

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

A MISSING PIECE OF A “FINE” PUZZLE: FILLING A GAP IN AMERICAN MUSIC

HISTORY THROUGH THE OBOE MUSIC OF VIVIAN FINE

A DOCUMENT

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

By

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Norman, Oklahoma

2022

A MISSING PIECE OF A “FINE” PUZZLE: FILLING A GAP IN AMERICAN MUSIC  
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A DOCUMENT APPROVED FOR THE  
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

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*For my siblings Hannah, Olivia, Scarlett, Noelle, and Maddox.*

## Acknowledgments

There are several individuals who have helped me navigate this journey. I want to take a moment to recognize them.

First, my committee members Dr. Marvin Lamb, Dr. Michael Lee, and Dr. Allison Palmer for their guidance throughout my degree and this document. A special acknowledgment to my chair, Dr. Valerie Watts and mentor Professor Rodney Ackmann for their wisdom, time, and grace as I have navigated both my master's and Doctoral degrees. Both of you have gone above and beyond for me throughout my time at OU.

To my friends: thank you for everything. I could not have done this without the many late nights studying, Library celebrations, "teatimes" in the office, or the many trips to Starbucks. Each of you has played a key role in my success. While it is impossible to recognize everyone by name, I want to give a special thank you to Kit Hawkins, for being a friend and colleague beyond what I could have ever imagined. The hours we spent studying, performing, making reeds, and growing together have made this crazy journey worth it.

To Will: Thank you for being an amazing partner, friend, supporter, and everything. Your love and support (and LOTS of patience) have been a driving force behind the completion of this degree. I can't thank you enough for the many hours you've spent attending performances, proofreading papers, and listening to me ramble on about school, oboe, reeds, etc. You made doing this very difficult thing a lot less difficult. You have helped me through the hardest of times, and I truly believe you have earned this degree alongside me.

To my parents and sisters: I want to thank you all for going on this journey with me. I remember someone once telling me that getting a doctorate is a family affair... After finishing

this degree, I believe it. I can't thank you all enough for the outpouring of love, support, and patience you all have shown through these insane last few years. I am so lucky to have been raised by and around so many strong and fearless women and a strong and fearless father who is so supportive of my ambitions. I am very proud to be the first "Dr. Sweeden".

I finally want to thank my cats, Ethelcat and Marcel Tabbytail (AKA Bumper) for keeping me company through the writing process. I seriously would have gone insane without the two of you.

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## **Abstract**

Vivian Fine (1913-2000) was an American composer of avant-garde music. With a nearly 70-year-long career and 140 compositions, Vivian Fine deserves to be a celebrated figure in American music history. Fine's name is hardly known despite her massive contribution to the American music repertoire and the impressive social and professional circles in which she navigated, which included famous names like Ruth Crawford Seeger, Aaron Copland, and Henry Cowell. Of her 140 compositions, Vivian Fine composed four works for solo oboe that fill major gaps in the oboe repertoire. These works have received little attention from the oboe community. This study will explore the life and music of Vivian Fine by examining the social and professional circles that Fine navigated in America during the Great Depression, the Red Scare, and the Second World War. The study will unfold the three compositional styles seen throughout Fine's career. These stylistic periods are characterized by serially informed atonality, followed by a shift to tonality, and concluding with a transition back to serially informed atonality. This unfolding will be examined through her oboe music, followed by each piece's pedagogical applications. The outcome of this study will advocate for the oboe music of Vivian Fine and further demonstrate her place as an important figure in American music history.

## Prologue

September 2015

“Are you paying attention?” She asked, pushing a worn-out score to the Gustav Schreck Oboe Sonata across the beaten-up worktable covered in reed shavings. Affixed to the table was a black lamp, the heat of which was radiating onto my arm, that illuminated the crisp yellow pages.

I wasn't. I had stopped paying attention a while ago. I didn't want to be there talking about a recital and definitely didn't want to be playing another long, drawn-out work by yet another dead white man. (Okay, I admit that was harsh, but I truly felt that way at that moment.)

“I apologize; I have a lot on my mind today,” I said, absently thumbing through the sonata on the table. It looked like a fun piece to play and had pleasant musical moments.

