A Conversation with Karel Husa

Kenneth L. Neidig

KAREL HUSA was born in Prague, Czechoslovakia on August 7, 1921. At age 19 he was prevented from pursuing a vocation as an engineer when occupying Nazi forces closed all Czech universities; however, he captured the last opening at the Prague Conservatory, which the Nazis had allowed to remain open. After the war, he received a fellowship to continue his musical training in Paris. By 1948 he was being hailed as a composer and conductor who was "one of the greatest hopes in Czech music;" but his citizenship was revoked in 1949 when he refused to return to Prague after the Communist takeover. He remained in Paris until 1954, when he came to the United States to join the faculty of Cornell University. He became an American citizen in 1959. In February 1990 he visited the country of his birth to conduct *Music for Prague 1968*, which had previously been banned there as a "provocative political statement."

The music of Karel Husa is published by G. Schirmer (Associated Music Publishers) and distributed by Hal Leonard. Rental is handled at 5 Bellvale Road, Chester NY 10918 (914-469-2271).

This and other interesting biographical and analytical musical material on Karel Husa appears in a special brochure of his works available (along with perusal scores and a band catalog) from the G. Schirmer Promotion Department, 225 Park Avenue South, 18th Floor, New York NY 10003 (212-254-2100).

In June 1992 Karel Husa finished a 38-year teaching career at Cornell University (composition/conducting) and will now devote all of his time to composing and guest conducting.

A world-class composer, with numerous commissions from major symphony orchestras, Husa has long been one of the band's best friends. His extensive catalog of works includes several masterworks for band and smaller wind and percussion ensembles.

He is a warm, friendly and accommodating man who has guest-conducted many bands throughout the country. We had our most recent chance to talk for the record just a few days before his 70th birthday, in the summer of 1991, when he was rehearsing the high school symphonic band at Interlochen. I watched him work on *Baroque Overture* by Otmar Macha, and his own composition, *Apotheosis of this Earth*.

He is a tall man with long arms, who uses a very small baton and large body movements to convey the strong emotion in his music; unfortunately, the students were not responding very well that day. They were partly pre-occupied with reading the notes, of course, but also not very well focused, since they had still not "bought" the contemporary sounds and techniques. Still, Karel Husa – ever even-tempered and optimistic – continued to work with them patiently ... and produced a successful concert.

The Interlochen bands prepare and perform a new concert every week throughout the 8-week camp, usually with a different guest conductor. This week's program included four works – two pieces (Williams: *Sea Songs* and Grainger: *Molly on the Shore*) conducted by Michael Kaufman, who had also done preliminary work on the two conducted by Husa.

I asked about the group. Is it comparable to an all-state band in Texas or New York?

Perhaps even better. The students are going by miles every day, and they learn at an incredible speed. We have just nine hours to prepare about an hour of music. My music is difficult, incredibly difficult. I remember that when we premiered my music with Bill Revelli [University of Michigan Band] about 22 years ago, he postponed the performance from January to April because he thought it was too much for them to do. But we will do it. I am confident. It's an experience for the students as well as for me.

As you conduct your music in different places, do you find any consistent problems you have to solve?

Yes, there are certain problems. Students are used to simple meters with generally (not always) a strong first beat; but modern music is different. I write usually in very simple meters, but the rhythmical things are not always on the first beat.

Technically, I find the students incredibly good – I could never have played the music I am writing when I was their age, but they can.

Also (as I said to young students in Czechoslovakia at the Conservatory when I spoke to them in April), the students in Prague have a fear of doing something new. They think because it's new, it's risky. That's the attitude there; while I think that here young people have the attitude, "Let's give it a try." That's what I like. Otherwise, I don't think there is any problem.

Is there anything band directors can do to get ready for those internal rhythmic problems?

Well, I would say it would be playing new things with students, even in high schools, even if one is not sure whether the work is great, even if they do not perform it. I think it might be good if the students are exposed to some new music, just to read it. So if bands could have regular reading sessions of music – hard music, new music, new notations so the students get used to it – that would help.

Thinking as a conductor, what qualities are important to get the job done?

I have to know the score well. If I don't know the score well, the band will never play it well. It's imperative that the conductor know the score perfectly.

How much time do you spend getting ready with a score you don't know?

I sometimes spend 2-3-4 weeks with a score. It depends. For some of the difficult scores, it takes me a month or two. For a new or unfamiliar symphony (25 minutes) it might take 2-3 months to know the score. It's not constant contact. I go back to it, and it becomes more familiar.

Do you have a systematic process?

Yes. First, I have to know what the structure is. Here [shows his markings in a score] this would be a grouping of 3 measures and I mark it in the score, because it helps me to understand; and I conduct it that way, of course. Sometimes I change – here I marked it 3 but changed to 2 – because before knowing the score well, you change your mind. Preparation takes some time. Also I mark cues.

Generally I see it's just regular lead pencil.

But sometimes I add things in red [shows score of Apotheosis, with marks added through the past 20 years].

I notice you do use the score religiously, even with your own music.

Well, yes, especially in rehearsal. As the composer I know the music, but I don't know exactly which instruments start at "3 measures before B." Also, I think that my music is so difficult for the players that it would not be fair for me to come in front and not be sure to cue them exactly. And the moment that I would cue them wrongly, or didn't cue, I wouldn't know how to stop my own machine.

Mozart symphonies, Brahms, some of the classical repertoire that I have learned at school as a young person, I conduct from memory, because I know it and the orchestra knows it, and they know where they could go wrong, so there's no problem. But in things that are tricky, I use the score.

I've over-simplified the work habits of composers in my own thinking – would you consider yourself a "Mozart" or a "Beethoven" type? In other words, Mozart being "work it out in your head and then put it down on paper;" and Beethoven being "try this, try that, go back, re-write."

New York Times

CITY EDITION

Weather: Partly sunny, hot today; fair, quite warm tonight, tomorrow. Temp. range: today 94-75; Thurs. 89-68. Temp.-Hum. Index yesterday 79. Complete U.S. report on Page 78.

—NEW YORK, FRIDAY, AUGUST 23, 1968— 10 CENTS

PRO-MOSCOW CZECHS NAME TRIO TO REPLACE THE DUBCEK REGIME; U.N. IS URGED TO CONDEMN SOVIET

RIVAL UNIT SET UP

Liberals Choose Own Presidium in Secret Party Congress

Texts of Czech statements are printed on Page 16.

By TAD SZULC

PRAGUE, Aug. 22 — Soviet-backed conservative Czechoslovak Communists elected a trio of leaders today to run the party under the protection of the occupation forces of the Warsaw Pact.

At the same time, a clandestine party congress elected a new Presidium on which liberals replaced the breakaway conservatives.

[The congress issued an ultimatum to the occupation forces, according to The Associated Press, to withdraw

FOR ALL TO SEE: Youths waving Czechoslovak flags ride truck in downtown Prague. A Soviet tank is at right rear.

In a page one story The New York Times *of August 23, 1968 reported the strife and agony within Czechoslovakia.*

I think I'm the Beethoven type. I re-write. I'm not sure. I wonder whether this is good. More and more. This Spring, we did *Missa Solemnis* at Syracuse and Cornell, so I studied that piece. It's incredible to me how much Beethoven sort of worked on simple things – simple motifs that he would jot down in his sketch book, like bum, bum-bum. Such simple things – dotted half, quarter, whole note. He starts with a motif that is sort of ordinary, but then he twists it and changes it, shortens it, all these things. It is really rather amazing the way it comes out.

I wonder if we could discuss, briefly, each of your pieces for band, and you could give some sort of thumbnail sketch – some feeling of the emotional value, something you might want to convey to the band conductor about each one. Let's start with "Prague."

MUSIC FOR PRAGUE 1968

19 minutes; composed 1968; premiere 1/31/69, Washington DC, Ithaca College Concert Band (Kenneth Snapp); G. Schirmer (AMP): score & parts for sale.

Prague was somehow, and still is, a manifesto for freedom. I think that if the band directors could read it in rehearsal – even if the students cannot perform it – I think it would give them some new look at what percussion is in a band, how differently one can write and how differently the instruments are used.

I could even say that maybe I did it, in a way, because I really didn't know exactly how to write for band when I wrote the piece. I didn't look into much band music, and I didn't realize that when I wrote the

aria for all the saxophones that it would be the first time, or one of the first times, the saxophones would get such a difficult melodic line – for all of them, including the bass saxophone, which usually plays only one note or two.

I have found out that the students like to play the piece. At the beginning they are reticent, there's no doubt; but when they learn about it they like it – and it helps the percussion players to get a better view of what they can do.

APOTHEOSIS OF THIS EARTH

25 minutes; composed 1970; premiere 4/1/71, Ann Arbor MI, University of Michigan Symphonic Band (composer conducting); G. Schirmer (AMP): score & parts for sale.

That's probably the most difficult piece to bring out, but I have found out that the students get interested in it and then they work and they like it; and it never happened to me after a performance that the students would not have been moved. But at the beginning, they are even more reticent than for the Prague.

Have you found things you can do to remove some of this reticence?

I would say to explain why I have written the piece and what it signifies – because I wanted to introduce new sounds into the band ensemble, you see. I think, and friends tell me, that they *are* new sounds, so just to know the new sounds that maybe helps. It's a difficult piece, but again, the more students play it, the more they are in it.

There is a new edition that I made about two years ago, taking the choral parts from a version I had for chorus and orchestra. We did it at Cornell and it worked pretty well; the conductor there thinks it's better. I don't know. I don't have preferences. The original is for band alone (no chorus).

CONCERTO FOR PERCUSSION AND WIND ENSEMBLE

18 minutes; composed 1971; premiere 2/7/72, Waco TX, Baylor University Symphonic Wind Ensemble (Gene C. Smith, Larry Vanlandingham); G. Schirmer (AMP): score & parts for sale.

I wrote this piece with the idea that the percussion should be at some time brought in front of the band and shown to the public. They don't see it often in the front, just in the back, and they don't even realize how excellent the musicians are. In addition, the instruments are so exciting – marimba, vibraphone, xylophone, glockenspiel and all the other bell-like ringing and chimes which produce beautiful sounds, and then of course the drums. I think it's necessary for these excellent players in the back to get the recognition.

AL FRESCO

12 minutes; composed 1974; premier 4/19/75 Ithaca NY, Ithaca College Concert Band (composer conducting); G. Schirmer (AMP): score & parts for sale.

I would say it is a little simpler piece, a shorter piece. It is not difficult and I don't mind if the conductors sometimes re-do a phrasing of a section that is difficult for saxophones – everything staccato. I believe it was Bob Reynolds who told me that he has done it with some school groups, playing two slurred and two tongued; I don't mind that at all. I think that can be done in every music, where the director can accommodate some of the players. If somebody doesn't have a certain instrument, like bass saxophone (which is usually ad lib), and may have extra tubas, I don't mind that the tuba would play that part. I am not so (how would you put it?) *fussy*, that it has to be exactly that instrument.

Even though so much of your writing is "sound"?

It's true. It would be better to have bass saxophone; but I venture to say that there may be only 15-20 bass saxophones in schools that I know of, so I don't think that the piece should be eliminated because of that. And the piece is only difficult because of some solos at the beginning; but I think if one gives confidence to the players, I think they can play. But I'm probably a very optimistic man.

No, I agree. You have to challenge the kids, and you must have confidence in what they can do. Of course, you can do things to get them ready – Mike told me that when he did Prague with his high school band he rehearsed the percussion separately for quite some time before doing it with everyone.

SMETANA FANFARE

4 minutes; composed 1984; premier 4/3/84 San Diego CA, San Diego State University Wind Ensemble (Charles Yates); G. Schirmer (AMP): score & parts for sale.

MadAminA!

A Chronicle of Musical Catalogues

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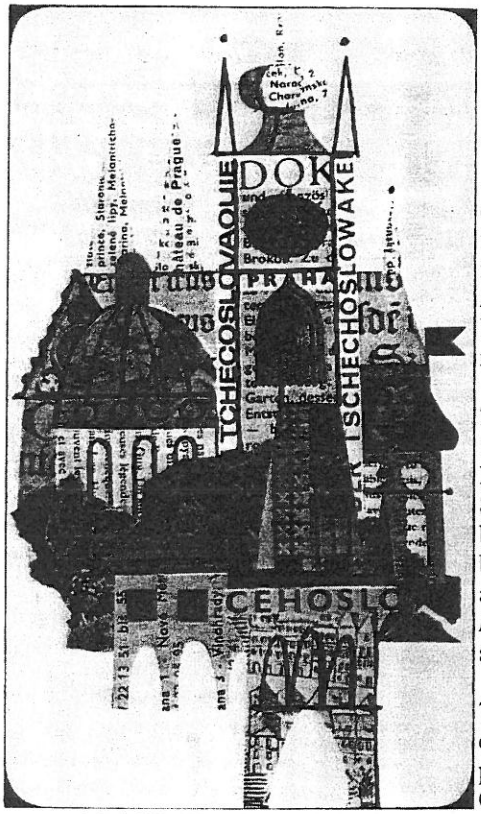


"Music for Prague"

Performed in Prague—At Last

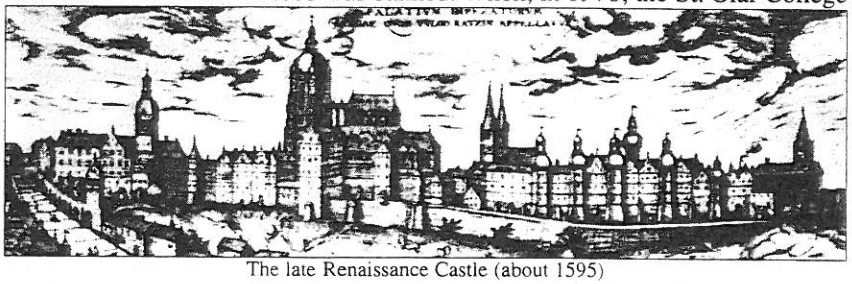
It was a poignant homecoming, marking not only the success and perseverance of an individual artist, but heralding a changing world—changing, this time, in favor of new hope, new freedom, new dignity. On February 10, 1990, Karel Husa returned to his native Czechoslovakia to conduct his *Music for Prague 1968* at a gala concert in Prague's oldest and most beautiful auditorium, Concert House Smetana, to celebrate the newly founded Association of Musical Artists.

Husa, who won the Pulitzer Prize for music in 1969 for his *Third String Quartet*, grew up in Prague where he was born in 1921, went to Paris to continue his studies (with Nadia Boulanger and Arthur Honegger) in 1946, and came to the United States in 1954 to join the faculty of Cornell University. He has been teaching there ever since. His many works include the ballet *The Trojan Women*, two powerful compositions for chorus and orchestra, *An American Te Deum* and *Apotheosis of This Earth*, as well as an imposing catalogue of pieces for orchestra, symphonic band, chamber ensembles, and solo instruments.

By far his most often-performed opus—it has had some 7,000 performances to date—is *Music for Prague 1968*. It was commissioned by the Ithaca College Concert Band and composed during the summer and fall of 1968 for the capital city of Czechoslovakia. Its premiere took place by the commissioning ensemble in Washington, D.C., on January 31, 1969 in a concert for the Music Educators National Conference. A year later, the orchestral version was completed. When the score was published by Associated Music Publishers, the composer expressed his wish that the *Foreword* be printed in its entirety in all concert programs or read to the audience before each performance of the work. It reads, in part:

> Three main ideas bind the composition together. The first and most important is an old Hussite war song from the 15th century, "Ye Warriors of God and His Law," a symbol of resistance and hope for hundreds of years, whenever fate lay heavy on the Czech nation. It has been utilized also by many Czech composers, including Smetana in *My Country*....
>
> The second idea is the sound of bells throughout; Prague, named also the "City of Hundreds of Towers," has used its magnificently sounding church bells as calls of distress as well as of victory.
>
> ...Much symbolism also appears: in addition to the distress calls in the first movement *[Fanfares]*, the unbroken hope of the Hussite song, sound of bells, or the tragedy *[Aria]*, there is also the bird call at the beginning, symbol of the liberty which the City of Prague has seen only for moments during its thousand years of existence.

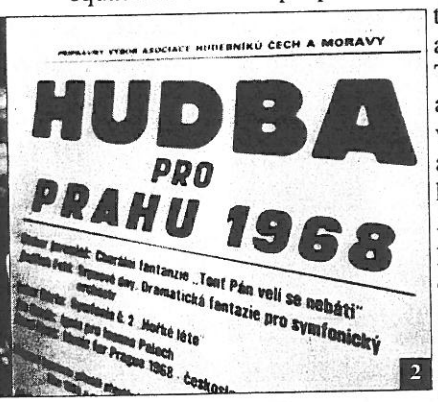
Music for Prague 1968 has been called a tone poem and a musical manifesto. Written on the heels of the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia, it summarily ended Husa's professional existence in his home land. He had never been invited to conduct there in public—he did lead a Prague studio session for a recording of his music—and the piece that had made him world famous was banned. When, in 1970, the St. Olaf College Concert Band toured Europe and played in Prague, they were told to remove the piece from the program just before the performance. And just four years ago (see *MadAminA!*, Spring 1987), *Music for Prague 1968* was nearly



The late Renaissance Castle (about 1595)

involved in an international incident. In June, 1986, there was a competition of European bands held in Vienna. An Austrian wind ensemble had programmed the work. When the Czech wind band arrived and learned of it, they threatened to leave unless the piece—according to them a "provocative political statement"—was withdrawn from the program. The press got hold of the story and brought it to public attention. The Czech group finally stayed and played, but the Austrians placed first in the festival, winning high praise for their performance and for the outstanding composition they had chosen.

With the astonishing developments in Czechoslovakia in the fall of 1989, friends and admirers flooded Husa with expressions of support and good wishes, knowing how deeply he felt his cultural heritage. National Public Radio's "Morning Edition" for December 11 contained a lively segment—interspersed with fragments from his dramatically charged tone poem—in which the composer expressed to producer Dean Olsher his hope that some day *Music for Prague 1968* might even be heard in Prague. That day was closer than he dared dream. Just a little over a month later, the call came. The State Symphony Orchestra (Filharmonie Bohuslava Martinu Zlín) would give a concert on February 13 in Prague under the direction of its permanent conductor, Milos Alexander Machek, in honor of the Association of Musical Artists. It was to be a grand affair and playwright-president Vaclav Havel was expected to attend. (As it turned out, he could not be there.) The program would contain only works by native Czech composers Otakar Jeremiás, Jindrich Feld, Lubor Bárta, and Jan Novák. Would Husa come over—as ardently urged by Husa's friend, the Czech composer Jan Hanus—to conduct the concert's final selection, his own *Music for Prague, 1968*?



1) On St. Wenceslas Square 2) Concert poster
3) In conversation with composer Jan Hanus

"Terrific, just incredible," Husa said on his return from Czechoslovakia. "They applauded wildly for five or six minutes and they were screaming 'Bravo.' At one point I made a 'V' for victory sign with both my hands, and they understood because the applause became even more intense. Czechs are usually much more reserved and never give standing ovations. It was so touching." Several hundred people from the audience waited patiently to shake Husa's hand and extend their warm greetings after the performance. The only disappointment of the event was that President Havel could not attend as planned. (Husa said that Havel had to be in Bohemia to give a talk on ecology, a subject near and dear to his own heart, as evidenced in his striking composition *Apotheosis of this Earth.*) In his stead, however, were high government officials, and squadrons of media people covered the concert for the press, radio, and television. The performance was televised on February 18 and also heard on radio. A 30-minute profile *(Medalion)* of Husa was also produced for tv containing Husa's sentimental walk through the city with views of the famous Hradcany Castle on the hill above Prague, and snippets of an interview given in Smetana Hall before the concert.

Czech composer Petr Eben, who has become president of the Prague Spring Festival, has invited Husa to return next year to conduct his music, as part of Husa's 70th-birthday festivities. Husa has already accepted the invitation of the Janácek Festival in Brnö to conduct one of his own works in addition to Dvorak and the obligatory Janácek *Sinfonietta* on October 13, 1991 and also expects to be making some more recordings in Czechoslovakia.

[Meanwhile, Lynn Harrell, who gave the world premiere of Husa's *Cello Concerto* at the University of Southern California, has given the European premiere in Zurich with the Tonhalle Orchester. And the *Concerto for Trumpet and Wind Orchestra* has become the work selected by the International Jury of the World Music Days 1990 for performance in Oslo in September under Husa's direction. Ole Edvard Antonsen will be the soloist.]

Reminscing on the composition of *Music for Prague 1968*, Husa said, "I finished the piece with hope and the Hussite war song. I am happy that I did it because I always thought the war song and freedom would prevail."

Information about Karel Husa may be obtained from Music Associates of America, 224 King St., Englewood, NJ 07631, Tel.: 201/569-2898, FAX: 201/569-7023.

Karel Husa returns to the Cornell stage to celebrate his 75th birthday

By Darryl Geddes

Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Karel Husa returns to the Cornell concert stage this Saturday for the first time since his retirement from Cornell in 1992. Husa will be a guest conductor at a concert celebrating his 75th birthday.

The all-Husa program, to be performed by the Cornell Contemporary Directions Ensemble and the Cornell University Chamber Winds, under the direction of Professor Mark Scatterday, features *Divertimento for Brass and Percussion* (1970), *Four Little Pieces for String Orchestra* (1955), *Al Fresco for Wind Ensemble* (1975) and *Fantasies for Chamber Orchestra* (1957). The free performance begins at 8:15 p.m. in Barnes Hall.

Husa's 75th birthday has taken almost six months to celebrate. In the United States, Husa has been an invited guest at performances of his work in several states. In Europe, Husa's 75th has been marked by all-Husa programs on radio networks in the Czech Republic, Croatia and Germany.

