatory pages from Dr. Howe and Ms. Han).

1. PENTACHORDAL ETUDES short Analysis:

Hubert Howe's Pentachordal Etudes are each based on four 5-note chords of his own intervallic groupings. They are NOT the same as the traditional pentachord which is known to both Western and Eastern classical music artists, i.e. chords which form the numerical intervallic grouping of: W, m3, W, W, in terms of the regular diatonic scale intervals.

Howe uses all 12 half-steps of the Western diatonic scale (the same as the chromatic scale from one pitch class to its same pitch class an octave apart. These half-steps are numbered 0-12, with 0 being the starting note and 12 being the last note in the scale. 0 is considered to be middle C. A pentachord named 0, 1,2, 4, 5 (a grouping used by Professor Howe) would be the notes: C, C# (or Db, D, E, F).

Dr. Howe writes:

"There are ten families of pentachords (in my system, not everybody buys into this) in which the elements produce four distinct forms under the operations on inversion, cycle-of-fifths equivalence, and the inversion of cycle-of-fifths equivalence. Chords are classified according to their intervallic structure. Etude #2 is based on the 01245 family, where the forms are 01245, 01345, 01358, and 03578."

Etude #2, which I will play today, is based on the following pentachords devised by Dr. Howe:

Etude #2 PENTACHORDS:

- 1 01245(3) = D#-E-F-G-Ab (The untransposed version of this unit would be: . C-C#-D-E-F--01245(0).)**
- 2 01358(11) = B-C-D-E-G**
- 3 01345(9) = A-Bb-C-Db-D**
- 4 03578(10) = Bb-Db-Eb-F-F#**

Again, the notes are numbered from C, so 0=C, 1=C#/Db, 2=D, ..., 10=A#/Bb, 11=B. The number in parentheses indicates a *transposition* of the chord, in other words, it's numerical jump from "C". Thus, transposition (3) begins on D#, which if you count half steps upward from C, is 3 half steps and so on.

Dr. Howe further explains:

"Each pentachord set is repeated every four measures. Thus, each successive four-measure passage presents the same sequence of pentachords, but in completely different registral and temporal distributions. For example, measures 1, 5, 9, 13, etc. are all based on the chord 01245 (3), which is E-flat, E, F, G and A-flat. The same holds true for measures 2, 6, 10, 14, etc. which are based on 01358 (11), and so forth. After double bars things change, and the subsequent passages may do something different. But the basic idea of the etudes is to show the various contexts and manners in which the same simple chords can be displayed, and how different they all sound."

Additional Properties of the Pentachords:

--Pentachords 1 and 3 are related by inversion and 2 and 4 also by inversion. Thus, form 01345 is the inversion of 01245 and 03578 is the inversion of 01358.

--Pentachord 2 (Form 01358) is the cycle-of-fifths equivalent of Pentachord 1 (01245).

--All the selected forms and transpositions generate all pitch classes, and only the notes F#, Ab, A and B are not repeated.

2. SCENES FROM A STRANGER--please refer to separate sheets for this analysis of Ms. Han's work.

Composer Bios

Tamara Cashour is an award-winning, ASCAP composer who writes for a variety of ensembles, choral and instrumental, and solo voice/instrumental. Her QUEENS SUITE for strings and harp was a featured performance/score at the International Alliance of Women in Music International Conference 2015.

Robert Cohen's (BMI, ASCAP) choral compositions are regularly commissioned and performed nationally and internationally by a wide array of choral groups. He also composes chamber and orchestral music.

Jacob Goodman is a mathematician and a composer. He organized the NY Composers Circle back in 2002.

Jinhee Han is Vice president, founder and composer of AWCANYC, and NYCC composer member.

Hubert Howe, professor emeritus Composition of Queens College, CUNY, is also president of the NYCC, as well as the NYEMF (New York Electronic Music Festival). His compositions have been heard worldwide.

Peter Michael von der Nahmer, New York based composer and sound reacher, has written over 27 works for music theater and dance and over 100 works for concert and film. His German/American/Cuban heritage influences the questions of identity, complexity, and transcendent connection that shape his music. Mr. van der Nahmer's *From Here to There*, which took an Honorable Mention in the New York Philharmonic's *New World Composition Challenge* in May 2017, can be listened on YOU TUBE at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BcMxZM7s1zQ>