“Will it pair well with *Quiet City*?” I asked.

“I think it will be fine,” she said, “you have a trumpet player, correct?”

“Yes, John will do it,” I said. John was a good friend of mine, and we shared a deep admiration for Aaron Copland's music.

“Good!” She said, “I'm glad we have this set. I think it will be a great recital.”

I began putting my things in my bag, careful not to bend the already-creased score, when the work I had printed out the night before, the reason my recital repertoire had not been solidified at that point, caught my eye. I wanted to show this work to my professor. I placed the score on the table.

“Before I go, can I show you something?” I asked.

“Sure.” She turned off the lamp. I felt its heat immediately dissipate off my arm. “What is it?”

“I found this work written by Vivian Fine... Do you think I could put this together in time?” I asked, grabbing the copy of the handwritten score out of my bag.

She glanced at the first page of the score. “It may be a bit much for our timeline,” she said. She was right. I hadn’t looked at the score; I just saw the name and thought, “Vivian Fine; what a great name for a composer.” (This was only the third time I had seen a piece for oboe written by a woman.)

“Oh... I agree,” I said through a chuckle. “Have a great day!”

I returned to my tiny apartment, sat down at my desk, and placed Fine’s score in the bottom drawer of my desk. I held the score to the other sonata in my hands. “This will be fine,” I said to myself.

*“Vivian, someday I’ll play it.”*

## Chapter One

*“Stories have to be told or they die, and when they die, we can't remember who we are or why we're here.”<sup>1</sup> – Sue Monk Kidd (*The Secret Life of Bees*)*

Everyone has a story, and each story has a fascinating cast of characters, places, and events that influence the main character. Some stories have yet to be fully told, existing in pieces amongst the details of stories more well known. Some stories are told but leave out crucial details, making them side stories within stories. This is the case with 20th-century American composer Vivian Fine. While the story of Vivian Fine has not been forgotten, it is not told with the urgency it deserves. To some, she is a background character in the world of significant figures in American Music; a friend of a friend, a student of “so and so.” However, she is much more than a supporting character; her entire life’s achievements deserve to be told.

Before telling Fine's story, it is essential to talk about how her career unfolded. Fine had three stylistic periods, each with differences in her compositional voice. Fine's first period was between 1928 and 1937 when she studied with Ruth Crawford-Seeger. Fine's first period is characterized by a serially informed style with no indications of tonality. Fine's second period was from 1937 to 1944 and was characterized by a more diatonic style. Her third period began in 1944, when Fine returned to her roots in atonality, this time with the knowledge gained in her second period.<sup>2</sup>

When Vivian Fine's name is brought up in conversation, she is usually associated with composers like Ruth Crawford Seeger or maybe Aaron Copland. Vivian Fine indeed stood alongside several significant composers. Her contribution of over 140 works to the American

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<sup>1</sup> Sue Monk Kidd, *The Secret Life of Bees* (New York, NY: Penguin, 2003), p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> Wallingford Riegger, “*The Music of Vivian Fine*,” *ACA Bulletin*, 1958, pp. 2-4.

music repertoire during her almost 70-year career as a composer, pianist, and teacher is not as well known.<sup>3</sup> Sadly, her story is rarely told, and her music is rarely programmed.

What is less known is that of those 140 works, Fine wrote four pieces specifically for the oboe. Those pieces are *Solo for Oboe*, composed in her first period; *Sonatina for Oboe* composed in her second period; and *Second Solo for Oboe*, and *Capriccio for Oboe and String Trio*, written in her third period. Fine was not an oboist, nor did she know any oboists until well into her compositional career, making her number of pieces for oboe unusual because the oboe is such a unique instrument. Fine's considerable output of oboe music may lead some scholars to assume that Fine is a well-known composer in the oboe community; however, this is not the case as Fine's oboe music is rarely performed.