Despite retiring from the faculty four years ago, Husa remains extremely active in music circles. He adds to his frequent-flyer miles regularly, attending performances of his work across the United States and Europe as an invited guest or as a guest conductor. He continues to get requests for commissions from symphony orchestras and bands, and there are some indications that a commission for an opera – the one musical commission that has eluded Husa – may be forthcoming from his homeland, the Czech Republic.

"It is something I have always wanted to do," Husa said about the opportunity to compose an opera.

He will travel to Northwestern University in November to conduct the world premiere of *Le Couleurs Fauves*, a piece he wrote for a fellow conductor. His inspirations for the piece are the painters Matisse and Van Gogh. "I am moved by color, by art work and by poetry, especially the work of several Czech poets, like Karel Capek, and American poet Walt Whitman."

But what has inspired Husa the most over his 50-plus years of writing music is nature.

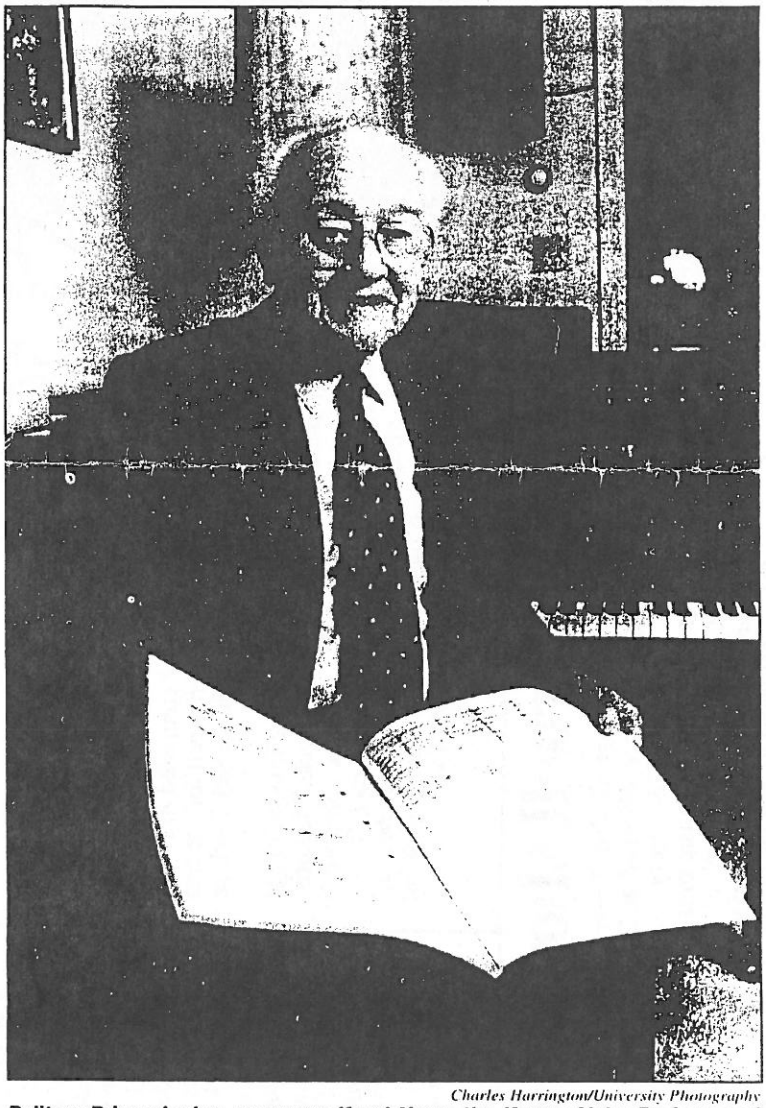
"I am a believer in nature and its greatness," he said.

Evidence of Husa's belief in nature's power as well as its fragility is his acclaimed *Apotheosis of the Earth*, which he calls his "manifest against pollution and destruction."

Two spacious picture windows make up two walls of Husa's study, where one finds his grand piano and his desk, upon which he does most of his writing. His wooded lot is filled with oaks and white birches, which are painted with autumnal brilliance.

"I love to look out and see the leaves, see nature," he said, noting that a family of deer eats breakfast regularly in his backyard.

A condominium on Florida's east coast, where Husa escapes Ithaca's winters, provides the composer with another beloved view: the ocean.



Charles Harrington/University Photography

Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Karel Husa, the Kappa Alpha Professor of Music Emeritus, poses at his home holding what he considers to be his greatest music composition, *Concerto for Orchestra*.

"I am always amazed that no matter when you see the ocean, it is never the same," he said. "Some days it's blue, others white and gray. It is a very powerful inspiration."

For many years, a Cayuga Lake cottage was where Husa wrote most of his music, including his most widely performed piece, *Music for Prague 1968*. "Freedom is what inspired me to write," he said. Husa put pen to paper soon after the Soviet Union's invasion of Czechoslovakia. The piece was banned by the Communist government and was never heard in that country until the 1989 election of Vaclav Havel and the first non-Communist government in 40 years.

Husa has since returned to his homeland to numerous celebrations, in which he served as a guest conductor with the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra for performances of *Music for Prague 1968*.

But it was Husa's *String Quartet No. 3*, the piece that won him the Pulitzer Prize in music in 1969, that brought him immediate acclaim. "That's when publishers began calling me all the time," he said.

Don't expect to find the Pulitzer on view in the Husa home, however. All of his honors, including the Czech Republic's State Medal Award of Merit, First Class, presented by Havel in 1995; the 1993 Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition; and his certificate of membership in the American Academy of Arts and Letters are on a wall in Husa's personal library, away from where he and his wife entertain guests.

But the professional achievement that may be the most important to Husa is his *Concerto for Orchestra*, which was commissioned by the New York Philharmonic and performed for the first time in 1986 under the baton of Zubin Mehta.

'I don't think I aged while I was teaching. I thought I was the same age the whole time, and it was simply the students who were getting younger and younger. They always kept me in good spirits, and I am very grateful for that.'

– Karel Husa, the Kappa Alpha Professor of Music Emeritus

"It was such a thrill and an achievement for me to be able to write this piece for such an accomplished organization," he said.

The piece provided an outlet for Husa's emotions. "At the time I was writing the concerto, my father died. He was 91," Husa said. "The fact that I was not allowed to go to the funeral made his death all the more difficult. I titled one of the movements 'In Memoriam,' which spoke not only to my personal loss, but to loss felt by everyone at war."

Husa recalls his Cornell days fondly. He said his 36-year association with the university as a faculty member kept him "ageless," and he credits the association with his continued good health and vitality.

"I don't think I aged while I was teaching," he said. "I thought I was the same age the whole time, and it was simply the students who were getting younger and younger. They always kept me in good spirits, and I am very grateful for that." Husa's work with students continues today as he is frequently invited back to the classroom by the music department.

"When students play his music, which we often do here at Cornell," said Scatterday, "they become quite interested in meeting the man and finding out more about him.

"I think Karel Husa represents what's really best about Cornell, and that's the opportunity for students of every class to meet and learn from a world-class artist," he added.

It would be unfair to talk about Husa without noting that with all his honors from the music elite, it is his family that he continues to consider his greatest success.

A grandfather nine times, Husa on this fall afternoon is playing a role that comes to all grandparents: He is baby-sitting his three grandsons, who are home from school on holiday as their mother, a local physician, tends to her patients.

"These are my wonderful grandchildren," beams Husa, who without any prompting offers a litany of *their* endeavors and successes.

Council for the Arts awards 27 grants to students and staff members

Twenty-four Cornell students and three Cornell staff members have been awarded grants from the Cornell Council for the Arts (CCA). The grants are used to support

sented "Family Heirlooms – an installation of souvenirs, collage and artist books"; and Mary Bianchi, in an exhibit at Willard Straight Art Gallery, is present-

Cox, Yasmin Hernandez, Amelia Bookstein and Sam Godin, junior Eniko Hangay, and master's degree candi-

dates Sara Sherwin, Jeffrey Whittle, Sabrina Raaf,

CHARLES HARRINGTON/Special to The Journal

Concert honors composer Husa

PROFESSOR Mark Scatterday, director of wind ensembles at Cornell, has planned a special concert in celebration of the 75th birthday of professor emeritus and Pulitzer prize-winning composer, Karel Husa. This free concert will be presented at 8:15 p.m. Saturday in Barnes Hall.

The program opens with "Divertimento for Brass and Percussion" (1958) scored for three trumpets, four horns, three trombones, tuba and percussion. It is actually a transcription of four pieces from Husa's "Eight Czech Duos" for four-hand piano composed in 1955.

The "Four Little Pieces" were composed in Ithaca during the summer of 1955 and performed for the first time at the Youth Music Festival at Fursteneck Castle in Germany in 1957.

"Al Fresco" was commissioned by the Ithaca College Concert Band as the first in the Walter Beeler Memorial Commission Series. The title reflects the composer's admiration for the art of painting, especially murals.

The concert closes with "Fantasies for Orchestra," which was commissioned by the Friends of Music at Cornell. For more information, call 255-4760.

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CSMA event samples chamber music classes

THE Community School of Music and Arts inaugurates the second season of chamber music classes with a "sampler" concert at 4 p.m. Sunday at the Whiton House Gallery from among the pieces CSMA Chamber Music co-celebrants have worked on for the eight-week session. The concert will present a sampling of works studied in a number of different chamber configurations.

Expect works by Bach, Bruch, Schumann, Telemann, J.C. Bach and Hayden, as well as pieces by Bartok, Vaughn Williams, Handel and Husa for string ensemble.

CSMA's Chamber Music Ensemble makes it possible for adult amateur musicians to meet together to enjoy performing the vast repertoire of chamber music, written by all the major composers from Bach to the present.

The courses are coached by Dr. Robert King who has spent a lifetime teaching and playing chamber music. The Community School of Music and Arts encourages all who have had at least several years of instruction and who enjoy playing music to audition for the Chamber Music Ensemble. String players are especially welcome. For more information contact CSMA at 272-1474.

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Cornell showcases its music ensembles

AS part of the Trustee/Council Weekend at Cornell University, the Depart-ment of Music presents "Cornell Makes Music" at 8:30 p.m. today in Statler Auditorium.

Designed to give the listener a taste of what the department offers in music performance, the program features pre-concert music by the Cornell Gamelan Ensemble and concert performances by the brass ensemble from the Cornell Wind Symphony led by Mark Scatterday, the Cornell Chamber Orchestra conducted from the harpsichord by John Hsu with Beth Taylor '00 as oboe soloist, the Cornell University Glee Club and Hangovers directed by Scott Tucker, and the Cornell University Lab Ensemble (jazz) led by Karlton Hester.

Individual performances will be given by doctoral candidate Brian Brooks on violin; pianist Ken Chan '97; vocal soloists Lea Friedman '97 and Brian Chu '97 assisted by pianists Blaise Bryski (D.M.A. candidate) and Rebecca Schaefer '00; and faculty jazz pianists Edward Murray and David Borden.

The music selections to be performed are as varied as the ensembles and soloists featured: from the works of Thomas Tallis and J.S. Bach to Brahms to the "Divertimento for Brass Percussion" composed by Professor Emeritus Karel Husa, to standard favorites by Cole Porter, Dizzy Gillespie and Duke Ellington and even a tune by Paul McCartney.

While this concert is free, it is a ticketed event.

To obtain tickets prior to the performance, contact Loralyn Light, events manager at 255-4760; otherwise, remaining tickets will be available at the door.

❑

Professor to Conduct Manifesto in Prague

Continued from Page 1

in the piece because "birds are portrayed as champions of freedom." Husa also said he used bells to evoke "a magic sound of eternity." He said that his piece must be played by a large symphony with an extended percussion section.

The final message of the piece is one of "unbroken hope," Husa said, adding that he wanted to fight the "tragic moment" of the Soviet invasion by trying to convince people that "if you believe, things will be better again." He incorporated the first four bars of a 15th-century Hussite war chorale, "Ye Warriors of God and His Law," in an effort to convey this sentiment.

Husa said he never expected to be able to conduct his piece in Czechoslovakia. Although Voice of America and Radio Free Europe have broadcast the piece to Eastern Europe, the government forbid its performance in the country until now, he said.

Letters and Gifts

He said he continually receives letters and gifts from Czechoslovakians who have heard these broadcasts and feel compelled to contact him.

After leaving Czechoslovakia, Husa traveled to France and stayed there from 1949 to 1954 under the protection of the French government.

In 1954, Elliott Galkin, who was a graduate student at Cornell, brought Husa to the attention of the music department, which needed someone to teach composition for a three year time commitment.

"From three years, it has become thirty-five," Husa joked.

Husa said he felt like the United States was a "family country" when he came to Ithaca, because he had cousins in this country who he had corresponded with before the war.

The United States and France were greatly admired by the Czech people, he said.

He said his life in the United States has helped his music. "When you live in a different country, you absorb things."

'Terrific Life'

Husa said he was the only European in the music department when he arrived at Cornell. "I thought it was a terrific life when I came," he said, adding that he was overwhelmed by the financial resources of the university, and by all the record collections, scores and facilities which were previously unavailable to him.

"We have to realize we live in a very happy country with many resources," he said. In Europe, they can't afford such resources, he explained.

Husa said he is planning another visit in the fall to conduct concerts which will be televised in Prague.

He is looking forward to meeting the new Czechoslovakian president, he said, although he might be "speechless to a certain degree."

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Professor to Conduct Manifesto in Prague

By ADRIENNE COHEN

A special concert in Czechoslovakia's capital on February 13 will feature the first performance in that country of Prof. Karel Husa's musical "manifesto" which reflects the events of the1968 Soviet invasion.

The concert is a tribute to Czechoslovakia's democracy movement led by the country's interim president, Vaclav Havel. Husa's piece, "Music for Prague 1968," is a 20-minute, four-movement performance.

The manifesto is a piece of art which carries political meaning, Husa said. It is the first in a trilogy which he composed since coming to Ithaca in 1954.

Husa, a professor of music at Cornell, said he took advantage of his freedom in the United States to write his protest piece. "I thought I was the only one outside who could afford to write because I couldn't be caught."

Husa left Czechoslovakia as a student in 1946. When the Soviet regime took over in 1948, he decided not to return to his homeland and consequently lost his citizenship.

—Sun Photo by Neva Flaherty
KAREL HUSA
On to Prague

Freedom

Husa said a major theme in the work is that of freedom, which is symbolized throughout the piece in a variety of ways. "All music uses symbols," he explained.

He incorporated bird calls

Continued on Page 8

Soviet Central Committee Criticizes Gorbachev Plan

Prof Says Gorbachev's Plans Will Gain Approval of Party

By DAVIDSON GOLDIN

Soviet Communist Party leaders surprised observers when they decided yesterday to add a third day to their meeting to discuss party leader and Soviet president Mikhail S. Gorbachev's radical proposals to revamp the nation's political system.

But at least one expert in Soviet affairs does not see the meeting's extension as a sign that Gorbachev's efforts will fail.

Prof. Myron Rush, government, said last night in an interview that he thinks Gorbachev's plans to remove the Communist Party's monopoly on power will succeed.

He said serious opposition to Gorbachev's policy initiatives is inevitable, as these changes would be "unbending important principles of Marxism and Leninism."

But Rush, a specialist on Soviet internal affairs who has served as a consultant to the State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency, said that as the Communist Party weakens "there's a very big question as to whether the Soviet Union will be able to preserve itself."

He also anticipated a serious setback to Gorbachev's ability to reach arms control agreements with the United States.

Continued on Page 12

Moscow (AP) — Communist Party leaders added an unexpected third day to their pivotal meeting yesterday and sent Mikhail S. Gorbachev back to the drawing board to fill in holes in his blueprint for ending the party's monopoly on power.

The extension of the party session, which was supposed to end yesterday, was a clear sign

See Related Story, Page 9

of the controversy generated by Gorbachev's proposals to revamp the country's political structure.

It sharply contrasted with previous sessions, when the Central Committee automatically approved policies that had been worked out at higher levels.

Central Committee sources said most speakers agreed with

Continued on Page 12

Baker Says Reunification Proposal Should Include NATO Provision

Prague (AP) — Secretary of State James A. Baker III

KAREL HUSA'S 'MUSIC FOR PRAGUE 1968'

An Ode to Liberty Finds Its Home

By Tim Page

KAREL HUSA'S "Music for Prague 1968" is a stirring, powerful tone poem that has been performed some 7,000 times throughout the world in the past 20 years. But it has never been played in Prague; indeed, the score was banned almost immediately by the Czech government.

Tomorrow night, however, the State Symphony Orchestra of Czechoslovakia will play the Czech premiere of "Music for Prague 1968" in the city's oldest and most historic auditorium, the Concert Hall Smetana, under Husa's direction. And Vaclav Havel — until recently Czechoslovakia's most celebrated dissident playwright, now president of the republic — will be on hand to welcome both the score and its composer home to Prague.

Husa, who left Prague in 1946, composed "Music for Prague" in the summer and fall of 1968, after the Dubcek government and its ideal of "Socialism with a Human Face" were crushed by Soviet tanks. He provided a written foreword, which he has asked to have printed in its entirety in all concert programs or read to the audience before each performance of the work. "Three main ideas bind the composition together," he wrote. "The first and most important is an old Hussite war song from the 15th Century, 'Ye Warriors of God and His Law,' a symbol of resistance and hope for hundreds of years.

"The second idea is the sound of bells throughout; Prague, named also the 'City of Hundreds of Towers,' has used its magnificently sounding church bells as calls of distress as well as victory," the foreword continues. "There is also the bird call at the beginning, symbol of the liberty which the City of Prague has seen only for moments during its thousand years of existence."

Husa was awarded the 1969 Pulitzer Prize for his Third String Quartet. Since 1954, he has been a professor of music at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y. "Like everybody else, I watched amazed while Eastern Europe won its freedom," he said in an interview last week. "I never believed that a regime so brutal and dictatorial could last so long and I was very depressed by its persistence. But then the government just collapsed, without much noise. It was like watching a big building fall down in a silent film — lots of smoke and turmoil and things falling over but very little sound."

A friend and fellow composer, Jan Hanus,

Please see HUSA on Page 11

Karel Husa's tone poem will premiere in Prague tomorrow night, under his direction.

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Ode to Liberty

HUSA from Page 3

notified Husa late last year of the impending Czech premiere of "Music for Prague." "When I said that I would come to Prague for the premiere, Jan insisted that I should conduct. Of course I accepted." The Concert Hall Smetana was the site of Husa's first public appearance when he conducted the Symphony No. 22 by Nicolas Miaskovsky in 1946.

"Jan wrote to me during the revolution," Husa said. "He said 'I don't sleep; I don't eat; I don't compose; I only fight.' " Tomorrow's concert, devoted entirely to music by native Czech composers, is being presented by the newly founded Association of Musical Artists.

Husa has not visited Czechoslovakia since 1975, when he paid a brief visit to attend the funeral of his sister. "I never saw my mother again after I left in 1946. She died in 1955 and my family only sent me the announcement two weeks later because they were afraid I'd try to get into Prague and that I would be arrested. When my father died in 1982, they wouldn't give me a visa."

"But I can't think of these things when I conduct," he said. "I have to just conduct. If I thought about all that has happened to me and to my country since 1946, I'm afraid it would be rather too moving." / ■

from THE COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY BAND
compiled by David Whitwell and Acton Ostling Jr.
Edited by Duke Johns
M.E.N.C 1977

Music for Prague 1968

Karel Husa/1971

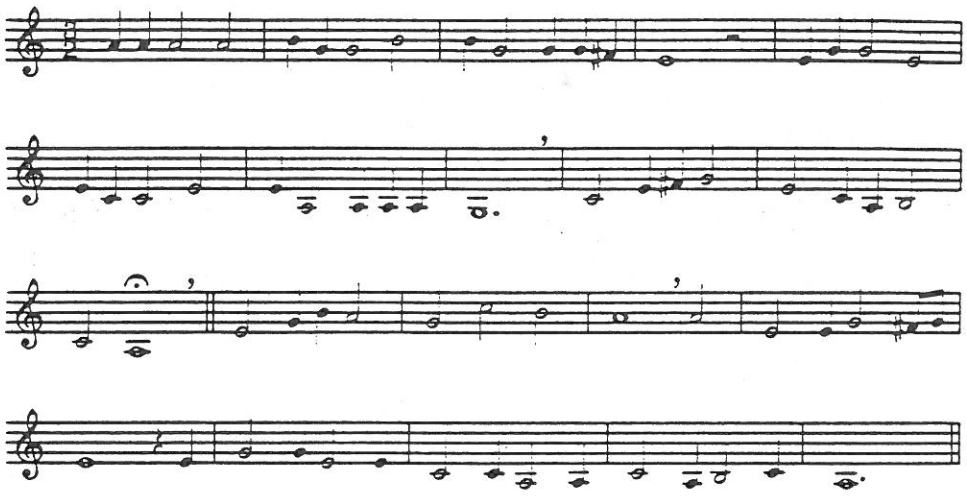
It was late August 1968 when I decided to write a composition dedicated to the city in which I was born. I thought about writing for Prague for some time because the longer I am away from the city (I left Czechoslovakia in 1946), the more I remember the beauty of it. In my idealization, I see Prague as more beautiful, perhaps, than it really is.