To advocate for Fine's oboe music, its story must be told alongside Vivian Fine's story. With so many “Fine” pieces for oboe that are accessible to oboists of all abilities, it makes no sense that it is not played. There is currently a dire need in the oboe community to have more diversity in its repertoire, including music composed by American women. Therefore, I pose the question: *Why is Vivian Fine's oboe music not performed?* Furthermore: *Why is Vivian Fine excluded from American music history?*

To find this answer, it is essential to first look at the complete story of Vivian Fine. It is a story that is not just about a woman who composed; it is a multifaceted series of events and environments that led to Fine's extensive career. Her story is about an exceptional woman who defied all odds, a young woman navigating several male-dominated professional circles. It is a

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<sup>3</sup> Peggy Karp, “*Biography*,” Vivian Fine: Biography (Vivianfine.org), accessed May 22, 2022, <https://www.vivianfine.org/main/biography.htm>.

story about American politics. It is a story about overcoming biases. It is a story that urgently needs to be told.

### **American Music Culture in the 1930s and 1940s**

It is crucial to talk about the world Fine was born into. On September 28, 1913, Vivian Fine was born into a family of Russian-Jewish immigrants who resided in an improvised Jewish ghetto in Chicago. Fine was born one year before the First World War and four years before the Russian Revolution, which were two large contributing factors to the First Red Scare. Fine's compositional debut was in New York City in 1929. That year saw the stock market crash which led to the great depression. Fine moved to New York City two years later in 1931 before eventually moving to Vermont and maintaining an active compositional career. There, she produced many works that covered political topics such as Civil Rights and Feminism while the US was at the height of the Second Red Scare. These historical events greatly influenced the world Vivian Fine navigated.

Tracing Fine's locations— Chicago and New York City— is essential for many reasons. Each city had its own culture and social circles that Fine had to navigate to create her career. Because of this, both Chicago and New York act as characters in Vivian Fine's story. Despite the looming "threat" of a communist uprising and the economic depression, Chicago and New York City were cultural centers where music and the arts thrived. These centers were full of aspiring and professional musicians who constantly contributed to the culture, even throughout these two significant events.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Chicago was booming with musical opportunities. Chicago was home to several well-known musicians such as Henry Cowell, Djane Lavoie Herz, and Ruth Crawford. Cowell eventually became Fine's first advocate as a composer, Herz became her piano

teacher, and Ruth Crawford taught her harmony and counterpoint, becoming one of her most treasured friends. These characters will become very important in Fine's story later as they relate to their professional relationships, friendships, and political leanings.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra was approaching its 40th season. Multiple music schools in Chicago, like The American Conservatory, Northwestern University, and the Chicago Musical College, were drawing in world-class faculty and students.<sup>4</sup> At this moment, Chicago was the ideal environment to foster a passion for music in a young girl.

Like Chicago, New York City was also a significant hub for musical creativity. New York City was a beacon of hope for people from all walks of life, particularly artists. As a densely populated area with many international ports, New York City became a global hub for art and music. Music schools like Juilliard attracted several world-class faculty and students each year.

New York City was also home to Aaron Copland, a maverick in the composition field, boasting about 100 works throughout his lifetime. Copland is a significant character in Fine's story. He oversaw the Young Composers' Group, which Fine joined alongside many young men who also became notable American composers and crucial figures in Fine's story.

In the years that followed her New York days, Fine called many other places home, including Montclair, New Jersey; New Platz, New York; and Shadesbury, Vermont. Fine held teaching positions at schools such as New York University, Juilliard, and Bennington College while continuing to compose. She also held positions in various large organizations, such as the Vice President of the American Composers' Alliance and the director of the Batsheva de

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<sup>4</sup> Heidi Von Gunden, *The Music of Vivian Fine*, 2-3. Vivian studied piano here, beginning at age five. She studied with Helen Ross for three years at the Chicago Musical College.



Rothschild Foundation for Art and Sciences. Even after her retirement, Fine went on to receive many commissions from well-known groups like the San Francisco Symphony and the Dallas Opera.

The context of Fine's story is essential because the world and the social circles she navigated in were highly impactful on her career. It is also crucial because Fine's works for oboe were written between 1929 and 1947, the peaks of the Great Depression and the Red Scare. These historical events greatly influenced the social circles that Fine navigated, as most of her friends and colleagues were either born into families or followed political ideologies that these events greatly impacted. This resulted in a massive shift in modern music, impacting Fine's voice and many other American composers.