During those tragic and dark moments for Czechoslovakia in August 1968, I suddenly felt the necessity to write this piece so long meditated. My friend and colleague Kenneth Snapp, then director of bands at Ithaca College, had mentioned to me the possibility of commissioning a work for his band to play at the MENC Convention in Washington in January 1969. I was sure the music I would write for Prague would be scored for concert band, a medium I have admired for a long time. The combination of wind and brass instruments with percussion fascinated me and the unexplored possibilities of new sounds and combinations of instruments attracted me. I am not speaking against the orchestra; it is a medium I have written much for and participate in as both conductor and violinist. However, so much great music has been written for orchestra and strings that it is difficult to produce new works in which orchestral

musicians would be interested. I had already written one piece for concert band in 1967—a *Concerto for Saxophone and Wind Ensemble*.

As I started to compose, the old Hussite religious song "Ye Warriors of God and His Law" came to my mind. There are several notations of this song; the one I remembered and found in my Czech song book is as follows:

Kdož jste boží bojovníci ("Ye Warriors of God")



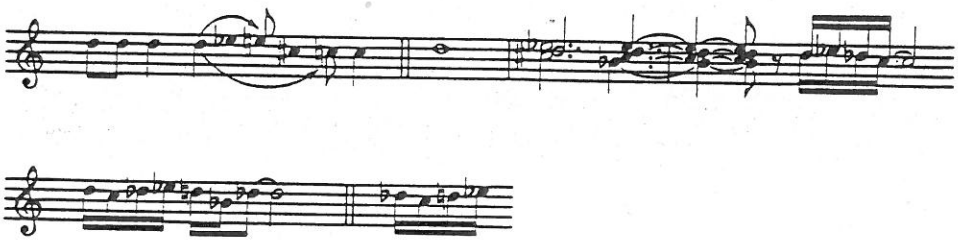
I used only the first four measures (or less). For instance, in the introduction, the timpani constantly develops the first and second measures. E is flatted and C sharped in order to preserve the tension of ascending and descending movements. The following fast fanfare in trumpets (at letter C) also evolves for the song. And of course it is used in many forms: diminution (first movement, two measures before G), augmentation (at T in the last movement), or close to the original speed (last movement, nine measures after M). Although *Music for Prague 1968* is not written in any tonality, the song's use at the beginning and end of the work gives it a strong "center note," which is D, even if the last unison at the end is on E. I have mentioned in the preface a few examples of symbolism. An-

other can be the ending of the work on the E, which is the highest note in the chorale. This note, together with the A (two measures before V) that I put one octave higher in the trumpets although the line of the song descends, is a gesture of defiance and hope.

Another unifying thread in the work is a chorale-like motif of three notes, always harmonized. It appears at the beginning in flutes, clarinets, and horns (measures 3-4), reappears at A and seven measures after A in clarinets, and at B in horns, trombones, and tubas. Later, in the aria at K and six after K, it shows up in the brass instruments. It appears again in the last movement, nine after Q (in baritones, tubas, contrabassoon, and string bass for the first two chords and in horns for the third), six before R, and at R itself in its strongest form ever, underlying the climax of the work.

Some passages, such as measures 3-9 after E in the first movement and a related passage in the fourth movement around L, are combinations of both the song and the chorale motif.

Shorter and fast figures throughout the whole work also evolve from the song:

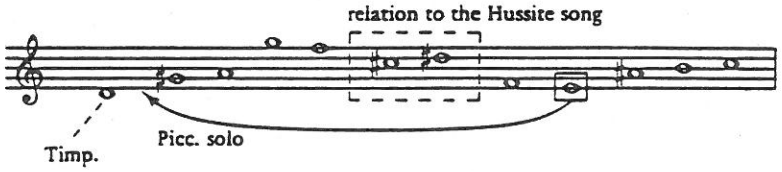


These figures appear frequently: seven measures after C in trumpets, one measure after D in woodwinds, at E in saxophones, and two measures after in marimba. They also occur in the second movement three measures before and four measures after K in the woodwinds, in the interlude at O and after in the vibraphone, and again in the fourth movement.

In the first movement, six measures after E, this figure flashes from one instrument to another, first in trumpets, later with added saxophones, and even later with all woodwinds and other brass. It is necessary for the trumpets to play with bells up so that the dif-

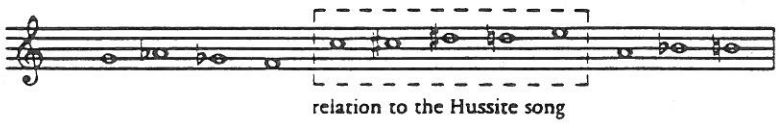
ferent sounds of mutes are heard over the ensemble. In the first movement the baritone saxophone melody one measure after B should emerge from the other sound more and more strongly until it dominates, two measures before C. I have added here the bass saxophone and contrabass clarinet, but as these are not always available, the baritone saxophone in this case has to play as loud as possible and then go back just before C into piano.

Other material used in the construction are several rows of twelve tones. They are treated very freely, repeating many notes, sometimes using the twelve notes not in order, not avoiding occasional octaves, and so on. For instance, in the beginning of the introduction, the original sketch of the row was:



However, in the piccolo the E is used sooner than the G-sharp, and also the Hussite song is used independently from the row in the timpani part. The aria, for instance, has another row:

Aria Row



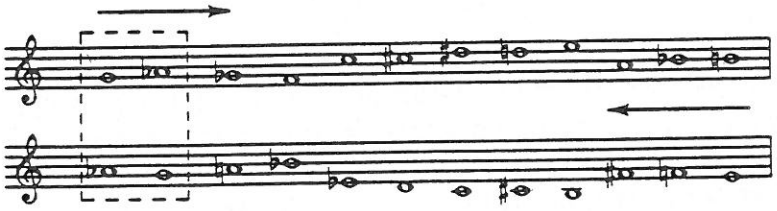
It spreads forward and then backward as "pedal" throughout the piece. The G starts in tubas, followed by A-flat in measure 3; baritones bring out G-flat and three measures later the F comes from tubas; C is played by the second and third trombones five measures before I, and three before I the baritones bring out D-flat. At I the horns play E-flat, followed by a D in the tubas and later E by the trombones. Even later A will sound in the baritones and B in the horns.

Now, as I go backwards in the row, I have decided to eliminate the B-flat in the brass (but it will sound in the vibraphone and ma-

rimba at J simultaneously with the B-natural). The B-flat in brass instruments has been reserved for the climaxing section, measure 4 after K, in trombones, tubas, string bass, bassoons, and contrabassoon, and later also in baritones. Then we go backwards in the row: four measures before L, tubas, string bass, and trombones bring in the A; E, D-sharp, and C-sharp are part of the harmony before and after (at L in oboes and first and second trumpet, for instance); D is played at L by all horns, which also play the following note of the row, the C six measures after L; two measures later the F appears in oboes, English horn, and third clarinet; the same instruments, together with all clarinets, will play F-sharp at M.

In the four measures before M, the A-flat will start to sound in flutes, piccolo, and E-flat clarinet. These instruments will play the last note, G; at the end they will be joined by vibraphone and marimba. The row also is used at the beginning of the aria in the vibraphone and marimba; the first tone, G, being in tubas, the vibraphone and marimba play tones two to twelve and start again. Tubas come with their second tone (A-flat), and marimba and vibraphone continue with tones three to twelve and one, two; baritones follow with tone three (G-flat), and so forth.

On the other hand, the saxophones with all clarinets (except the small E-flat) finish with playing note E. This is the same note that the aria started on and derives from the retrograde inversion of the same row started by tubas at the beginning of the aria. It is, in addition, transposed:



I already have mentioned that diminutions of the song are included before and after K, mostly in the woodwinds. There is another important figure that repeats itself in the free middle part of

the aria; it is the major third and minor second intervals that start the first movement:

It appears three and five measures after K in the low instruments (brass and woodwinds) and seven after K in saxophones, trombones, horns, and bass clarinet. The role of the percussion instruments is to express anguish or obsession. The title of aria might be a little surprising; it is, of course, not an aria in an operatic sense. I have given it to the saxophones purposely; they have the tremendous ability to sing, sound strong and loud, and yet remain expressive. Their vibrating quality may be close to what we call vox humana on the organ. And this is what this melodic line is about: the anguish, fear, and desolation in awaiting what will come next.

The "next" is prolonged by the interlude: a quiet night, but the sort of quietness before an explosion or storm. I have chosen the metallic percussion instruments to give an impression of bell sounds, and the snare drum to symbolize the occupant. From the point of construction, the interlude takes considerable time: the pitches as well as the rhythm and the dynamics are serialized from the last note in N until the first note in P. I made a few adjustments, but otherwise the structure is rather strict.

The letter O divides the part with cymbals, triangles, and tam-tam (percussion 1, 2, and 3) in half; from the last antique cymbal note the score reads exactly in retrograde inversion backwards to letter O; this is strict mirror rewriting. The only difference is the note before last on antique cymbal (percussion 2), which was added in order to resolve the trill and add one sound I felt was necessary. The vibraphone line has been added later and has an independent, nonrepeating, and nonretrograde line.

Percussion instruments are spread as much as possible around the ensemble for the necessary space effect. If all percussion is put into a small area, the sounds come from one direction and are much too close. I also divided the antique cymbals, triangles, cymbals,

and tam-tams among the players rather than give each player the same kind of instrument. The idea was to have these instruments (as well as chimes, vibraphone, and marimba) sound like bells of Prague coming from the city as well as from surrounding hills. I have used the E and B antique cymbals because many orchestras own them for Debussy's *Afternoon of a Faun*. The C has been chosen to match the E and B.

The toccata in the fourth movement is rather straightforward, with contrasting passages: the first in the clarinet solo at A and later in all B♭ clarinets; another in trumpets at C; and still another, a variant of the latter that now sounds more lyrical in clarinets and saxophones at F. All of the toccata is difficult rhythmically; the accents and the rests are placed in a rather intricate way. It may very well remind one of Czech folk dance music. At the end of the toccata at the letter S, my idea of the entrance of the first flute was to wait a long time so that the preceding D of the chime nearly disappears. Then the flutist will try to start as softly as possible without an accent, matching the disappearing sound of the chime in a way to bring it back to us; all instruments should later enter the same way, with no attack on the start but rather sneaking into the existing sound and then extending it by crescendos and decrescendos. Some people have wondered about this passage at S. Why this pianissimo while the timpani is pounding some of the heaviest notes? The symbol was more and more people from afar joining a warrior on the drum and uniting in the song.

The aleatory passage at the end, letter V, as well as before H in the first movement, is to be played fortissimo. The individual players should choose those notes that they play well and that sound strong. Also at letter V there should be two chimes players, each one with two hammers. The sound is much more powerful than with only one, even a strong player.

In regard to baritone mutes, they have been written in as *ad libitum*. Not too many bands have such mutes; however, they are very effective and should be used if possible. There is one passage not marked muted, but the baritones should play with mutes in the beginning introduction, measures 2-6 after B. At letter C they should take off the mutes for the rest of the first movement.

Although we proofread the score and parts several times before publication, there are a few mistakes that escaped us. The most important is the metronome marking of the second movement aria. It should read that a quarter—not an eighth—note equals approximately 60-66.

In the introduction, all flutes should play two measures before B (indication tutti missing there). In the interlude, the indication "not necessarily in tempo" extends to the fourth beat two measures before P. The vibraphonist should be together and in tempo with the conductor on this fourth beat A, as well as on the following ones.

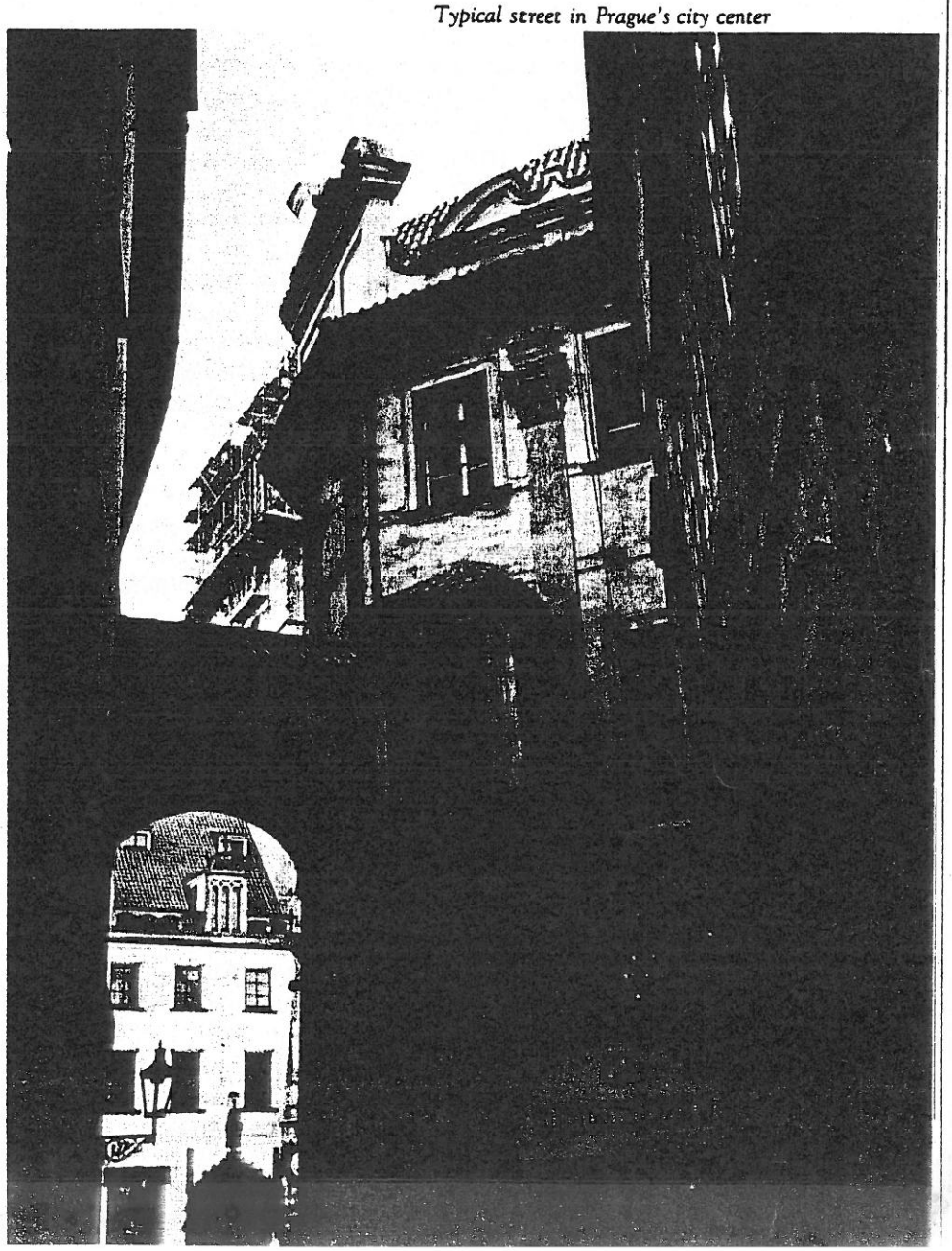
Karel Husa's *Music for Prague 1968*: An Interpretive Analysis

BY BYRON ADAMS

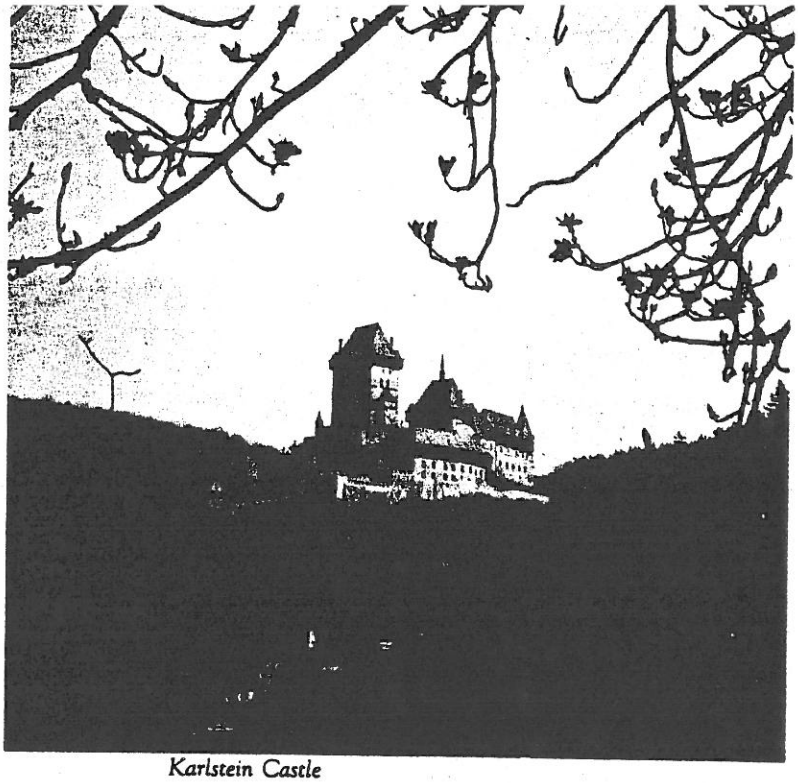
Karel Husa was galvanized by the invasion of his native Czechoslovakia by Soviet troops in August of 1968, particularly the entry of the invading army into Prague, the city of his birth, where several members of his immediate family still lived. After a sleepless night monitoring radio broadcasts for news of the situation, Husa began sketches for a composition. A recent commission from the Ithaca College Concert Band gave the impetus for these initial ideas. In the short space of seven weeks, working at a high pitch of excitement and inspiration, Husa composed *Music for Prague 1968* with the score completed in October.

Byron Adams is Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of California, Riverside. He holds degrees from Jacksonville University, the University of Southern California, and Cornell University, where he received his doctoral degree studying composition with Karel Husa. One of Adams's own compositions was performed at the 26th Warsaw Autumn International Festival of Contemporary Music.

Typical street in Prague's city center



Photos courtesy Lisa Anne Pondelicek

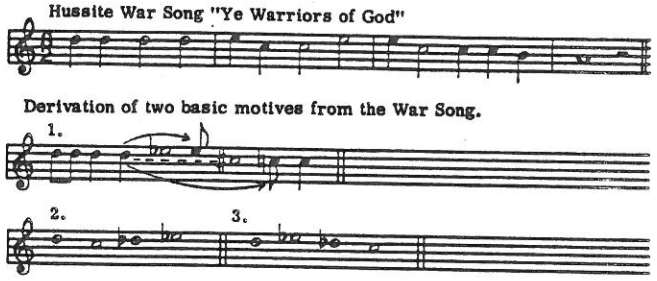


Karlstein Castle

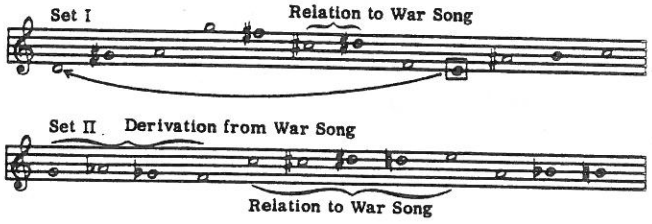
Music for Prague 1968 was first heard in a semi-private performance at Ithaca College by the Ithaca College Concert Band conducted by Kenneth Snapp on December 13, 1968. The same conductor and ensemble gave the official public premiere on January 31, 1969 at an M.E.N.C. convention in Washington, D.C. Husa subsequently prepared a version of *Music for Prague 1968* for standard orchestra, which was first performed on January 31, 1970 with the composer conducting the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra. Since its premiere the work has received over 7,000 performances around the world. Among the distinguished interpreters of the score are Frederick Fennell, Erich Leinsdorf, William D. Revelli, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, and John P. Paynter. While reviewing this analysis, readers should follow the concert band score of *Music for Prague 1968*, using the 1986 edition published by Associated Music Publishers.

Husa had long planned to write a piece to celebrate the beauty of his native city, but after the events of 1968, the emphasis necessarily became Prague's tragic history. The central musical idea of *Music for Prague 1968* is the first four bars of the 15th-century Hussite war song "Kdož jste boží bojovníci" ("Ye Warriors of God and His Law"). This melody has been repeatedly used by Czech composers when writing about their homeland: it was used by Dvořák in two concert overtures, *Domov můj*, Op. 62 (*My Home*, 1882) and the *Husitská dramatická ouvertura*, Op. 67 (*Hussite Overture*, 1883); by Josef Suk in his symphonic poem *Praga (Prague*, 1904); and most notably by Bedřich Smetana in *Tábor (The Camp*, 1878) and *Blaník* (1879), the final two symphonic poems of his cycle of six entitled *Má vlast* (*My Country*, 1874-1879). By using this war song Husa places *Music for Prague 1968* directly in the tradition of compositions that deal with the history of the Czech nation. The use of the Hussite war song in the timpani in *Music for Prague 1968* deliberately recalls Smetana's similar scoring of this melody in *Tábor* from *Má vlast*. Any Czech concert audience would understand the allusion instantly, given the opportunity.

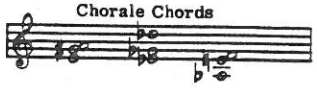
Husa had previously used traditional Czech melodies as the basis for such scores as the *Evocations of Slovakia* (1951) for clarinet, viola, and cello, and the *Eight Czech Duets* (1955) for piano. *Music for Prague 1968*, however, is the first of Husa's scores to combine an existing traditional melody with the personal and experimental serial procedures found in such works as the *Poem* (1959) for viola and chamber orchestra and *Mosaiques* (1961) for orchestra. Every thematic element in *Music for Prague 1968* can be traced to the first four bars of "Ye Warriors of God."



From the implications of these four bars, Husa has derived two 12-note sets that contain between them all of the score's basic motives:



Set II also contains the origin of the most important recurring harmonic ideas in *Music for Prague 1968*: three chords that Husa refers to as the chorale chords.



Husa never employs these 12-note sets in a rigid manner; rather, he uses serial procedures to promote the greatest possible thematic unity through motivic interrelation. He does not allow serial procedures to become merely systematic.

Husa frequently alters the order of notes within a set to suit his expressive purposes.

The overall form of *Music for Prague 1968* is that of a symphony in four movements — "Introduction and Fanfare," "Aria," "Interlude," and "Toccata and Chorale." Within this large structure Husa uses cyclic return of ideas; music from the first movement returns in both the "Aria" and the "Toccata and Chorale." This use of cyclic procedure includes the use of musical symbolism; the resolve of the Hussite war song, the sounds evoking the bells of Prague, and the opening piccolo solo representing a bird call. In the composer's words the bird call is a "symbol of the liberty which the City of Prague has seen only for moments during its thousand years of existence" [foreword to the score of *Music for Prague 1968*, Associated Music Publishers, Inc.]. Other musical symbols recur throughout the score.

The Work:

The first four bars of the "Introduction and Fanfare" contain the basic musical ideas of the entire piece in embryo: the motive stated in the piccolo; the three chorale chords in the flutes, clarinets, and horns; and the Hussite war song outlined by muted timpani. These ideas are developed and extended throughout as the introduction proceeds, growing increasingly more intense until the savage brass fanfare erupts at rehearsal letter C. In the remainder of the movement Husa opposes the ideas of the introduction with those of the fanfare, each section growing more restless and complex. A massive climax is achieved from G to H, only to dissipate quickly to a reminiscence of the piccolo and quiet timpani with which the movement began.

The second movement, "Aria," is both the most systematically serialized and formally subtle of the four movements. Husa superimposes a modified song form (ABB'A') on an underlying expressive structure organized like the arch of a huge span of continually developing melody. The A section of the song form is a melody derived from set II, played by saxophones and low clarinets accompanied by an ostinato in the percussion that is constructed by the rotation of the same set. Beginning with nervous rhythmic figures in the upper woodwinds four bars after J, the first part of the B section contains a prominent return at K of the chorale chords from the first movement.

The second part of the B section commences at the entrance of the bassoons, low clarinets, and saxophones seven bars after K; this is imperceptibly transformed into the middle of the main melody of A six bars after L. The rising progress of the underlying expressive structure can be followed from the beginning of the "Aria" by tracing the pedal points, starting low in the tubas and ascending through the ensemble, to the climax at K. Husa derives these pedal points from the pitches of set II in free augmentation.

The "Interlude" is scored exclusively for the percussion: the snare drum and vibraphone are the soloists accompanied by three percussionists playing a variety of instruments selected to evoke bell-like sonorities. Like the Danish composer Carl Nielsen, Husa sometimes assigns personality traits to given instruments. In this movement the snare drum has an elemental, menacing, and militaristic quality, while the vibraphone symbolizes a human voice growing increasingly agitated. The accompanying percussion parts suggest the bells of Prague ringing a warning against the approach of the invaders; these parts are rhythmically serialized and organized in a palindromic structure that progresses from the beginning to O and then reverses itself in inversion.

The concluding movement, "Toccata and Chorale," is a sectional form reminiscent of the "Introduction and Fanfare." The 19-bar introduction has two parts, the first being seven bars that contain a rhythmic motive of repeated notes in groups of five. (Rhythmic figures of five units have appeared previously in each of the preceding movements.) The second part of the introduction contains fragmentary motives that coalesce into the 17-bar first theme played by the clarinet at A:

From B to C this theme is subjected to a brief development leading to a second theme played by the trumpet section at C. This theme is a 17-bar period organized as two asymmetrical antecedent/consequent phrases separated by rests and accompanied by high woodwinds and percussion:

At D a restatement of the first theme begins an elaborate development that continues until F, when the second theme undergoes an extended development. The procedure used to build this first large formal unit of the "Toccata and Chorale" recalls the French Baroque *doublé*, a formal procedure in which a concise unit is immediately followed by a longer, more elaborate treatment of the same material. We might note that Husa has long been interested in music of this period, having produced performing editions of Lully and Delalande.

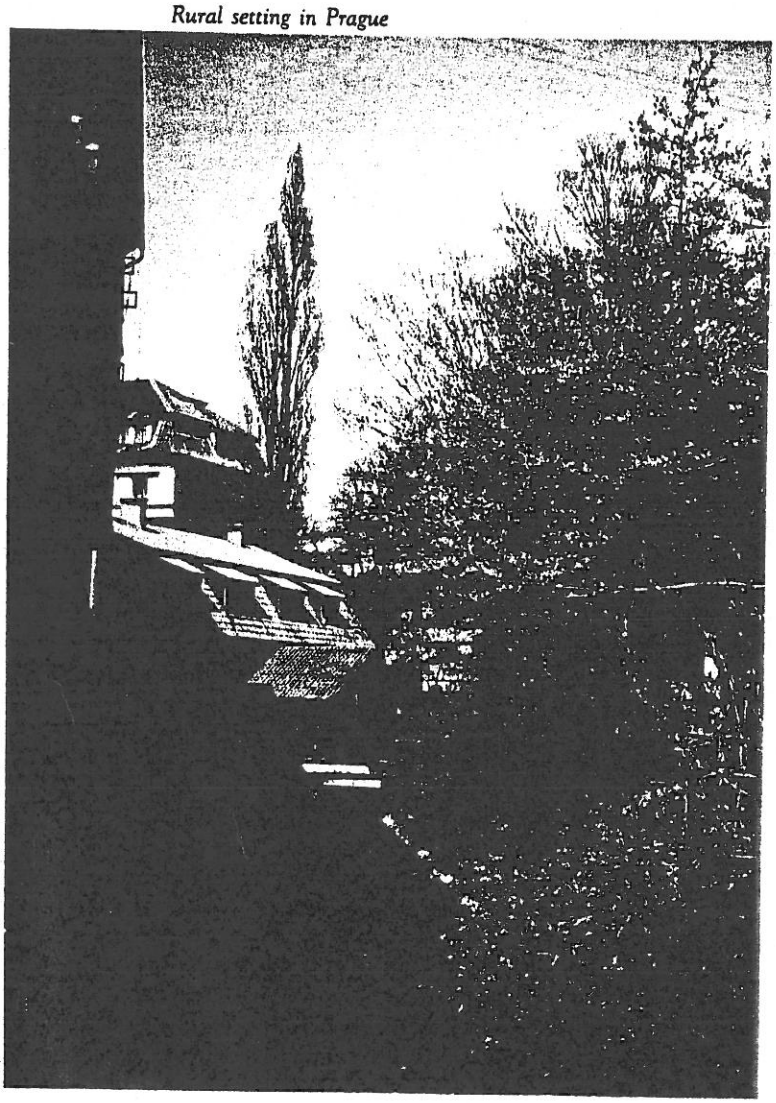
21

Beginning at I both of these themes are combined in development, and during this section material from the preceding movements begins to reappear. At I, for example, the last three pitches of set II appear in the flutes, oboes, and E♭ clarinet. Material from E in the "Introduction and Fanfare" is recalled in the alto saxophone eight bars after K, while five bars after L the trumpets play a rhythmically transformed version of the fanfare material from the first movement and pitched percussion play the Hussite war song. One bar later the trombones, baritones, tubas, and string bass begin a version of the chorale chords heard in the first and second movements. The Hussite war song makes a dramatic appearance nine bars after M, leading to a return at N of the rhythmic motive of five repeated notes with which the movement opened.

The next section, from O to 12 bars after Q, corresponds to the section in the "Introduction and Fanfare" from C to E, with slight differences in rhythmic adjustment, register, and musical detail. The rest of Q is a brief transition from this material to the grand, augmented statement at R of the chorale chords by the brass, saxophones, and low woodwinds. Eleven bars after R the opening rhythmic motive of five repeated notes returns.

After a brief pause the coda begins at S; this is the "chorale" section to which the movement's title refers. The Hussite war song, which dominates this coda, is heard *fortissimo* in the timpani one bar after S, followed by an instrumental statement of the song's first of the two phrases. This is interrupted by a five-note rhythmic figure in the woodwinds and percussion. After the second phrase of the war song is stated, the menacing snare drum of the "Interlude" returns at V (there is no letter U), sounding its rigid and militaristic rhythmic pattern over a 12- to 16-second passage of controlled aleatoric playing by the winds and percussion. This aleatoric section is constructed of many of the main motivic fragments of *Music for Prague 1968* in their most elemental form. The terror and dismay of this section suggests the wildness of a fearful crowd. A metered bar of snare drum solo is followed by a tutti statement of the first phrase of the Hussite war song, which overpowers the snare drum. The second measure of this two-bar phrase is repeated, and then the last two notes of this second bar (C and E) are repeated as a gesture mingling defiance, resolve, and hope. The Hussite war song remains unfinished; so too the search for freedom is never finished.

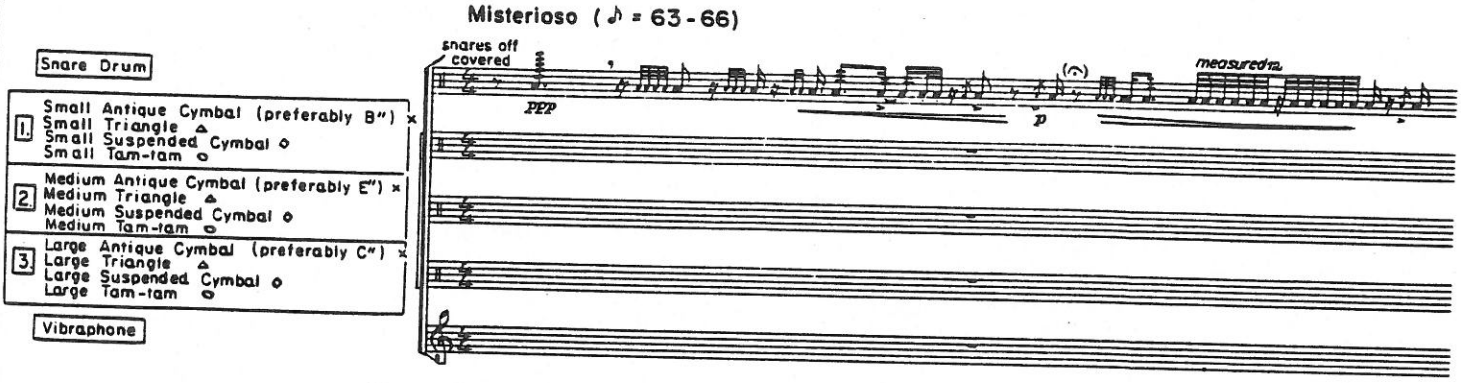
Rural setting in Prague



The conductor who undertakes a performance of *Music for Prague 1968* faces five basic challenges. The first of these involves his baton technique, which must be absolutely precise and controlled if the music is to have continuity. The rhythmic vitality of *Music for Prague 1968* depends on the clarity of the conductor's beat patterns, especially in the fast sections of the "Introduction and Fanfare" and the "Toccata and Chorale." The conductor needs to resist the temptation to be carried away by the music and begin to rush, which can mar the precision of the rhythmic values (such as can happen with 16th notes in the brass fanfare at C in the first movement). Allowing the beat pattern to become too large can retard the forward impetus of the music and cause the carefully planned formal proportions to fall apart. Cues need to be absolutely confident and consistent from rehearsal to performance, especially at such spots as the cue to the suspended cymbals at C in the first movement or the off-beat cue to the muted trombones 12 bars after A in the last movement. The players must feel absolute confidence in the conductor if they are to be able to interpret their often taxing parts with conviction.

The second challenge combines these technical considerations with an element of the conductor's basic musicality: the ability to remember and control tempo relationships. It is vitally important that the forward motion be consistently

III. Interlude



maintained throughout *Music for Prague 1968*. The musical argument and the formal design are predicated upon the continuity of tempo, which is as important in the slower passages in the "Introduction and Fanfare" and in the "Aria" as it is in the faster sections. The "Toccata and Chorale" in particular should have a cumulative effect, and the music from K to the coda must move inexorably ahead toward the approaching tragedy. Wherever Husa has indicated a single unmodified metronome marking, such as the ♩=52 at the beginning, it must be precisely followed; when a possible range of metronome markings is given, such as the opening of the last movement, ♩ = *ca.* 120-126, the faster tempo is preferable.

The third challenge for the conductor presented by *Music for Prague 1968* is the balancing of instrumental forces so that the basic thematic continuity emerges with optimum clarity. The main thematic line always needs to be balanced against an often complex and elaborate background. Without careful differentiation between the various elements, the composition can degenerate into a series of loud gestures without melodic content, and the success of *Music for Prague 1968* is predicated largely upon the primacy of its melodic line. Even a cursory study of the score will reveal the care with which Husa has indicated the relative importance of the different elements through his orchestration and expressive markings.

Solutions to problems of balance in the first movement include doubling the flute flutter tonguing the low C♯ if only one flute cannot be heard, making sure that the baritone saxophone solo from B to C stands out strongly from the accompanying texture, and reducing the dynamic marking of the trumpets from *fortissimo* to *forte* for the first three bars of E so that the winds can be heard, as Husa himself does whenever he conducts the work. In the second movement the saxophones should gradually *diminuendo* five bars after L and become quiet only at M. Husa omits the *poco dim.* marking in the percussion one bar before M.

In the "Interlude," the vibraphone solo needs to be distinctly differentiated from the accompanying bell-like percussion. The additional snare drums, which enter for the terrific roll that concludes this movement, should have staggered entrances and each should begin *piano*.

Problems of balance in the "Toccata and Chorale" are found nine bars before F, where the piccolos have to strongly reinforce the trumpets to help them in this difficult passage. Husa recommends the use of any extra trumpets to double the low Gs and F♯s here. From J to K the *glissandi* should predominate. especially the trombone *glissandi*, which should give the impression of a wailing siren. At five bars after L, the pitched percussion have to play the Hussite war song loudly enough so that it sounds both brilliant and resolute.

Attention to details of dynamics is the conductor's next challenge in *Music for Prague 1968*. Although the score is conceived on grand terms, it makes its most complete impression only if the details are carefully and lovingly prepared, rather like the way the details of a great fresco by Delacroix contribute to the viewer's impression of the whole. Such details are found in the first movement in the trumpet section six bars after E, where each trumpeter should have his bell in the air, *campana in aria*, so that the colors of the different types of mutes are heard; at eight bars after K, where each of the trumpets needs to clearly articulate the different rhythmic patterns while playing at high volume, in order to give the impression of the cruel brilliance of a giant searchlight; and at H,where the varied grace notes have to be accurately differentiated by each trumpet in turn. In the "Aria" the upper woodwinds must crescendo continually after their *forte-piano* attacks at M. Another important dynamic consideration in this movement is that the figure in the marimba and vibraphone

one bar after K should be particularly brilliant. The principal detail in the "Interlude" is attention to the accents marked throughout the parts, but especially in the opening snare drum solo. A crucial detail in the "Toccata and Chorale" comes in the handling of the snare drum solo in the coda: at V the snare drum takes its tempo from the preceding adagio (♩= *ca.* 44), and there is no breath mark in the snare drum part, which continues without a break from the aleatoric section into the next metered bar.

The final challenge for the conductor of *Music for Prague 1968* is to realize fully the work's message and dramatic content. For example, the fanfare at C in the "Introduction and Fanfare" has to be both machinelike and aggressive. The thematic line of the "Aria" needs to rise in an unrelenting curve of anguish and despair. The "Interlude" must unite the mysterious beauty of the bell sonorities with a sense of increasing dread. The "Toccata and Chorale" should hurtle to its noble and tragic conclusion. When Husa conducts *Music for Prague 1968*, he emphasizes the resolve of the ending by holding the last note, which is marked both with a *fermata* and the direction *lunga*, for eight or nine seconds, beginning moderately loud and growing to a massive final sustained sonority. Many a performance of *Music for Prague 1968* has been robbed of its impact by a conductor content merely to cue in the ensemble and count seconds at V in the last movement rather than indicate to the players through some gesture the terrifying expressive implications of this passage. Every bar of *Music for Prague 1968* is infused with the burning sincerity and compassion of its composer; the interpreter of this masterpiece of the contemporary wind ensemble repertoire must come prepared with an equal commitment to the task of bringing the music to life. □

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Discography for Music for Prague 1968

Concert Band

University of Michigan Symphony Band, Karel Husa, conductor, Golden Crest: CRS-4134 (White Horse Pike and Ehrke Road, Ancora, New Jersey), presently unavailable.

University of Texas Symphonic Band, William J. Moody, conductor, Belwin-Mills: BP-136

Orchestra

Louisville Orchestra, Jorge Mester, conductor, Louisville Orchestra: LS-722

Karel Husa, 95, Composer and Conductor

By STEVE SMITH

Karel Husa, a Czech-born American composer who won the Pulitzer Prize for music in 1969 and the Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition in 1993, died on Dec. 14 at his home in Apex, N.C. He was 95.

His death was announced by Cornell University, where he taught composition and conducting for 38 years.

Mr. Husa created works in most of the standard concert-music forms apart from opera, including two symphonies, several concertos, four string quartets and three ballets.

Among his works for concert band are two compositions that have become staples, "Music for Prague 1968" (1969) and "Apotheosis of This Earth" (1970).

Those pieces illustrate Mr. Husa's mature style: a mix of formal rigor, dramatic vitality and avant-garde techniques used to illuminate ethical concerns.

In "Music for Prague 1968," a response to the Soviet Union's crushing of the Prague Spring reform movement, he incorporated a 15th-century Hussite anthem used previously by Dvorak and Smetana to connote solidarity and resistance, alongside eerie, unsettling microtonal passages and instrumental effects evoking bird song, church bells, Morse code and gunfire.

The piece, given its premiere by the Ithaca College Concert Band in January 1969, became one of the most-played works in the wind-ensemble repertoire, with more than 10,000 known performances to date. Mr. Husa also created an orchestral version, a rendition of which was included in "Shadow of Stalin," a live album by Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Los Angeles Philharmonic released in 2008.

"I don't think of it as a political message for one country," Mr. Husa said of the work in a 1986 Los Angeles Times interview. "It is universal."

Karel Jaroslav Husa was born in Prague on Aug. 7, 1921. Following early training on violin and piano, he trained at the Prague Conservatory from 1941 to 1945, studying composition with Jaroslav Ridky and conducting with Pavel Dedecek and Vaclav Talich. He wrote his first published work, a sonatina for piano, in 1943.

A French government scholarship allowed Mr. Husa to pursue training from 1946 to 1951 at the École Normale de Musique in Paris, where he studied composition with Arthur Honegger and conducting with Jean Fournet. He continued his compositional studies under the eminent teacher Nadia Boulanger, and conducting with Andre Cluytens.

CORNELL UNIVERSITY

The composer and conductor Karel Husa in 1956.

International recognition came with his String Quartet No. 1, first performed in Paris in 1948 and again on several occasions elsewhere. It won first prize at the 1951 Gaudeamus Festival in the Netherlands.

Influenced by transformative composers like Janacek, Bartok, Stravinsky and Schoenberg, Mr. Husa evolved from an early neo-Classical idiom through experiments with atonality, serialism, microtonality and indeterminacy to reach his distinctive style.

A musician who won a Pulitzer Prize for a string quartet in 1969.

Having allowed his passport to lapse in 1949 — by some accounts in deliberate defiance of Czechoslovakia's Communist government — Mr. Husa accepted a post at Cornell and emigrated to the United States in 1954. He became an American citizen in 1959 and taught at Cornell until his retirement in 1992.

Among his prominent students were the composers Steven Stucky, Christopher Rouse, John S. Hilliard, David Conte and Byron Adams. Mr. Husa taught concurrently at Ithaca College from 1967 to 1986, and traveled widely as a guest conductor, lecturer and instructor.

"His personal passion and the really highly dramatic nature of his music made it approachable even though it was unfamiliar," Mr. Stucky said in a 2012 statement circulated by Cornell after Mr. Husa's death. "I think that was a big step in the reception of modern American music in this country."

Mr. Husa won the Pulitzer Prize in 1969 for his String Quartet No. 3, and the Grawemeyer Award, the most lucrative prize in classical music ($150,000 at the time), in 1993 for his Cello Concerto.

Among his other major works are his Trumpet Concerto (1987), commissioned by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and two pieces commissioned and premiered by the New York Philharmonic: the Concerto for Orchestra, conducted by Zubin Mehta on Sept. 25, 1986, and the Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, conducted by Kurt Masur on May 27, 1993, with Glenn Dicterow as the soloist.

He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1994, and in 1995 was awarded the Czech Republic's highest civilian honor, the State Medal of Merit, First Class.

He is survived by his wife of 64 years, the former Simone Perault; four daughters, Catherine Husseini, Anne-Marie Katerji, Elizabeth Evola and Caroline Husa Bell; 10 grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

More obituaries appear on the preceding page.

Prague

mvt. 1, m. 30 - the baritone does not indicate to use mute and it should.

mvt. 2, m. 52 - the bass clarinet's 2nd 16th note of beat two should be a written Ab

mvt. 3, m. 8 - perc. 1 should have a tie between the two small triangle notes.
mvt. 3, m. 18 - perc. 1 should have a tie between the two small triangle notes.
mvt. 3 - measure numbers - count the measure AFTER N as measure #1 (the first "real" measure - after the snare roll to pppp). The last measure to number is the bar before P - this is m. 18

mvt. 4, m. 80 - clarinets should have an F natural, not an E natural on the last eighth note of the bar. (errata in score and parts I think)

--
Elizabeth Kerns McCann
betsykmccann@gmail.com
612-384-8979

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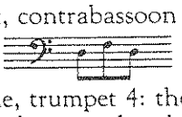
Page 88, bar six, contrabassoon and string should have this: 

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Music for Prague 1968 - Rehearsal Numbers
Measure numbers start over for each movement.