### **The American Composers' Alliance**

Another vital part of Vivian Fine's story is the American Composers' Alliance (the ACA). The ACA was founded on December 19, 1937; the first meeting was at Vivian Fine's home on Bleecker Street in Greenwich Village and included Aaron Copland, Roy Harris, Douglas Moore, Wallingford Riegger, Elie Siegmeister, Bernard Wagenaar, Marion Bauer, Goddard Lieberson, Quincy Porter, Roger Sessions, and Virgil Thomson.<sup>5</sup> The mission of the ACA was published in a manifesto in *The Dance Observer* in 1938. The alliance's goal was to ensure composers' right to earn compensation from performances of their works, much like that of today's American Society of Composers, Artists, and Publishers (ASCAP) and the American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA). The manifesto also suggests a collective bargaining effort between composers

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<sup>5</sup> Von Gunden, *The Music of Vivian Fine*, 27-28.

and publishers.<sup>6</sup> Overall, the ACA's goal was to increase music performances by American composers through fair compensation.

The first official record of Fine's involvement in the American Composers' Alliance is a letter from Fine to Aaron Copland, dated June 2, 1938, where Fine mentioned the possibility of a composers' project under the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and suggested a survey be sent to the members of the ACA to gauge eligibility to participate in that program. In the letter, Fine described the possibility of a project as "quite a feather in our cap."<sup>7</sup>

Even though Fine had early ties to the ACA, Fine was never mentioned as a founder in the public records of the American Composers' Alliance, and her official membership was not documented until July 28, 1944.<sup>8</sup> There are records in the ACA archives at the University of Maryland that date back to the Copland letter in 1938. Other correspondences in this collection include a 1941 letter requesting Fine fill out the survey after multiple attempts to contact her.<sup>9</sup> In a 1942 letter, Fine requests a meeting with President Harrison Kerr to discuss copyright.<sup>10</sup> Finally, two letters from 1944 ask for a prompt response from Fine after multiple attempts to reach her about procuring a list of her compositions<sup>11</sup> and a signature for BMI.<sup>12</sup> These letters

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<sup>6</sup> Aaron Copland, "A Manifesto from the American Composers' Alliance," *The Dance Observer* V, no. 5 (May 1938): pp. 68-69.

<sup>7</sup> Vivian Fine (College Park, Maryland, n.d.).

<sup>8</sup> Harrison Kerr, "Vivian Fine's Membership Agreement to the American Composers' Alliance" (College Park, MD, n.d.). While Vivian Fine was instrumental in the formation of the ACA, she was never mentioned in any of the official ACA documents or correspondences until 1941. Vivian Fine, being left out of the beginning documents of the ACA, tells an even bigger story of what it meant to be a woman who was also a composer.

<sup>9</sup> Harrison Kerr (New York City, New York, n.d.). Fine was sent several letters requesting biographical information, updated pictures, and other reminders for correspondences between the years 1941 and 1950; this may have been due to her career taking off as a composer and the birth of her first daughter Peggy.

<sup>10</sup> Vivian Fine (College Park, Maryland, n.d.).

<sup>11</sup> Harrison Kerr (College Park, Maryland, n.d.).

<sup>12</sup> Kathryn Biehn (College Park, Maryland, n.d.).

were sent while the Alliance was in its early days and perhaps still figuring out its bylaws and official membership terms.

On June 29, 1945, Fine was nominated for election to the Board of Governors, and on July 10, 1945, the same day Fine's official membership was documented, Fine sent a letter to Harrison Kerr, president of the ACA, accepting that nomination.<sup>13</sup> On September 14, 1945, Fine received a letter from the ACA informing her that she had been elected to the Board of Governors.<sup>14</sup> From then on, Fine remained an active member, documented by hundreds of correspondences kept in the American Composers' Alliance archives.