Movement 1 (107 measures)

Letter/Landmark	Measure
A	15
B	29
C	35
D	44
E	60
F	71
G	76
H	88
Adagio	100

Movement 2 (68 measures)

Letter/Landmark	Measure
I	16
J	30
K	36
L	46
M	60

Movement 3 (19 measures)

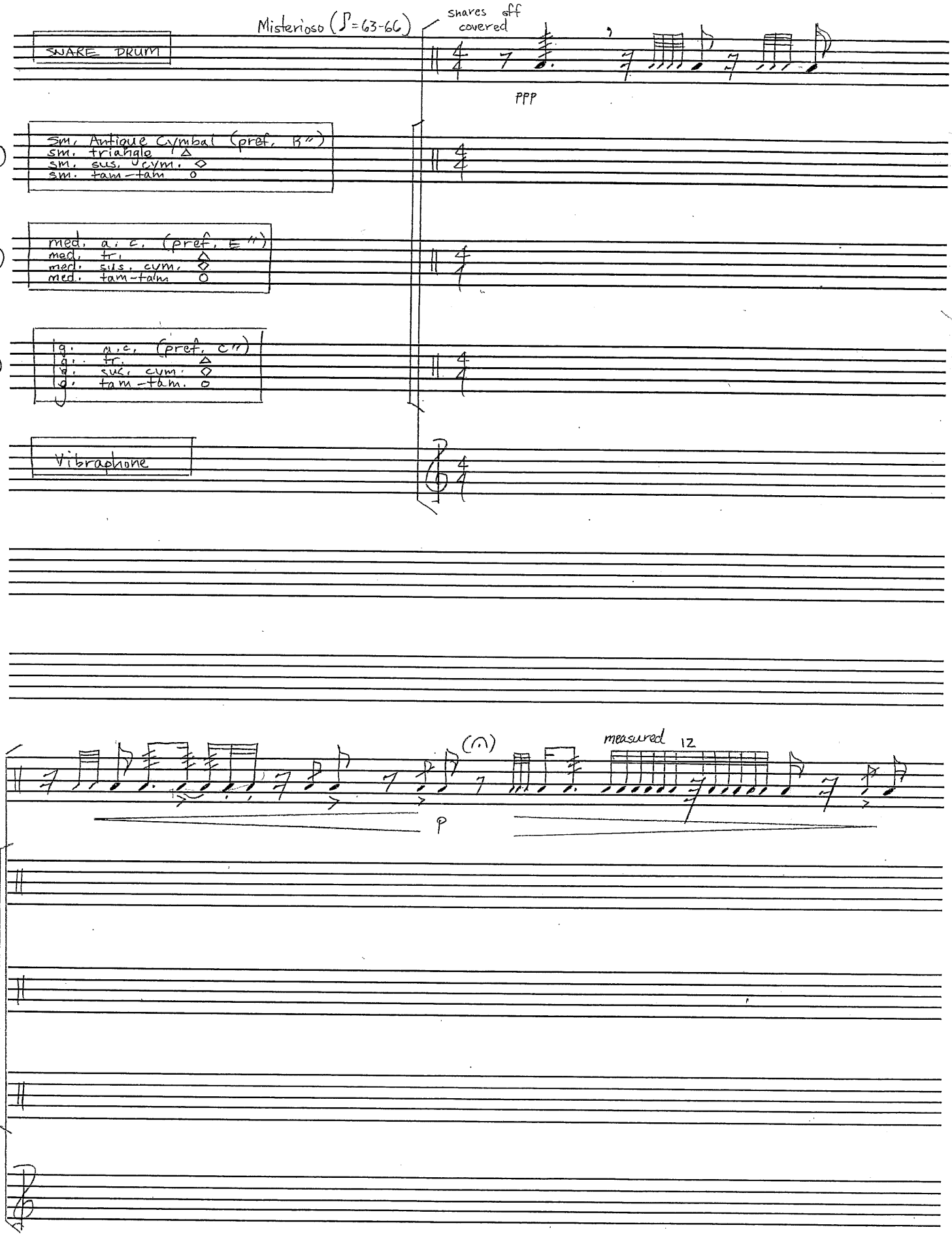
Letter/Landmark	Measure
Measure after N	1
O	10
P	19

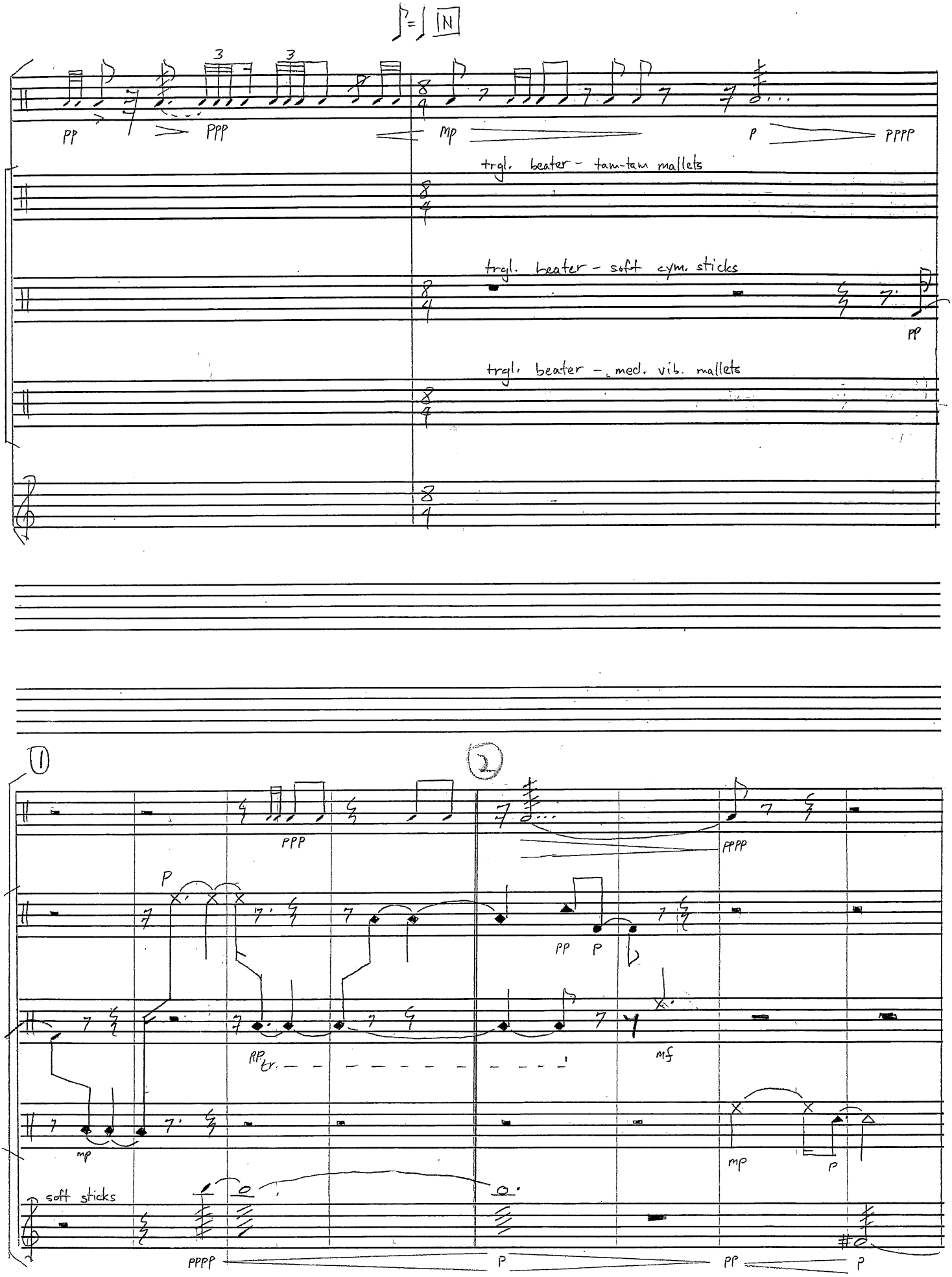
Movement 4 (330 measures)

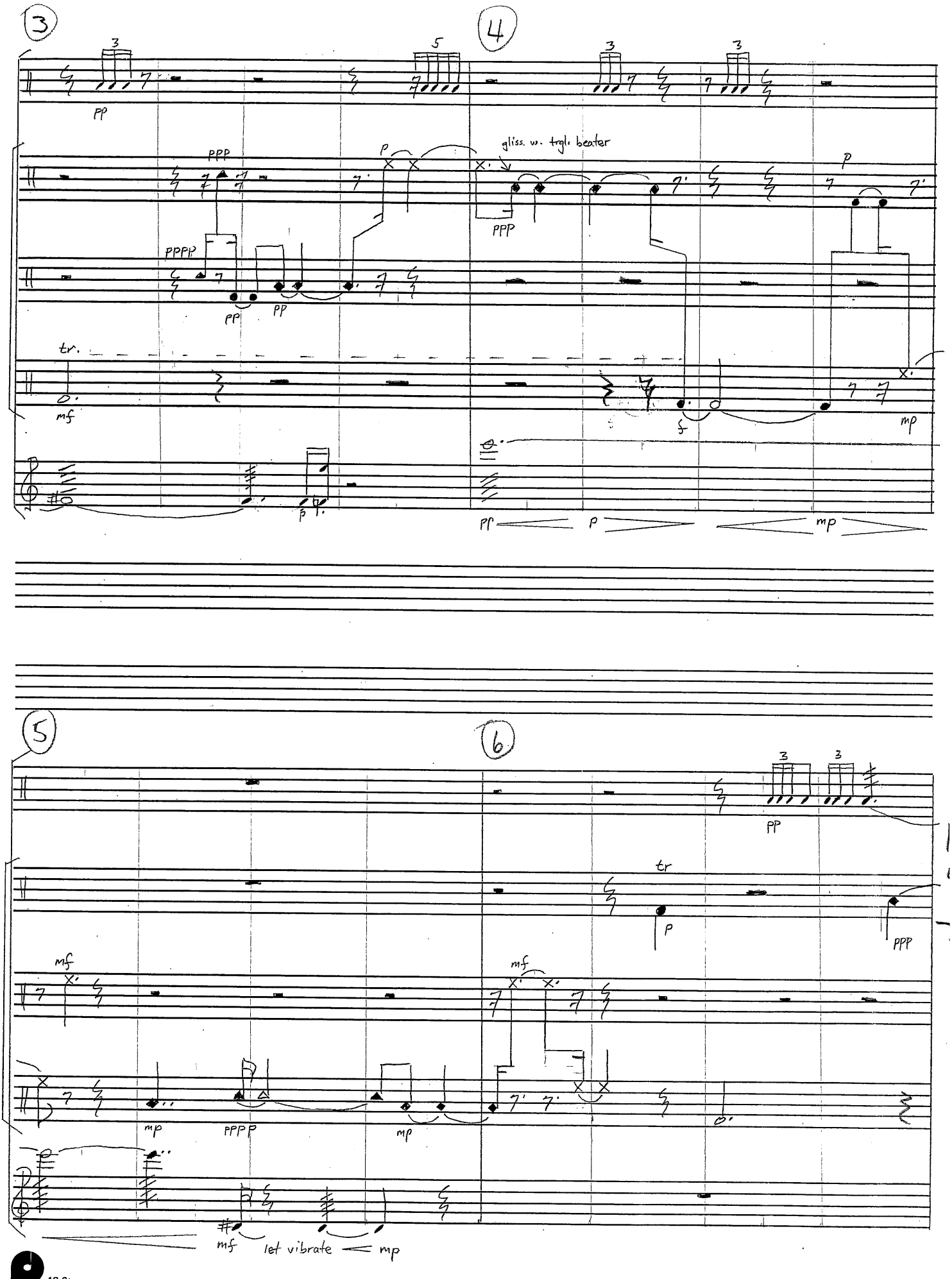
Letter/Landmark	Measure
A	20
B	37
C	55
D	77
E	94
F	115
G	128

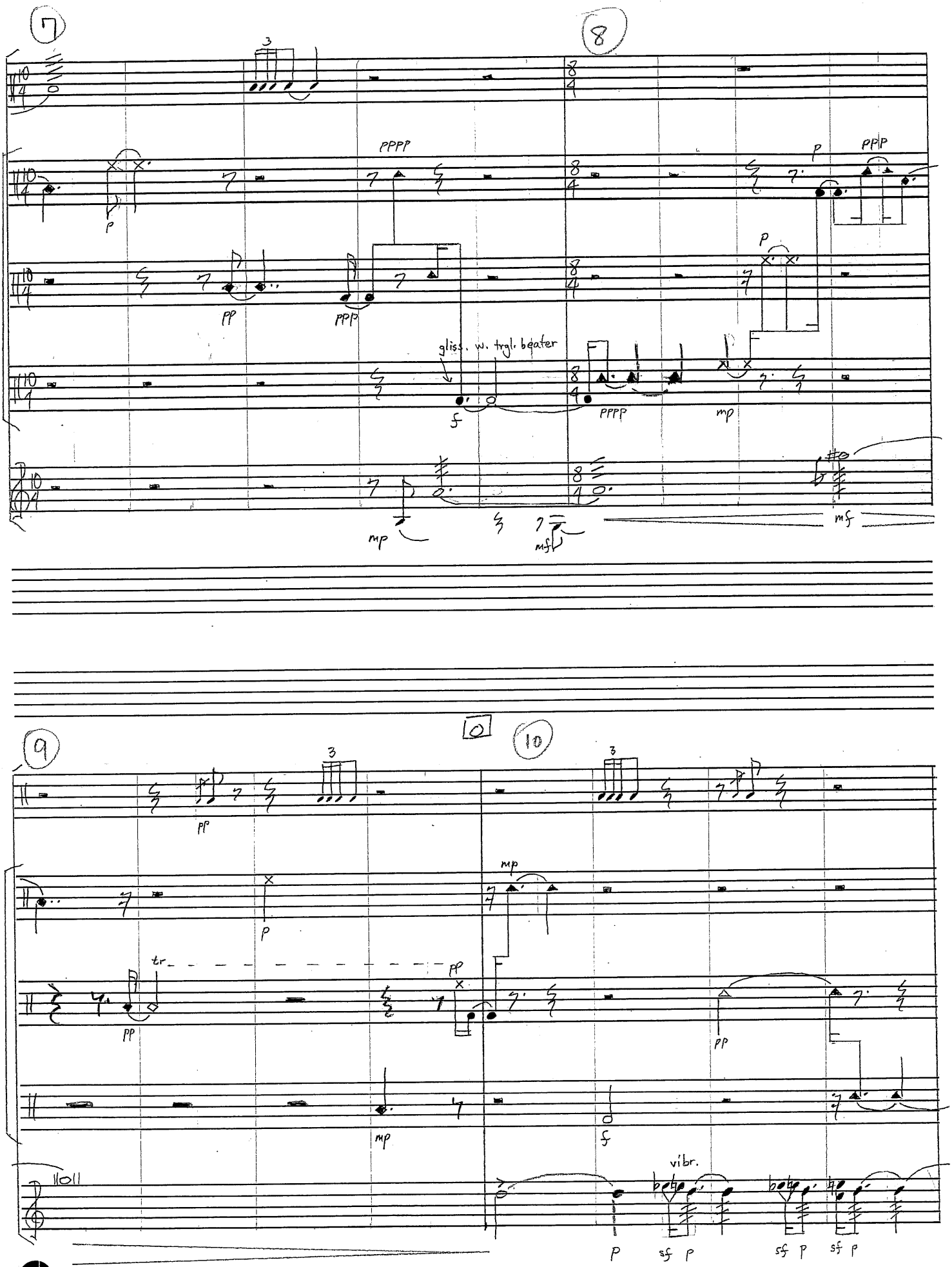
H	141
I	154
I1 (add this!)	158
J	163
K	173
K1 (add this!)	183
L	189
M	203
N	218
O	229
P	247
Q	268
R	287
S	307
T	316
Poco più vivo	318
V	323

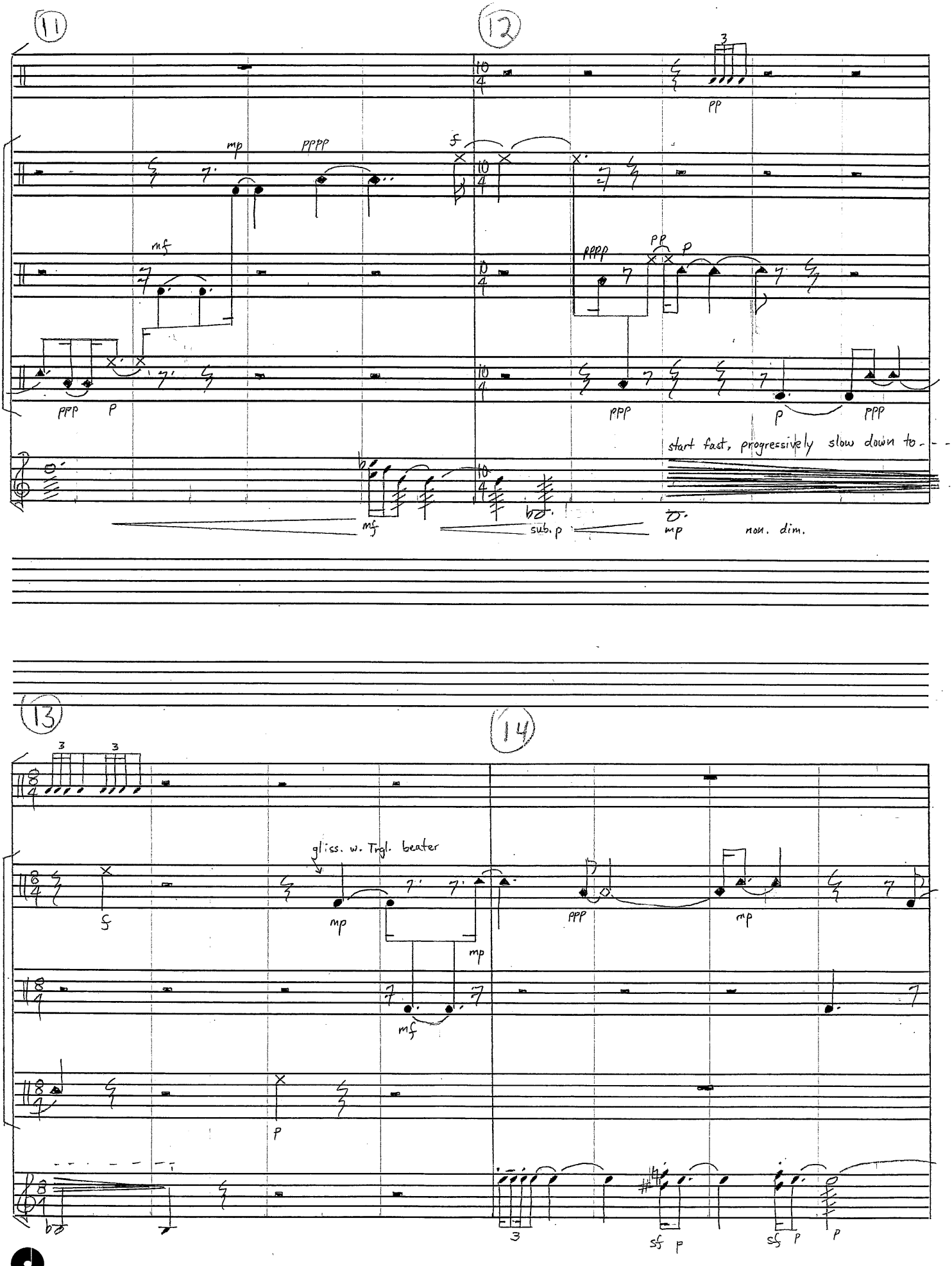
III. Interlude

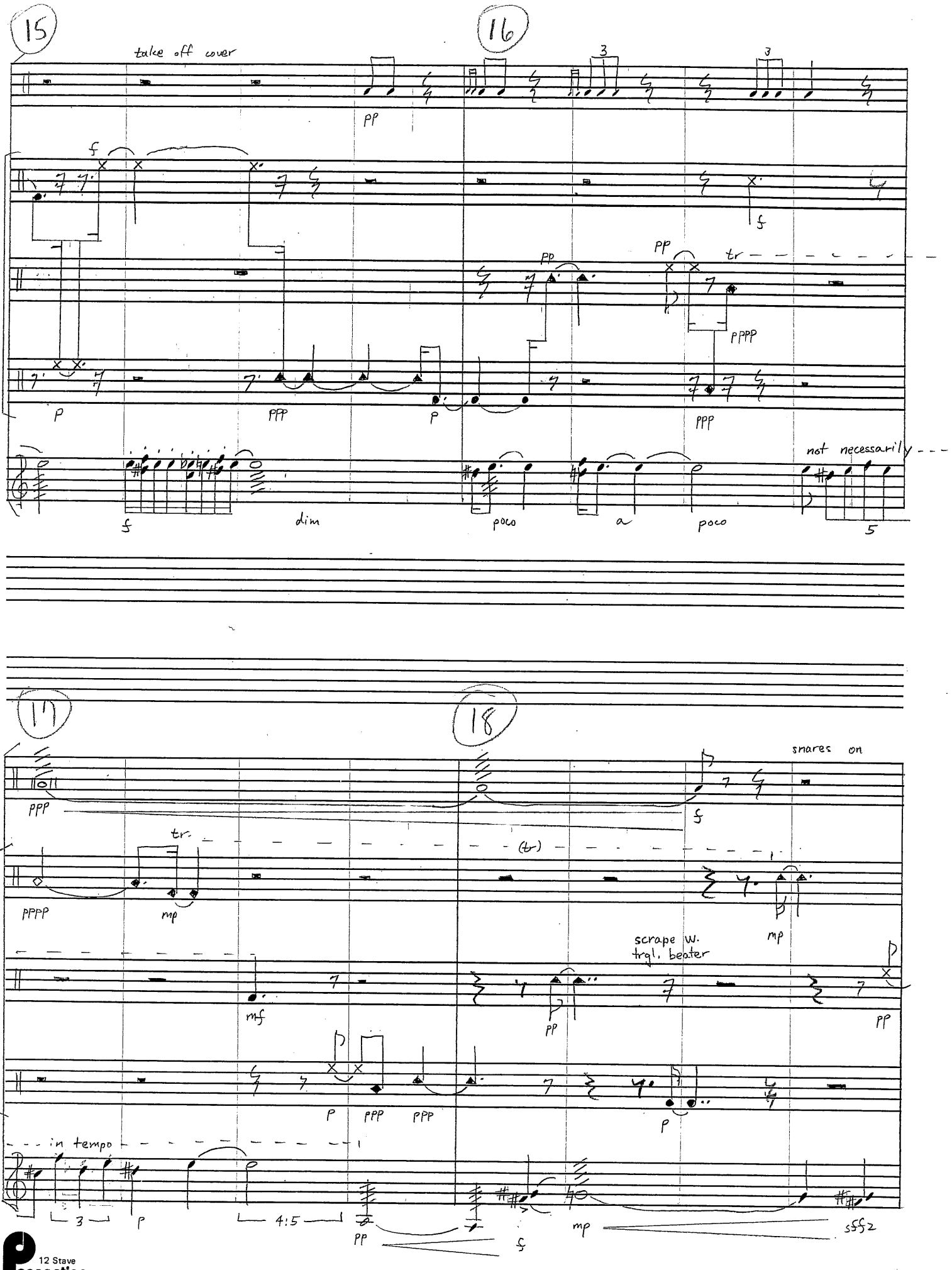


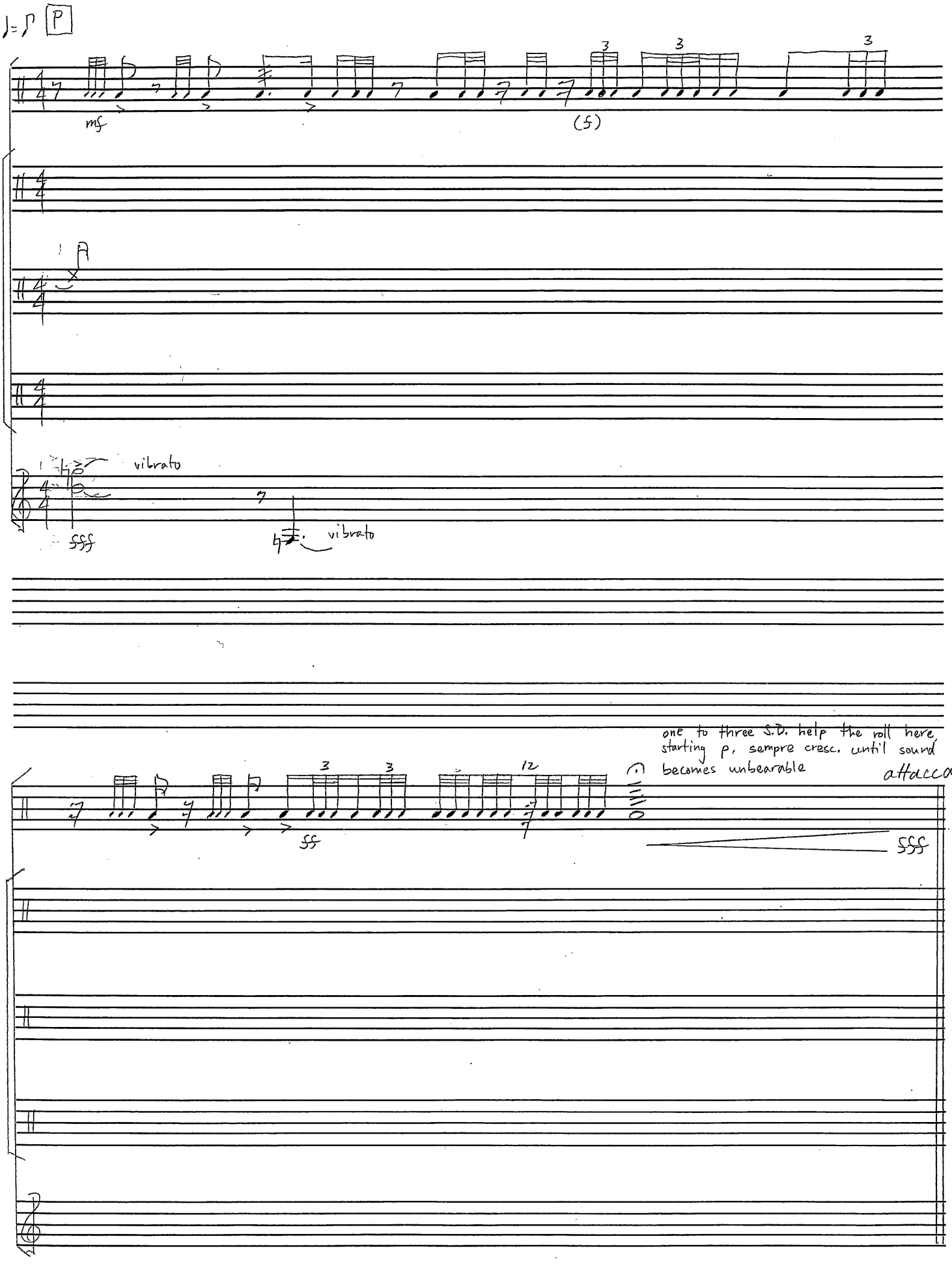



3
4
5
6
pp
ppp
p
gliss. w. trgl. beater
pppp
tr.
mf
f
mp
pp
mf
mp
pppp
let vibrate
12 Stave
Peeeantino


7
8
9
10
11
12
PPPP
PP
PPP
P
gliss. w. trgl. beater
f
mp
mf
tr
vibr.
sf
12 Stave


11
12
13
14
mp
pppp
mf
ppp
p
pp
start fast, progressively slow down to - - -
sub. p
non. dim.
gliss. w. Trgl. beater
sf
3


15
16
take off cover
pp
f
3
3
f
pp
pp
tr
pppp
p
ppp
p
ppp
not necessarily
f
dim
poco
a
poco
5
17
18
snares on
ppp
f
tr.
(tr)
pppp
mp
mp
scrape w.
trgl. beater
mf
pp
pp
p
ppp
ppp
p
in tempo
3
p
4:5
pp
f
mp
sfz



Music for Prague 1968

-Karel Husa

A Formal Analysis & Interpretation

by

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Music for Prague 1968
Karel Husa
(1921-)

Biography

Karel Husa was born on August 7, 1921, in Prague, Czechoslovakia. Husa attended an engineering school in Prague and also studied violin and piano at the behest of his mother. When the Nazis occupied Czechoslovakia in the 1940's, the engineering school was closed and Husa enrolled in the composition department of the Prague Conservatory with no formal training other than violin and piano lessons.

After the end of World War II, Husa finished his studies at the conservatory and earned the equivalent of a master's degree. He then traveled to France to attend the Ecole normale de Paris where he studied composition with Arthur Honegger and Nadia Boulanger. Husa also studied conducting with Jean Fournet and Andre Cluytens. The Academy of Musical Arts in Prague accepted the studies Husa had done in Paris and awarded him a Doctorate of Music in 1947.

Paris - Boulanger Honegger

Husa remained in Paris where he continued to compose as well as guest conduct. Eventually his conducting schedule became so busy that he was finding it difficult to devote time to composition. In 1959, he accepted a position at Cornell University where he would conduct the orchestra for one year and teach theory for three years. Fourteen years later, Husa was appointed to Kappa Kappa Alpha professorship of music in 1973 where he remained until his retirement in 1992.

Among his numerous honors are a Guggenheim Foundation fellowship; awards from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, UNESCO, and the National Endowment for the Arts; Koussevitzky Foundation commissions; the Czech Academy for the Arts and Sciences Prize; and the Lili Boulanger Award. Husa was elected associate member of the Royal Belgian Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1974 and has received honorary doctorates of music from Coe College, the Cleveland Institute of Music, Ithaca College, and Baldwin Wallace College.

Husa has written numerous works for band, orchestra, chorus, voice, piano, and chamber ensembles. In 1969, he received the Pulitzer Prize for his *String Quartet No. 3*.

1969 Pulitzer String quartet #3

> Karel Husa is "one of the most interestingly human and humane musical minds in this century's recent history."
>
> Elliott Galkin,
> *Baltimore Sun*

Selected Works List

Orchestral

An American Te Deum for Chorus and Orchestra (1978)
Apotheosis of this Earth for Chorus and Orchestra (1972)
Celebración (1997)
Celebration Fanfare (1996)
Concerto for Orchestra (1986)
Concerto for Organ and Orchestra (1987)
Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra (1987)
Concerto for Violin and Orchestra (1993)
Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra (1988)
Fresque (revised version) (1963)
Monodrama, Ballet (1976)
Music for Prague 1968 (1969)
Overture ("Youth") (1990)
Pastoral (1979)
Reflections (Symphony No. 2) (1983)
The Steadfast Tin Soldier (1974)
Symphonic Suite (1984)
The Trojan Women, Ballet (1980)
The Trojan Women, Scenes from the ballet (1980, rev 1988)
Two Sonnets by Michelangelo (1971)

Band

Al Fresco for Concert Band
An American Te Deum for Chorus and Band (1976)
Apotheosis of this Earth for Chorus and Band (1970)
Concerto for Alto Saxophone (1967)
Concerto for Percussion and Wind Ensemble (1970-71)
Concerto for Trumpet and Wind Orchestra (1973)
Concerto for Wind Ensemble (1982)
Les Couleurs Fauves (1997)
Divertimento for Symphonic Winds and Percussion (1974/95)
Midwest Celebration (Fanfare) (1996)
Music for Prague 1968 for Concert Band
Smetana Fanfare for Wind Ensemble (1984)

Chamber/vocal/solo

Cantata (1983)
for male chorus and brass quintet
Divertimento (1974)
for brass quintet
Divertimento (1958)
for ensemble of brass and percussion
Drum Ceremony (1976)
for 5 percussion
Fanfare (1981)
for ensemble of brass and percussion
Five Poems (1994)
for wind quintet
Intradas and Interlude (1980)
for 7 trumpets and percussion
Landscapes (1977)
for brass quintet
Postcard from Home (1997)
for alto saxophone and piano
Recollections (1982)
for wind quintet and piano
Sonata à tre (1981)
for clarinet, violin, and piano
***String Quartet No. 3* (1968) Pulitzer Prize Winner**
Three Dance Sketches (1979)
for percussion
Tubafest Celebration Fanfare (1992)
for tuba quartet

Thoughts on Composing

Husa is emphatic about writing a line of music and assigning a specific instrument to it right away. So rather than orchestrate from a piano reduction, Husa immediately has a particular timbre in mind.

He also believes that his conducting has helped his composing.

> "I do think at the end that my music is very difficult – or maybe it's unusual or unfamiliar. But what I also want to say is that my music is written for, not against, the instruments, although it may sometimes seem to be! I think that is what composers should learn and know from conducting or performing his or her music. [The music] can be difficult to a certain degree, but it must be idiomatic and possible to play." (A Talk with Karel Husa, 1997)

still some unplayable passages - ie: tb glisses (not do-able) : trpt flutter in decreasing speed

Also, Husa makes a concerted effort not to repeat himself. So even though there may be threads that run through several compositions, he always attempts to create something a little bit different or newer.

History

Music for Prague 1968 was commissioned by the Ithaca College Concert Band and composed during the summer and fall of 1968 in Prague, Czechoslovakia. The commissioning band under the direction of Kenneth Snapp in Washington, DC on January 31, 1969 premiered *Prague* for the Music Educators National Conference. Over 7,000 known performances have been given of this work since its premiere.

According to Husa, the introduction to *Prague* was designed to create an uneasy "quietness before the storm." The innocence of the piccolo, the noble war song in the timpani, and the underlying minor seconds in the accompanying winds help to create this uneasiness.

In an interview with Mark Scatterday and Donald Hunsberger, Husa states that had he known how saxophones were traditionally used in the wind band, he probably would not have chosen them to play the melodic line in the "Aria". For the orchestral version, that line is played in unison with violas and cellos, rather than the octaves used in the saxophones.

The percussion interlude came out of a need to create balance with the three primary sections of the wind band: woodwinds, brass, and percussion. Husa felt that the percussion section is too often neglected in composition.

Program Note

Karel Husa, in the score for *Prague*, wishes for this forward to be read or printed in the concert program for each performance.

> Three main ideas bind the composition together. The first and most important is an old Hussite war song from the 15th century, "Ye Warriors of God and His Law," a symbol of resistance and hope for hundreds of years, whenever fate lay heavy on the Czech nation. It has been utilized also by many Czech composers, including Smetana in *My Country*. The beginning of this religious song is announced very softly in the first movement by the timpani and concludes in a strong unison (*Chorale*). The song is never used in its entirety.

The second idea is the sound of bells throughout; Prague, named also the City of "Hundreds of Towers," has used its magnificently sounding church bells as calls of distress as well as of victory.

The last idea is a motif of three chords first appearing very softly under the piccolo solo at the beginning of the piece, in flutes, clarinets and horns. Later it reappears at very strong dynamic levels, for example, in the middle of the Aria.

Different techniques of composing as well as orchestrating have been used in *Music for Prague 1968* and some new sounds explored, such as the percussion section in the *Interlude*, the ending of the work, etc. Much symbolism also appears: in addition to the distress calls in the first movement (*Fanfares*), the unbroken hope of the Hussite song, sound of bells, or the tragedy (*Aria*), there is also the bird call at the beginning (piccolo solo), symbol of the liberty which the City of Prague has seen only for moments during its thousand years of existence.

-Karel Husa

Instrumentation (based on Ithaca Band instrumentation)

Piccolo (div.)
Flute 1
Flute 2
Oboe 1
Oboe 2
Eng. Horn
Bassoon 1
Bassoon 2
Contrabassoon
E-flat Clarinet
Clarinet 1 (div.)
Clarinet 2 (div.)
Clarinet 3 (div.)
E-flat Alto Clarinet
B-flat Bass Clarinet
Alto Saxophone 1
Alto Saxophone 2
Tenor Saxophone
Baritone Saxophone
*(Plus E-flat Contrabass Clarinet, ad-lib.)
Bass Saxophone
*(Plus B-flat Contrabass Clarinet, ad-lib.)

Trumpet 1 (div.)
Trumpet 2 (div.)
Trumpet 3 (div.)
Horn 1
Horn 2
Horn 3
Horn 4
Trombone 1
Trombone 2
Trombone 3 (Bass)
Baritone (div.)
Tuba (div.)
Percussion (5 players):
Chimes
Marimba
Vibraphone
Xylophone
Timpani
3 Antique Cymbals (c, e, b)
3 Triangles (s, m, l)
Cymbals
3 Suspended Cymbals (s, m, l)
3 Tam-Tams (s, m, l)
Snare Drum(s) (2 or 3)
3 Tom-Toms (s, m, l)
Bass Drum

*This instrumentation is based soley on what Kenneth Snapp told Husa his forced were. That is the primary reason for 8 trumpets, as well as what Husa termed his "frustration with the Soviet Union" for invading his homeland.

FORMAL ANALYSIS

I. Introduction and Fanfare

INTRODUCTION

Overview: The Introduction is comprised of three primary motives that Husa uses throughout the entire composition. First, is the Hussite war song in the opening measures played by the timpani. Second, is the bird song played first by the piccolo and later passed on to the flutes. And third, is the "cluster" chords at letter A played by the clarinets.

1. Hussite
2. Birds
3. Clusters ch

It is imperative that strict time is kept throughout to assist players with entrances as well as exits. Husa is extremely meticulous with how sounds begin and end as is evidenced by measures 18-28 in the accompaniment.

Husa also makes great use of colors and what I term as "masking" of notes. Sustained notes are usually doubled with one voice assisting in the attack of the note and the other voice sustaining the pitch. Examples of this can be seen in measure 16 between trombone 1 and string bass as well as measure 20 between trumpets 1 & 4 and marimba. The "masking occurs when one pitch is presented in it's "pure" form in one voice while another voice either plays around that pitch by ½ step or colors that pitch by techniques such as flutter tonguing, trilling, or in the case of the saxophones, playing in ¼ steps above the pitch.

neighboring pitches "hide" true pitch

Beginning – A (1-14), Adagio (quarter note = ca. 52)

- Conductor's note: This may be conducted slower than the tempo marked.
- M. 1, Timpani – (**D**-Eb-C#) upper and lower neighbor tones to "D". This is the Hussite war song: "Ye Warriors of God and His Law".
    - *NOTE: At the end of the final movement, the same motive only Eb moves out to E and C# moves out to C.
- M. 2, Piccolo solo – birdcall, "symbol of liberty." Throughout the entire piccolo and flute solo, no two rhythmic patterns are alike. This is loosely based on 12-tone technique.
- M.3 – M. 8, Sustained intervals closing in from D-Ab in flutes to A-Db in clarinets to Eb Gb in horns to E-F in flutes followed by trumpets and again by flutes. (Could symbolize the gradual closing in of the USSR army.)
- M. 12, C-C# between clarinet 1 and flute 2. M. 13, C-Db in vibraphone. M. 14, flute 1 and clarinet 1 unison C. (Completely engulfed.)
- Half steps persist throughout in the accompaniment.
    - M. 7, trumpets on E-F
    - M. 8, flutes on E-F
    - M. 9, alto clarinet & flute 2 on D-Eb
    - M. 12, clarinet 1 & Flute 2 on C-C#

- M. 13, vibraphone on C-Db

A – B (15-28)

- M. 15-18, Clarinets oscillate between chromatic (Eb-Gb-D-E-**F**) and (F-A-E-D-**F#**-**G**)…(F-Ab) added in M. 17. Common tone "E" also emphasized in trombone & string bass & marimba and continues through to M. 21.
- M. 17, Flute 1 solo picks up from piccolo solo. M. 24 begin tutti flutes.
- M. 21, Clarinets mutate chord structure slightly, adding more voices including Eb clarinet. (Gb-Eb-Gb-F-Ab-D-E-D) to (Gb-F-A-F#-G-E-D-D)
- M. 23, Clarinets thin out cluster. Same notes, less octave doubling. "E" continues to be prominent in oboes and Eng. Horn.
- M. 25, Begins staggered entrances with same notes in clarinets.
- M. 27, Flute duet with oboes, which continues through M. 31.
- M. 27, Vibraphone sustains "D" to foreshadow the "Fanfare" section beginning at Letter D.
- Flutter tonguing technique is used to mask the true pitches. For example, M. 16, trombone 1 flutters on an E, which is the common tone in all the woodwind clusters. NOTE: This is an extremely difficult spot for the bone player. They must begin by fluttering, then slow to double tonguing, and eventually slow to single tonguing.
- Another masking occurs at Mm. 20-21 in the trumpets. The primary tone is Eb played by trumpet 2 with a straight mute. Trumpet 1 with a Harmon mute masks that pitch by coming in an out of the texture on an E.
- The entire introduction is a gradual movement from E down to D.

B – C (29-34)

- M. 29, Low brass chords (Bb-Db-A-C-**Eb**-B) to (C-**E**-Bb-B-Db-A). Virtually the same but with different voicing…difference being the "E" in the first cluster. The "D" from the vibraphone could be included to complete the chromatic cluster.
- M. 30, Bari Sax outlines.
- M. 32, Beginning to show a tendency toward "D-ish" center. Euphonium sustaining Db. Picc., Fls., Obs., Alto Cl. all on D. Everything is moving toward the unison "D" in the trumpets beginning at letter C (M. 35).
- NOTE: The thread of sustained pitches that moves throughout the opening 34 measures can loosely be traced to the timpani motive of (D-Eb-C#)…of which the base pitch is the "D".

A-SECTION

Overview: This is the first section of the "Fanfare" and goes from letter C to letter E. The primary motive is a manipulation of the Hussite war song into a 4-note series based on ½ steps. The first example of this is seen in measure 37 in the

trumpets. This 4-note series is transformed constantly through inversion, retrograde, transposition, etc. throughout the entire ensemble.

Tempo should be fairly strict and deliberate to allow for accuracy of 16th notes in all voices. Every note is important and must be heard at precisely the right moment to achieve the full "chaotic" effect.

Colors are again extremely important and must be brought out. For example, measures 44, 46-47 with the marimbas and vibraphone coloring the trumpet pitches. "Masking" is also still very prevalent as in measure 54 in the trumpets (D is masked by a Db and Eb).

The primary pitch in the first movement is "D". I feel it represents the country of Czechoslovakia and the pitches that constantly surround "D" are the Soviet Army invading. If you notice, "D" is rarely presented by itself. More frequently it is "masked" by other pitches.