The ACA is where Fine proved herself to be a champion of American composers. In January 1951, Fine brought the attention of a composition competition to the executive board that she deemed needed investigation. The competition took place in 1949, had a \$1,000 cash prize (about \$12,000 in 2022), and required an unspecified submission fee for each composer. Of the 39 manuscripts submitted, no winner was selected, and the competition host refused to give the names of the judges because they were "not well-known musicians."<sup>15</sup> While the ACA could not do anything, they were made aware of the matter, leading to further investigation and future oversight in composition competitions.<sup>16</sup> Fine proved that she was a vital member not only of the organization but in American music history.

In 1961, Vivian Fine was elected as the Vice President of the ACA and held that position until 1965. Fine's official title was "Founder and Chair, 1961-1965, Vice President."<sup>17</sup> When she

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<sup>13</sup>Vivian Fine (College Park, Maryland, n.d.).

<sup>14</sup> Harrison Kerr (College Park, Maryland, n.d.).

<sup>15</sup> Vivian Fine (College Park, Maryland, n.d.).

<sup>16</sup> David W Rubin (College Park, Maryland, n.d.).

<sup>17</sup>Judith Cody, *Vivian Fine: A Bio-Bibliography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 19.

was elected Vice President, Fine and her husband were busy working full-time jobs and raising two children. This was a hectic time in Fine's life, yet she managed to find success, despite the chaos.

On January 16, 1965, Fine submitted an official letter of resignation from the American Composer's Alliance to President Richard “Dick” Donovan. In the letter, Fine writes: “This step is the result of many weeks of inner debate as my association with the Alliance goes back to its formation, as you know. However, my situation has changed to the point where practical considerations, that is, economic ones, dictate this move.”<sup>18</sup>

Vivian Fine's involvement in the American Composers' Alliance is crucial to her story because she is never given credit as a founder or even a member until 1945, despite written proof of her heavy involvement in the key moments of its formation. Unfortunately, this is only one of many instances of a woman being excluded from history despite her significant contributions.

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<sup>18</sup> Vivian Fine (New Paltz, New York, n.d.).

## Chapter Two

*“I don’t think of my life in terms of having highlights. Life somehow does not feel that way: it simply unfolds.”<sup>19</sup> -Vivian Fine*

I must preface this chapter by saying that most good stories involve more than one person going on an adventure. A good story has a purpose and unfolds, keeping the reader searching for answers that lead to more questions. Fine's story has many of those moments, specifically in regard to her oboe music. This chapter will discuss the events that led up to the composition of Vivian Fine’s oboe music because that alone is a story worth being told.

Of the many viewpoints from which her story can be told, it makes the most sense to tell Vivian Fine's story through the developments in her compositional styles because it also lines up with significant moments in her life and American history. This retelling of Fine’s story will cover her life's unfolding from the very beginning, the culture she navigated, and what led up to the compositions of her oboe music. It will scratch the surface of the stories of her friends and colleagues and provide further information about this extraordinary woman.

Fine was drawn to contemporary music at an early age before she began composing. Her musical style was strongly influenced by her upbringing, the social and professional circles in which she navigated, and the culture surrounding them. Throughout her career, Fine composed over 140 works and underwent three stylistic shifts in her compositional voice: the first being defined as highly serial with no indication of tonal centers, the second a shift to tonality with a more solidified sense of musical form, and the third period a return to serialism with hints of diatonic writing, devoid of triadic harmony. Of the 140 works, four of these are written for oboe,

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<sup>19</sup> *Seventy Years of Composing: An Interview with Vivian Fine*, *Seventy Years of Composing: An Interview with Vivian Fine* (Contemporary Music Review, 1997), <http://www.vivianfine.org/main/writings/interviews/I1seventy.htm>.

each composed during major milestones in these stylistic periods. This chapter will discuss Fine's upbringing, the cultural and social influences that led to the unfolding of Fine's voice, and the significance of her works for the oboe in her career.