C – D (35-43), Allegro (quarter note = ca. 108-112)

- Conductor's note: This may be conducted faster than the tempo marked, but not so fast as to reduce the clarity of the 16th notes.
- M. 35, Trumpets enter and boldly reinforce "D"!
- M. 36, Trumpets begin to disguise the "D". The progression is as follows:
  - (**D**)
  - (Db-**D**-Eb)
  - (Bb-Db-**D**-Eb)
- M. 37, Trumpets move down to unison "C".
- M. 39, Answer in the mid and low brass. Their progression follows:
  - (**D**)
  - (Db-Eb-C#-**D**...horns, Db-**D**-Eb)
  - (Bb-**D**-Eb...horns, Bb-Db-**D**-Eb)
- M. 41-43, Trumpets continue to manipulate the D-Eb-C# motive. Sustaining pitches on the following:
  - Db
  - Bb-Db-**D**-Eb
  - Bb-**D**-Eb
  - Finishing on Db
- M. 43, Fermata just for a brief moment

D – E (44-59)

- M. 44, Marimba and vibraphone are coloring the entrances in the trumpets...and the woodwinds in M. 45.
- M. 45, Woodwinds take over the brass idea of the C-C#-Eb-D motive in octaves first in the flutes, oboes, and clarinets. Then by the saxophones also in octaves.
- M. 45, Mid- and low brass sustain Db-Eb.

- M. 47, Trumpets play against each other with inversions of the 4-note motive.
- M. 48, Saxophones and baritones sustain notes D-F, while (M. 49) contrabassoon, tuba, and string bass sustain a C. (The D-F is an expansion outward of Db-Eb earlier)
- M. 53, Timpani still play fragments of the Hussite war song. Horns very strong statement of the note "D", but are masked by the trombones and tuba/string bass playing "C".
- M. 54, Trumpets state "D" with 2nd and 3rd trumpet masking on Db-Eb.
- M. 58, All woodwinds on D and Eb. Eb masking the D.
- M. 59, Manipulation of the 4-note motive in woodwinds.

B-SECTION

Overview: The B-section lasts from letter E to letter F and consists of a new thematic idea (lyrical, if you will) in the upper woodwinds, trumpets, and low brass. The tonal center for this section is "E". While this is not based on a strict sonata form, it does follow the idea that the rhythmic first theme should be followed by a slower more lyrical second theme.

The 4-note motive begun in the A-section of the composition continues in the saxophones and it eventually takes over the entire ensemble by letter F, or the start of the C-section.

Again there is masking of the pitch D in the upper woodwinds at measure 65. An interesting exchange of the 4-note motive occurs first between the saxophones and trumpets beginning in measure 67 with one group on the beat while the other is off the beat, and then the reverse happens. Ultimately this alternation happens in the entire ensemble by letter F.

To achieve the effects desired by Husa, it is imperative that musicians follow their own dynamic markings as well as attacks and releases rather than listen to those around them. More often than not, even within one instrument section, each part has its own specific responsibilities to the music. This can be said not only for this section of the composition, but also for the work as a whole.

E – F (60-70)

- M. 60, Saxophones take over 4-note motive from the upper woodwinds.
- M. 60, New thematic material presented in upper woodwinds, trumpets, and low brass played in octaves. (E-F#-E-F-A-F#-E-Eb).
- M. 60, Contrabass clarinet & saxophones fragment 4-note motive…and finally change it to 5-notes by the end of M. 62.
- M. 62, Answered by the horns and trombones playing:
    - First: Db-Eb
    - M. 63, Second: C-D-E (another outward expansion of intervals)
    - M. 64, Third: Bb-C-D-Eb-E (further expansion)

- M. 65, Sustained "D" masked by "Db" in upper woodwinds. Trumpets begin 4-note motive in canon/round.
- Mm. 66-68, Mid- and low brass alternate between (C-D-E) and (Bb-C#-D- Eb-F-F#-A). The second chord expanding the outer notes of the first chord.
- M. 67, Saxophones join trumpet canon/round only off of the beat. Trumpets and saxophones alternate who is on and who is off the beat from Mm. 67-70.
- M. 70, Woodwinds begin joining the trumpets and saxophones in the 4-note motive played both on and off the beat.

C-SECTION

Overview: The C-section lasts from letter F to letter G and basically takes the 4-note motive that has been driving the "Fanfare" and transforms it into organized chaos. I believe this is directly related to the chaos that ensued as a result of the Soviet Army invading Czechoslovakia.

One of the BIG moments in the first movement occurs in measures 74-76 when the trumpets and low brass state the Hussite war song as a complete idea, but with much intensity using minor 2nds to create stress.

Although it would be easy to get lost in the tangled web of 4-note motives, of primary concern should be the idea that every motive begins either on the beat or off of the beat by 1 eighth note. Each entrance should be audible.

F – G (71-75)

- M. 71, Horns played mirrored versions of the 4-note motive back to back. Trumpets are sustaining C-G#-A.
- 4-note motive continues in intensity until letter G!
- M. 72, Brass chord Eb-E-G.
- M. 74-76, Brass stating the Hussite war song in strong dissonance:
  - G#-A
  - B-F#
  - G
  - B-F#

D-SECTION

Overview: The D-section begins at Letter G and continues through to the Adagio in measure 100. It is a continuation of the previous C-section climaxing at Letter H with the entire ensemble on the pitch "D".

The percussion needs to be careful not the reach *ffff* at letter H too early. There must be direction within the large picture.

Trumpets and percussion represent the "militaristic" Soviet Army marching into Czechoslovakia while the woodwinds represent the chaos that abounds.

Measures 81-88 in the upper woodwinds help to create the chaotic sound by playing designated rhythms in an aleatoric manner.

It is also very important for the sustained pitches in the brass to be heard over the rhythmic utterances in the woodwinds. Each brass entrance should have strength to be audible, but none should be soloistic.

Underneath all of the confusion at letter H is the restatement of the Hussite war song in the timpani. It should be barely noticeable within the context of the winds.

Finally, the ritard poco a poco that begins at Letter H must be structured so that it reaches its final tempo no earlier than measure 99. I would suggest that to keep the continuity of the ritard, the tempo reached should be quarter note = 52 - the same tempo as the Adagio that follows.

G – H (76-87)

- M. 76-87, Percussion states "militaristic" rhythmic pattern that eventually overtakes the entire ensemble.
- M. 76-81, Upper woodwinds trilling and fluttering between G#-A.
- M. 77-81, Trumpets also "militaristic" with C-Eb-E chord.
- M. 77-81, Low Brass sustains C-E-G#.
- M. 79-81, Horns enter with Db-F.
- Note from all combined:
    - (C-Db-(Eb-E-F)-G#-A)…notice use of ½ steps.
- M. 81, Upper woodwinds begin aleatoric section. Saxophones trilling between C-E or Db-Eb. (Note: Saxophones have surrounded the "D")
- M. 83, Trumpets bring back the "D" with organized chaos.

H – End (88-107), *rit. poco a poco, Adagio* (quarter note = ca. 52)

- EVERYONE FINALLY REACHES "D" TOGETHER!!!
- M. 88-99, Everything gradually slows down to the fermata in M. 99. Organized chaos turns into fermata.
- M. 100, Start of a brief Coda.
    - Timpani are left unresolved on "C".
    - Piccolo returns with bird call…somewhat more somber.
    - First movement ends on a minor 2nd. (C-C#)

↓ indicates a continuation

Symbolism: (?) D represents unyielding nature of Czech people

II. Aria

A-SECTION

Overview: In the true sense of the word aria, the second movement is a "soliloquy" for bass clarinet, contrabass clarinet, and saxophones. The rest of the ensemble serves as accompaniment for the movement.

The overall form of the second movement is that of an arch with the peak coming between measures 43-49. It could be viewed as an A-B-A form with the division of sections blurred.

Interesting note: The rehearsal letters continue from the first movement through the third movement. In movement four, the rehearsal letters start back at "A". A logistical reason, or symbolic?

Beginning – I (1-15), *Moderato molto* (quarter note = ca. 60-66)

- Three different ideas are presented at the beginning of the 2nd movement.
  - 1: The seemingly random notes played by the percussion. (Represents the bells of the City of Prague.)
  - 2: The sustained pitches surrounding the melodic line.
  - 3: The melodic line itself. (A mournful, sorrowful reflection of the despair felt by the Czech people.)
- Mm. 1-15, sustained pitches in the tuba, baritone, contrabassoon, and trombones are as follows:
  - G-Ab-Gb-F-C-Db
- The melodic line, played in octaves by the saxophones, bass clarinet, and contrabass clarinet are as follows:
  - E-F-Gb-Cb-Db-C-(E)-D#-Bb-A-G (to breath mark in M. 11)
  - Bb-A-G-Ab-Eb-F-E-F#-(**D**) (to letter I)
    - Note: missing is "D". It is only given to us as the second to last note in the line one measure before I…and then only on the weakest part of a weak beat ("a" of 2).
    - Note 2: the idea of surrounding a given pitch by ½ steps above and below still permeates the melodic line. (Example: E-F-Gb, Cb-Db-C)
- The percussion pitches are as follows:
  - Ab-Gb-F-C-C#-D#-D-E-**A-Bb**-G-B (mm. 1-3.2)
  - F#-F-C-Db-Eb-D-E-**Bb-A**-G-B-G# (mm. 3.3-6)
  - F-C-C#-D#-D-A-(c)-Bb-B-G-Bb-A-F# (slightly different)

I – J (16-29)

- M. 16, Accompaniment in winds begins to build vertically.
  - M. 16: Eb-F

  - M. 19: D-F
  - M. 21: E-F
  - M. 24: A-E-F
  - M. 27: A-Eb
  - M. 28: A-Eb-F
  - M. 29: A-D-F
- Low clarinets & saxophones continue melodic line in octaves.
  - (Db-Cb-D)-(Gb-[E-F)-Eb]-Bb-A-G-C…
    - Again the idea of surrounding the pitch by ½ steps above and below. The parentheses and brackets highlight this.

B-SECTION

Overview: Although I call this a B-section, the lines between A and B are blurred the same as in the first movement. The "B-Section" is merely an interludes between the two melodic lines stated in the low clarinets and saxophones.

J – K (30-35)

- Sustained accompaniment pitches.
  - M. 30: B-D-F (b-diminished)
  - M. 33: D-Eb-G-Ab-B
- M. 32, Melodic line fades into the background.
- M. 33, Piccolo, flutes, and clarinets present repeated rhythmic pattern. (Almost like a telegraph sending Morse code. Short, short, long…short, short, long, etc.)
  - Pitches are unison G splitting to F# and Ab. Here again the idea of surrounding the primary pitch "G" with ½ steps.

K – L (36-45)

- M. 36, Sustained accompaniment pitches in the brass. Building a thicker texture
  - M. 36: D-F#-F-Ab-E to E-G#-(Eb)-Gb-B-D
- M. 38, The bassoons, trombones, tuba, and string bass play the horizontal representation of the cluster chord first presented by the clarinets in the first movement. (D-F#-G-Ab). Repeats this idea in measure 40.
- M. 41-42, Brass chords are as follows:
  - Db-E-F-Gb-Ab / Bb-pedal
  - Ab-A-C-E / Bb-pedal
  - D-E-F-G-Ab / Bb-pedal
  - Db-E-F-Ab / A-pedal
- M. 42-43, Melodic line returns with a displaced octave version of the 4-note cluster chord (D-F#-G-Ab).
- M. 43, The music approaches the climax of the second movement. Melodic line returns and begins a brief journey back to the A-section. For a short time, bassoon, trumpet 3, horns, and baritone join the primary melodic instruments.
- M. 43-45, Chromatic chaos in the upper woodwinds and mallet percussion.

- M. 43: C-Db-D-E
- M. 44-45: C-Db-D-Eb-E-F

A_1-SECTION

Overview: Again the line is blurred as to when the "A-section" really returns, but I feel there is a return to normalcy…somewhat…beginning at letter L. From here on out, the textures begin to thin, the rhythmic intensity begins to wan, and the dynamic level begins to decrease.

L – M (46-59)

- M. 46, Saxophone melodic lines continues, this time with the brief addition of the double reed instruments. This is also the first time the line is not in strict octaves.
  - Note: The pitches used at measure 46 are still (D-F#-G-Ab, and A)
- M. 47, The melodic lines adds the pitch B (in octaves) to the 5-notes.
- M. 48, "D" returns as a dominant pitch in the melodic line as well as the sustained accompaniment. The upper woodwinds are still masking it.
- M. 49, Trumpets masking the "D" with Db and Eb.
- M. 50-52, Melodic line returns to its octave origins…with bassoon. Pitches are as follows:
  - G-Eb-Gb-Db-D-Db-Bb-C-Ab-G-A
- M. 53-59,
  - E-Gb-D-B-Db-B-Db-G
  - (G-B-Bb)-(E-F-Eb)-[Bb-(A-Ab]-…)-(G-Bb-A)-G-Bb-G-E-D
    - Note: Sustained accompaniment pitches begin to take on the characteristics from the beginning of the Aria.

M – End (60-68)

- M. 68 back to M. 57, The sustained pitches from the beginning appear in reverse order at the end. (See measures 1-11)
  - G-Ab-F#-C-Db
- The same can be said for the melodic line looking backwards from measure 68 to 60. (See measures 1-5)
  - E-F-Gb-C-B-Db-C

The Composer in Conversation with Bruce Duffie (interview from 1988)

This past August, the Pulitzer Prize winning composer Karel Husa celebrated his 80th birthday, and there were (and still are) concerts being given all over the world to honor this occasion.

Born in Prague, Husa studied there and in Paris with, among others, Arthur Honegger, Nadia Boulanger, Jaroslav Ridky, and conductor Andre Cluytens. In 1954, Husa was appointed to the faculty of Cornell University where he was Kappa Alpha Professor until his retirement in 1992. He was elected Associate Member of the Royal Belgian Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1974 and has received honorary degrees of Doctor of Music from several institutions, including Coe College, the Cleveland Institute of Music, Ithaca College, and Baldwin Wallace College. He has conducted professional and student orchestras all over the world, and several of his works have been recorded commercially and are in the current catalogue. More details can be found on his page at the Schirmer website.

It was in February of 1988 that Karel Husa was in Chicago for the world premiere of his Trumpet Concerto, written for Adolph Herseth and the Chicago Symphony. Just before the first performance, the composer sat down with me for a chat at his hotel. Here is much of what was said that afternoon.....

Karel Husa: I was at the rehearsals. It was an immense experience for me. You know, sometimes I conduct my music for the first time and this time I didn't, so I can see how things are progressing. I think it's going very well. Mr. Herseth is terrific, and Sir Georg and the orchestra are incredible.

Bruce Duffie: Is it better if you conduct your work for the first time, or let someone else do the premiere?

KH: I think that I prefer others to conduct my music. It just happened in the past that I conduct it myself. I like to conduct my music, but I also learn from others many things that I haven't thought of.

BD: When you conduct your own works, are you better at it because you also conduct works by others?

KH: I don't know. I would say that to conduct my own music it's more authentic, but a composer doesn't live by conducting his music. It has to be conducted mostly by others. When I was a student in the conservatory, I thought about conducting. It was offered at the same time as composition, so it was convenient and I saw that when I started to conduct my own music, it would be easier especially when I was young. When you're just starting out, it's difficult to be performed, and to have a conductor learn a piece of music just for one performance can be impractical. So a composer can demonstrate it very well.

BD: Now, when you conduct a work you wrote many years ago, do you have to approach it as if it was brand new?

KH: In a sense, but I have a feeling that I know the piece. Once I've conducted it or have heard it, I know it. Before that, I don't.

BD: Are you ever surprised by what you hear?

KH: There are times, yes. It happens both ways - sometimes I miscalculate, and other times it sounds even better than I thought. But those surprises are not very big.

BD: Is it safe to assume that you've been pleased with most performances you've heard of your music over the years?

KH: It sounds a little narcissistic, but yes, I would say so in general. There are some circumstances that your music gains because another conductor or performer has a different view and may embellish your music more than you would dare to. When I am on the podium and speak about "my music" or "my work," it sounds a little too big. One has to keep some modesty and not overdo it in front of the orchestra. I usually didn't rehearse my music too much because of that. When you have a soloist, you have to give time to them for their performance, and if you don't rehearse the standard work(s) on the program, the orchestra will somehow feel abandoned.

BD: Then your piece gets short shrift?

KH: I feel that I don't have to give as much rehearsing, but rather show in the actual concert what I really thought.

BD: Speaking as conductor, do you do all of your work at the rehearsal, or do you leave a little bit for the moment of performance?

KH: Due to the shortness of rehearsal time, especially with orchestra, it usually happens that one leaves enough - and often a lot - for the concert. That depends, also, on the quality of the group. I have conducted young ensembles in the high school or university where the situation is completely different from a professional orchestra. But there is practically never a time when the conductor can say, "We've accomplished enough" and not have rehearsal the next day. That doesn't exist today. But something special happens in the concert, hopefully. It might also be like Berlioz describes in his concerts, but in general I get the feeling that it's something special.

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BD: You've been teaching for many years. Is there any real difference between the students of today and those when you started out?

KH: I think so. They are better equipped and maybe smarter in general. They know more and have the advantage of hearing much more music than I have heard. They have access to excellent recordings and scores. As a composer, one learns the most from scores, so technically they are very good. The ideas, or the inspiration, are probably the same as it was, but technically, they are better prepared. And the performers are better, I think. They have to be because they live in a constant competition. If you want to get into a school of music today, you have to be very good and they only accept a certain number. Then after you finish school, again you are in competition when you look for a position. For a composer-position in a university today, there will be easily 120 applicants.

BD: Is that perhaps too much competition?

KH: Oh yes. It's very, very tough, and to a certain degree it's too much. We are too many for the few positions that exist.

BD: What advice do you have for all of these graduates you're turning out in composition?

KH: Well, it was always hard, but it is very difficult. I was told by my teachers that you couldn't live from composition or from teaching composition. We had to be prepared to do something else. Even before they are accepted, I point out the number of people who get positions against the number of those who apply.

BD: Then once they've been accepted, they've already cleared a huge hurdle.

KH: That's true. And the competitions for an orchestral position have at least as many applicants. They don't audition all the applicants, but they invite certain people. But everyone who applies must think that he or she will be one of those who probably will be invited.

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BD: As teacher and composer and conductor, how do you balance the three sides of that triangle?

KH: Somehow I try and it works out. The university gives the composer a lot of leeway as a teacher. If I miss one week, I make up my lessons the next week. Until now, I have worked it out, and I have about three more years to teach so I think I will be all right.

BD: Would you balance the legs of the triangle differently if you could?

KH: No. I like all three of them - certainly composing the most - but I like the three of them so much. If I had to choose only one, I would compose. But the problem of only composing is to be always at home writing, and I wouldn't be able to stand it for long. To sit and write music and be by oneself, and be at the table or go to the piano all day long... I couldn't do it. It's a very tiring profession in the sense that the blood cannot circulate. I'm not a gymnast, but one has to do something else. I have to go and I have to speak to people and I have to see what other people think. That's my contact. As a teacher, it's advantageous to have students come and show you and speak to you about other music. That way, you don't get closed off.

BD: Is it a mistake for a composer to closet himself or herself?

KH: People have different characters. I also feel that as a conductor, performing music is magic to me. I need the outlets to all of that.

BD: Then here's the big question: What is the purpose of music in society?

KH: That's a very difficult question. I hope I can answer... When I was 17 or 18, I went for the first time to a concert. I went to art exhibitions because I was interested in it. I had been reading poetry because I loved it. That first concert was a violin and piano recital of the Kubeliks – Jan accompanied by his son Raphael. At the time, Jan was over 60 years old, and it was an amazing experience for me to go to a concert and hear music. A week later, I bought a ticket to an orchestra. Before that, I had the impression one couldn't go to a concert without being properly dressed, which meant having a tuxedo. I felt it was only for the highest society. But I went, and

the impression I got from the music - which I didn't understand - was overwhelming. So the purpose, I guess, is the communication. The sounds poured on me and soaked in. Then to see the players perform, that is something I have always admired. It's something that can lift me, even at my age. I am sometimes moved to tears when I hear passages, and that is amazing.

BD: Do you get the same feeling when you listen to your own music?

KH: No. These days, I am too scared. In general, I am worried and nervous about it, so I'm not so free. When I listen to my music in concert - for instance the Music for Prague, which I've heard numerous times - I'm a little impatient because I know it a little too well. I have the impression that the audiences who are listening find it too long or boring.

BD: But you wouldn't go back and make changes in the score?

KH: No. In the end, I don't think that the piece is too long, but it's just the impatience of somebody who has heard it too often.

BD: Perhaps you should just show up when the final notes are sounding!

KH: No, no. I still like it, but that's the feeling.

BD: Some of your pieces have different versions. For instance, Music for Prague was written for band and later scored for orchestra. Is it two different pieces, or just one piece in two versions, and how do they differ?

KH: I would say in that case, it's one piece in two versions. It was originally commissioned for band. In 1968, I had a commission to write a piece for wind ensemble at Ithaca College. At that time, the events happened and I saw that it would be a terrific vehicle with the power of the winds plus percussion. Later, I was going to guest-conduct in Europe and America, and I thought I'd make a transcription of it myself. That's how it started. I didn't expect that it would be played so often by orchestras, but it is. That's a nice feeling.

BD: Is one or the other version better?

KH: No, I would say they are two children of mine and I like them both.

BD: Like twins?

KH: Perhaps, yes. Sometimes, one child is more impressive in one concert, and other times, the other child is more impressive in its concert. If the orchestra is powerful and has a large string section, then the sound is very good. If the string section is smaller, then it can be overpowered by the winds and percussion. You might think I'd prefer the orchestra version because bands are not usually professional organizations, but I have heard some very moving performances by young bands, even all-state high school bands which were really excellent.

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BD: You get many commissions. How do you decide which to accept and which to set aside?