### **The Formative Years**

David and Rose Fine immigrated to the United States from Latvia at age eight and Ukraine at two, respectively. Both Ukraine and Latvia were heavily associated with radicalism including communism, and immigrants from these countries were constantly being suspected of non-American activity, resulting in a rough start with little money and little knowledge of their new home, Chicago. Once married, they had three daughters: Adelaide, Vivian, and Eleanor. Adelaide was born in 1910, Vivian in 1913, and Eleanor in 1914. This was the height of the First Red Scare in the United States and was significant to the culture of Chicago in the 1910s and 1920s.<sup>20</sup>

The Red Scare created a widespread hysteria over communism which led to various government interventions, such as the Espionage Act of 1917,<sup>21</sup> the Sedition Act of 1918,<sup>22</sup> and

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<sup>20</sup> Murray Burton Levin, "What Did Happen," in *Political Hysteria in America* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1971), pp. 29 The First Red Scare began in 1917 as a reaction to the communist revolutions spreading through Europe, which, to the American mind only being exposed to American journalism, suggested that a popular solution to poverty was radical anarchy. Murray B. Levin refers to it as "a nationwide anti-radical hysteria provoked by a mounting fear and anxiety that a Bolshevik revolution in America was imminent—a revolution that would change Church, home, marriage, civility, and the American Way of Life

<sup>21</sup> The Espionage Act prevented interference with United States military operations and recruiting, prevented insubordination within the United States Military, and prevented any support of the enemies of the United States during wartime

<sup>22</sup> Marcie K. Cowley, "*Red Scare*," *The First Amendment Encyclopedia* (Free Speech Center at Middle Tennessee State University, 2009), <https://www.mtsu.edu/first-amendment/article/1063/red-scare>. The sedition act was passed in response to multiple targeted attacks on American officials, which criminalized the language deemed disloyal to the United States. This encompassed the mailing system in the United States, resulting in 79 newspapers, the only media source of that time, not being distributed

the Palmer Raids between November 1919 and January 1920.<sup>23</sup> Vivian Fine's family was never a victim of raids, nor the various governmental laws directed at communist activists and sympathizers developed by the Red Scare; however, those activities significantly shaped the world where Vivian Fine grew up. The family lived on the salaries of a box-office manager and a secretary in an impoverished Jewish ghetto in Chicago. Despite their lean means of living, David and Rose Fine made great investments in their daughters' educations, as they were not afforded that luxury in their upbringings.

David's education stopped in the third grade, and Rose was working full-time as a secretary by age fourteen. While David's formal schooling stopped at such a young age, he continued to educate himself through reading and attending lectures, most of which were by socialist or communist authors and speakers. David passed this quest for knowledge on to his daughters, encouraging them to read and seek knowledge from various events and sources, such as a lecture by the socialist, Bertrand Russell, which Fine remembers clearly.<sup>24</sup>

Rose Fine found music lessons a worthwhile expense in the Fine household. The oldest daughter Adelaide was taking violin lessons, and it was soon discovered that young Fine had perfect pitch. Not long after this discovery, the Fines visited Rose's sister, Bertha. The home contained a piano that had been gifted to Rose years before; however, the family had no place to keep it. It was here that three-year-old Vivian discovered her fascination with the piano during a visit. The young girl was enchanted by the sound, carefully touching each key rather than banging on it. In a fit of rage, Vivian demanded to take lessons. Rose was shocked by the

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<sup>23</sup> The Palmer Raids mainly targeted Jewish Immigrants with leftist and socialist ties, leading to about 5,000 Americans being investigated and jailed for being a communist or communist sympathizers.

<sup>24</sup> Von Gunden, *The Music of Vivian Fine*, 1

outburst of her usually even-tempered daughter. The piano was moved to the Fine home, and Rose began teaching young Vivian piano herself.<sup>25</sup>

Vivian's exceptional ability resulted in Rose Fine reaching out to a local piano teacher named Ms. Rosen. Rosen was also amazed by young Fine's ability and granted the five-year-old a place in her studio, usually reserved for students aged eight and up. The lessons with Ms. Rosen were short-lived as Vivian quickly demonstrated the need for more advanced instruction. This became a common theme in Fine's musical upbringing.

Rose took five-year-old Fine to audition at the Chicago Musical College. Fine's ability and the fact that she was a rather tall child left the faculty in disbelief, making Rose find a copy of Fine's birth certificate to prove her age. The exceptional young girl was then awarded a full scholarship to study with Helen Ross. After three years of lessons, it was decided that Vivian, once again, needed more advanced instruction. Vivian took lessons with two additional instructors at the college, studying there until she was eleven years old. She again needed more advanced education, so Rose sought out yet another music instructor for her daughter.