KH: I wouldn't say that I get too many commissions, but it has worked out that I could accept many. When I was approached a year and a half ago to write a concerto for Mr. Herseth and the Chicago Symphony with Maestro Solti, there's not a choice to make. You have the perfect commission there can be. It was the same when I was approached by the New York Philharmonic. When I was younger, I was not approached by these great ensembles, so I accepted most things that were offered. Today, it's a little different because there are young composers with impressive amount of commissions. That stems from organizations like Meet the Composer, who tries to arrange things. Also the National
Endowment for the Arts. That helps. In fact, I think that life for composers today is very good. There are outlets and they can get commissions and be performed. Of course, one has to be 'good' . . .

BD: Then let me ask that question - what contributes to being a 'good' composer?

KH: Ideas, definitely. Many scores will be refused by conductors and members of committees on the basis that they are technically not as good yet. It would be like writing a proposal and making grammatical mistakes. That would be terrible, and the same thing is true in music. If a composer writes things that are impossibly wrong, or which don't exist, that's how they start to eliminate some works from the stack.

BD: As Music Director of orchestras, is this how you select which pieces you will and will not put on various programs?

KH: I am only a guest conductor, but in the past I have been a member of some committees, and yes, it's true. If there is a competition for composers, there will be 500 or 600 scores. Another committee will be there to eliminate those which are not technically very good. They will have many good scores, and one has to arrive at a small number to make the final selection.

BD: When putting together symphonic programs, how do you balance the old works with new ones?

KH: I like to do that. I like to play one modern composition in every program. I think the audience will not rebel against that. They may not like the piece, but they accept it and this is not a new idea. I remember Charles Munch in Europe and Talich in Prague and many others always had a modern piece in subscription concerts. I think it has to be. Composers have a very difficult task. We are competing against music of 300 or 400 years. Performers are different. They only compete against other performers who are alive for the slot on the schedule. When selecting a soloist, they are the ones who are available to perform. When selecting music to play, they take Beethoven and all the rest, and eventually there is no place for the living composer.

BD: But aren't the performers competing against the memories and recordings of the past?

KH: In a sense, but the orchestra cannot engage Heifetz any more. To get a sold-out performance, the might do only Beethoven, Brahms, Bach, and the audiences will definitely will come.

BD: What do you expect of the audience that attends one of your works - either an old one or a world premiere?

KH: I expect that they listen to the piece and not compare it to the style of Handel or Bach or Beethoven because I don't write in that style. I admire those composers so much and they have

done it so well that I cannot compete with them on that level. But Beethoven didn't write like Handel. It was a completely different style, just as painting is not only Rembrandt, Da Vinci, Raphael. They are only part of the whole literature that we have. If I had been born in Asia, my concept of art would have been very different. If I'd been born in Mesopotamia behind Turkey, I might say my style of art is truly beautiful and I don't need Beethoven. It would be wrong again, but it shows that these composers were not part of a culture in other countries.

BD: So you are encouraging the expansion of everything.

KH: Yes, of all arts. Not too long ago, we didn't think of music as anything other than European. Today we are interested in Javanese music and the culture of Tibet and many, many things.

BD: It's a good thing to always learn more?

KH: I think so. One has to learn constantly.

BD: In music, where is the balance between the artistic achievement and an entertainment value?

KH: I really don't know. I often wonder where that is. When I go to a concert, I don't think of it as entertainment. I think that it will enrich me in some way. Entertainment, as wonderful as it is, doesn't come too much to my mind. I like to hear light pieces, too, and there are some beautiful excerpts from larger works I played on the violin. When I was a student in Prague, I was at a concert or an opera practically every day. I remember how touched I was by hearing operas and operettas that others considered simple. I took everything at its highest value.

BD: Why didn't you write operas?

KH: I didn't have the chance. I would have loved to, and maybe it's not too late for me. All music has some function. I like to hear a light overture, but I also like to hear something substantial in a concert. The problem is that some audiences come to a concert tired after a day's work, and they would like the music to entertain them. Many times that doesn't happen because the composer wants to be serious. We can't always write music just to entertain people. It's amazing to say this because I've written some pieces which I call divertimento. That word means to entertain. They are short pieces and I've had so much critique that they are too simple.

BD: But you do like them just the same?

KH: I do like them because I like to laugh and be happy and even talk nonsense sometimes.

BD: You've not written an opera, but you have written for the voice. Tell me the joys and sorrows of writing for the human instrument.

KH: I've not written much, and the reasons are practical. By the time I thought I would like to write for voice, I left Prague and went to Paris. So I had to capture and learn about the French language. I read many French poets and would have liked to set them, but I wasn't ready. Then I left and came to America and I thought I'd better wait before writing in English. I did set 12 Moravian Songs for voice and piano, but that used a Moravian text and it was translated. Then I set some Henry David Thoreau, whom I admired, and I've also written An American Te Deum which is about 46 minutes. That was for chorus and it was a great experience.

BD: Some of your music has been recorded. Is it special to get a broader audience in this fashion?

KH: I guess it's one of the ways that a composer is known, but a concert is something that really happens. That live experience lets me feel things and be in the middle of things. But recordings are a wonderful help to the composer to be heard on radio and in homes all over. That's part of what life is today.

BD: Are you basically pleased with the recordings that have been made?

KH: Yes, I think so in general. The recording which the old Fine Arts Quartet made of my Second and Third Quartets I still think is just terrific. I conducted a recording of the University of Michigan Band of Music for Prague and Apotheosis, and just yesterday I spoke with one of the Chicago Symphony brass players and he said it was one of his favorites! When you record with a school or university ensemble, you think it's not as good or not on the professional level, but this was a live concert and not a recording session. The Alard Quartet did my First Quartet, and the Verdehr Trio did the Sonata a Tre and I'm most pleased.

BD: Is there ever a chance that the records can be too technically perfect because of the cut-and-splice?

KH: That is true. That has happened in recordings earlier in my career. In 1954 in Paris we did Bartok's Miraculous Mandarin. We had to make about 20 or 25 splices because we would rehearse and record the first five minutes of it, then we took the next four or five minutes and made two or three versions of each. But we had to splice it because sometimes a mistake would happen and people would look for the mistakes in recordings. Perhaps today one doesn't do it as much, but after maybe 30 splices, it was very good. I also did the Brahms First Symphony, and was supposed to do the Prokofiev Cello Concerto, which is a symphony in itself, but that was when I received a letter from Cornell asking if I was interested in coming to the US for three years to teach composition. So, I abandoned the project because I was a composer first.

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BD: Where is music going today?

KH: The fastest and the best description would be 'the same direction that the world is going,' so we really don't know. In my case and in my thinking, music has mirrored the life we live in. You can see it backward. When you listen to Bach, it reflects the life and you can imagine it as it was at that time. When you listen to Beethoven, after the Third Symphony, you know that there is a revolution in Europe. It's in the music, too. But it was in literature and painting, and music was probably the third in order. When you listen to Debussy, you know that he has gone into the atelier of impressionistic painters and that he has read the poetry of the symbolists and impressionists. When one listens to music of Berg, you can imagine the life in Vienna and all the things that happened. When you listen to music of Kurt Weill, that was Berlin at that time. I think my music also mirrors what is happening today. A lot of music does. So we have the high-powered, twentieth century music and we also now have at the same time something very easy to listen to and things in between. We are so different as people and we are so different as composers. Diversity is today's trend and the music reflects that, too. There are so many good things in the world and we dispose of them too fast. Some things are left untouched. Some

things are taken and others are not. That's in music, too. I'm sure there is beautiful music from many gifted people, but we are too many composers. We are too many performers. We are too many sports figures. The schools are turning out
so many professional athletes as well as so many instrument players. How many can get to that top level? That's today's life.

BD: Do you feel that you are part of a lineage?

KH: Yes, I think so. In many ways I am a traditionalist. Perhaps not in that exact term, but I have roots that came from the past. Philosophically, I am the son of somebody, not only in life but also in music. Somebody gave me the help and knowledge and I have taken it from that person who was my musical father and have tried to do something with it, and then pass it to others. That's how it goes.

BD: You have worked with quartertones and polytonality. Are these things you have accepted and rejected, or have they filtered throughout your music?

KH: They have filtered throughout my music. I think we have very good ideas today and I accept new things. I'm not revolting against something new. On the contrary, I think there must be some potential good in new things. Composers don't want to write bad music and alienate the audiences. Even in revolutionary times, it's the necessity that the composer feels to do it. The avant guard is the faction that keeps us going on ahead. We would become senile if that didn't exist.

BD: Are you optimistic about the future of music?

KH: I am. I think that there are so many excellent musicians and many very good composers. Still I think that we have much more music today than we have ever had in the past. There may be too many concerts to which audiences don't come, but later everything will be sorted out. We will take what we need and what represents this period. The only music that will exist is that which is accepted first by performers and then by audiences.

BD: Slonimsky says your music, "has been oxygenated by humanistic romanticism." Is that accurate?

KH: If to express human feelings - joy, love - is romantic, then I am romantic. Expressing a fight for freedom must be romantic, too. I think that music can express these things and I don't want to be a cerebral composer. I want to be inventive, to have a score that will reveal something interesting and intriguing and sophisticated to the performer or conductor, or to another composer. At the same time, it must be musical and warm, and show that I care about other people.

BD: Is composing fun?

KH: At some moments, it's fun. When it gets closer to the deadline, then it can be frustrating. When you have time to think and prepare, it's fun. When it's the time to put things together, the composer is not different from the manager of the orchestra who has to produce all the press releases and meet people and make sure it's all done on time.

BD: Do you like meeting the public before or after concerts?

KH: I like to explain to audiences, when they ask me, what the composer is trying to achieve.

BD: Does that change from piece to piece, or are you trying to achieve something over a lifetime?

KH: It changes from piece to piece. But the audiences who are interested in the composer like to listen. Even if they don't agree with me, they like to accept an explanation from a composer. I like to say why I'm doing what I'm doing. People have the right to listen to it.

BD: Tell me about winning the Pulitzer Prize.

KH: The Pulitzer Prize is a very important prize, and the moment you receive it, it's like a zoom on one moment in your life. Then it remains, but it doesn't mean that the works either before or after are either worse or better. The members of the Fine Arts Quartet submitted my Third Quartet and didn't want to let me know - in case I didn't win.

BD: Does having the prize, then, focus too much attention on that piece?

KH: In my case, there seems to be more focus on Music for Prague. It's a curious thing because I like other things just as much. Apotheosis of this Earth, for instance, or Concerto for Orchestra. But it's Music for Prague that gets the attention.

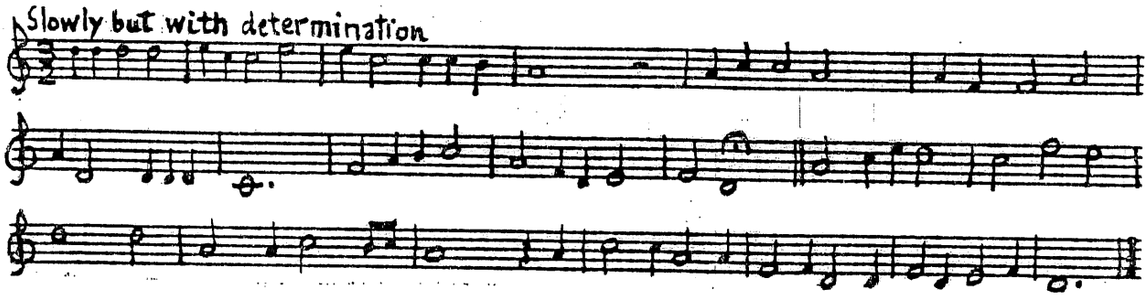
BD: You're not sick of that one, are you?

KH: (laughing) No, no. There is enough narcissism left to fight this!

Karel Husa : Music for Prague 1968

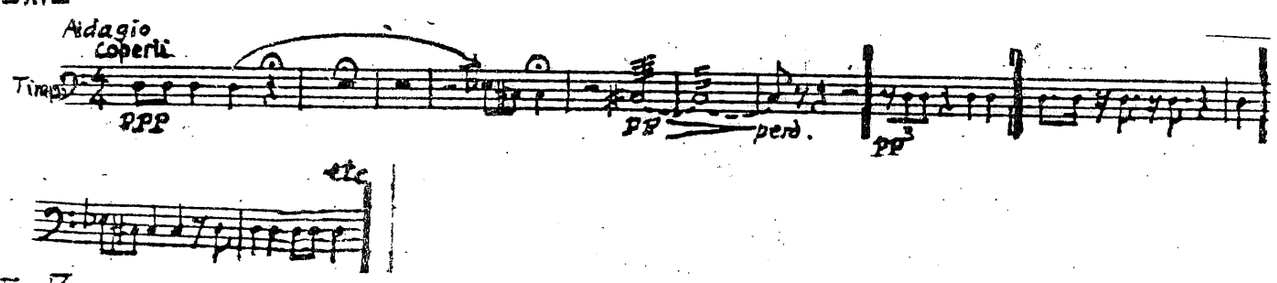
Ex.1

Kdož jste boží bojovníci
Ye warriors of God



Ye warriors of God and His law, pray for God's help and love in Him,
that you will have final victory with faith in Him.
This Lord commands not to be afraid of corporal destructions,
commands to even give life for the love of one's neighbor.

Ex.2



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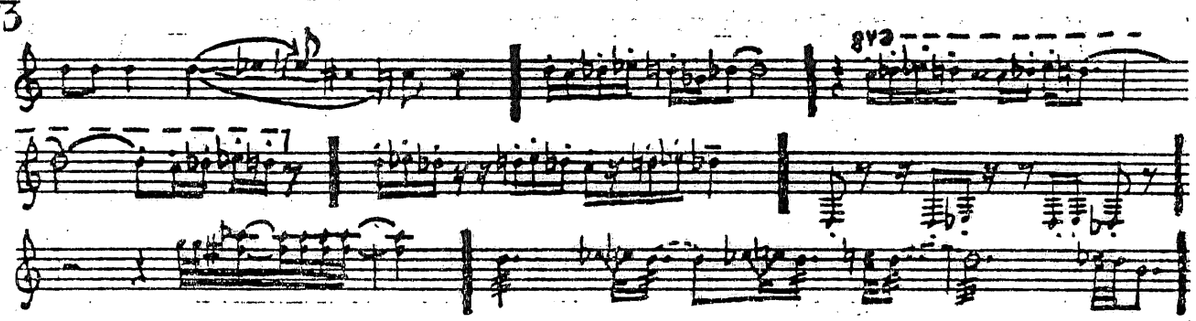

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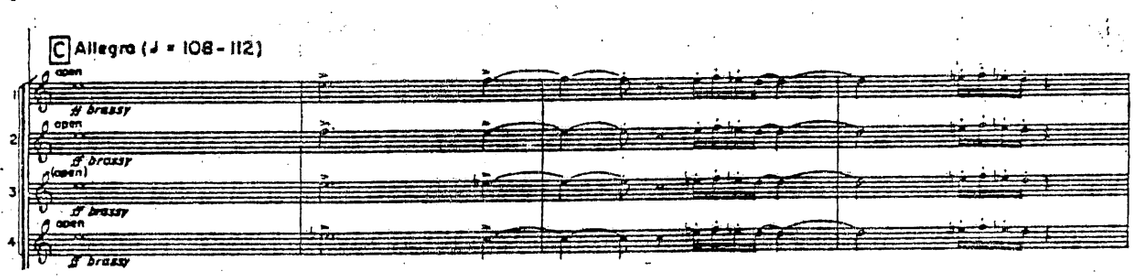

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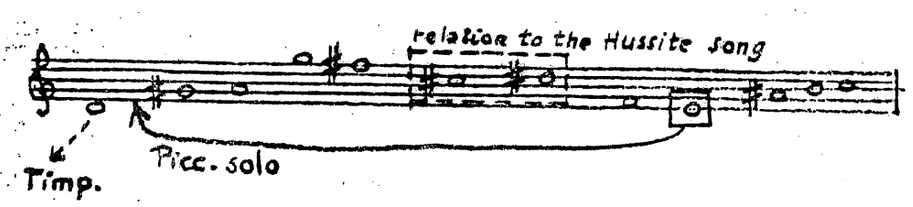

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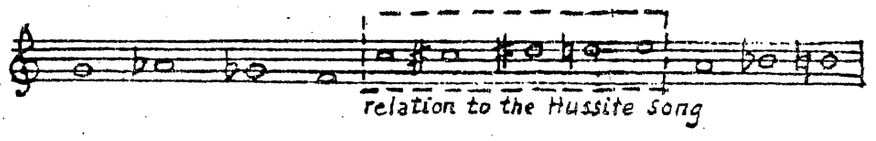

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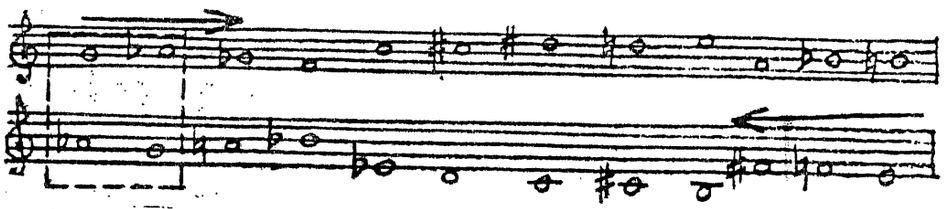

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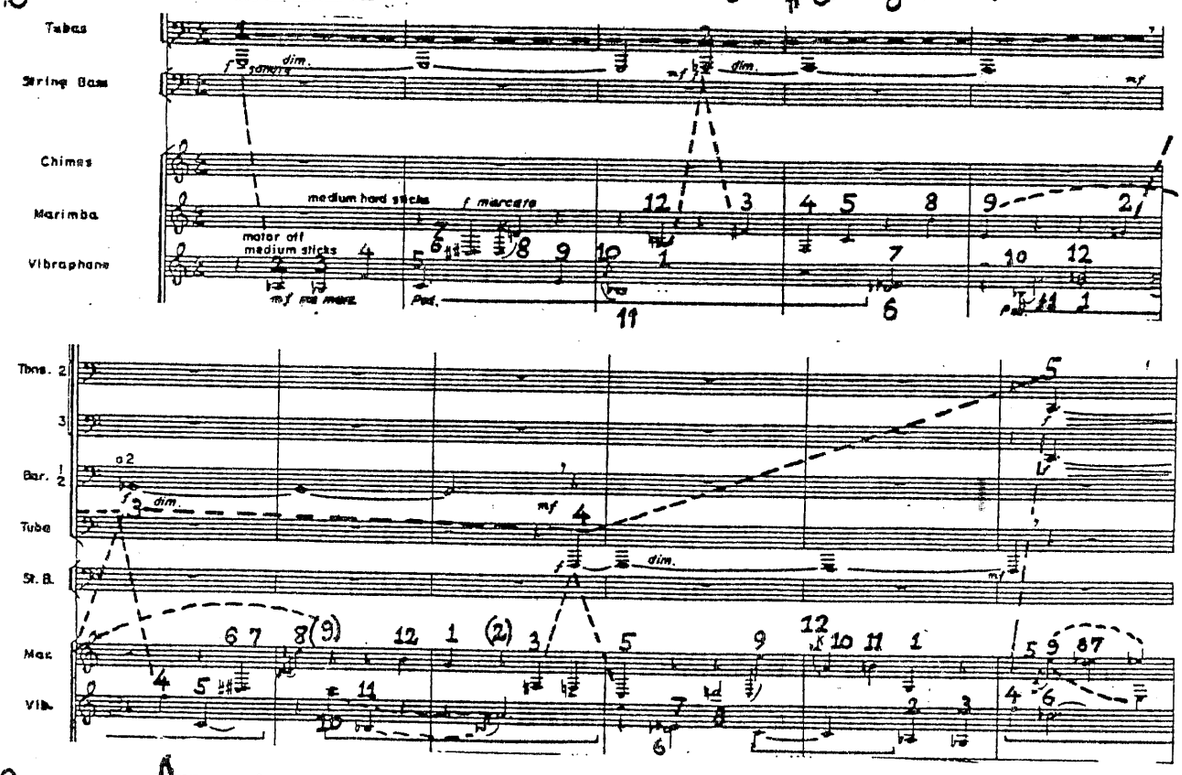

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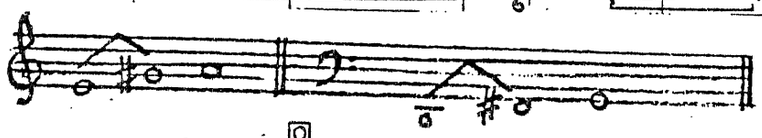

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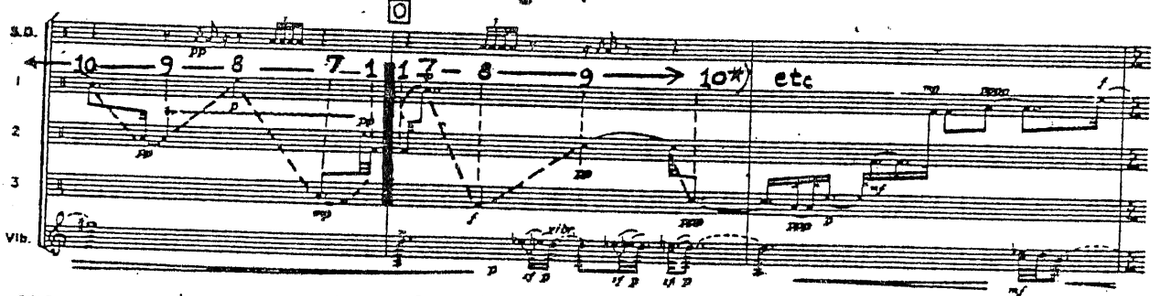

Ex.11