### **The Mentorship and Friendship of Ruth Crawford**

Fine began taking piano lessons with Madame Herz after six years of study at the Chicago Musical College. Herz was passionate about providing opportunities for her students; on several occasions, she organized recitals in the homes of prominent socialites in the Chicago area, for many of which Fine performed.<sup>26</sup> Madame Herz saw great potential in Fine as a musician and suggested she begin studying harmony and counterpoint with Ruth Crawford, a

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 1-2

<sup>26</sup> Von Gunden, *The Music of Vivian Fine*, 3.



student of Adolf Weidig at the American Conservatory.<sup>27</sup> Crawford eagerly took the opportunity, mentioning that according to Weidig's teachings, Vivian Fine was the “ideal student” because of her perfect pitch and natural ability at her given instrument.<sup>28</sup>

Once her lessons with Crawford began, Fine excelled in her studies. Fine referred to Ruth Crawford as “A force to be reckoned with in American modernism.”<sup>29</sup> Crawford's mentorship was essential to Fine's early success. This was because Fine was able to see Crawford, another woman with a similar musical upbringing, succeed in a field that was, at the time, less than welcoming to women.

Crawford instantly recognized the talent Fine naturally possessed and encouraged Fine to compose, examining and critiquing Vivian's compositions with “great attention.”<sup>30</sup> This ignited a passion for writing music in the young girl and turn her focus to composition, sometimes even neglecting the piano to the disdain of Herz. Fine, who was at the top of her class, dropped out of high school after one week of her freshman year to focus on music. Fine's parents were more than supportive of this decision, going as far as to hide her in a closet from a truancy officer.

After writing many short pieces with Crawford's guidance, Fine composed *Solo for Oboe*, which marked the beginning of Fine's first compositional period.<sup>31</sup> That same year,

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<sup>27</sup> Herz offered Crawford free piano lessons in exchange for teaching Fine harmony and counterpoint.

<sup>28</sup> Von Gunden, *The Music of Vivian Fine*, 3. Vivian Fine had Perfect pitch. According to Weidig's textbook *Harmonic Material and Its Uses*, Vivian had the “discernable Ear” and physical adaptability for the piano, Fine's “chosen instrument.”

<sup>29</sup> David Lewis, “*Ruth Crawford Seeger Biography*,” *Ruth Crawford Seeger Biography - mother of Peggy Seeger*, June 24, 2009, <http://www.peggyseeger.com/ruth-crawford-seeger/ruth-crawford-seeger-biography>.

<sup>30</sup> Rachel L. Lumsden, “*You Too Can Compose*,” *Music Theory Online* 23, no. 2 (November 2, 2017) <https://doi.org/10.30535/mto.23.2.8>, 3.

<sup>31</sup> Wallingford Riegger, “*The Music of Vivian Fine*,” *Bulletin of American Composers Alliance*, 1958, pp. 2-4. There are two schools of thought regarding the three compositional periods of Vivian Fine's music. One is of Wallingford Riegger, who categorizes her work based on stylistic periods. The first stylistic period was 1928-1937, the second from 1937-1944, and the third from 1944-1998. The second school of thought is that of Judith Cody in

Crawford moved to New York and passed her scholarship to the American Conservatory to Fine. Then, Fine began her brief study with Crawford's now-former teacher, Adolf Weidig. Weidig was not fond of the modern style that both Crawford and Fine favored but allowed Fine to continue discovering her voice as a young composer.

The mentorship of Ruth Crawford was priceless because, through Crawford, Fine was able to meet several other significant figures in the Chicago music scene. These connections eventually led to the premiere of *Solo for Oboe* at the Pan American Association of Composers in 1929. This was made possible through Henry Cowell and Imre Weisshaus, also colleagues of Herz and Crawford. Both Cowell and Weisshaus continued to advocate for Fine's professional career through their connections and mentorship even after her time in Chicago.

### **Navigating Fine's Social and Professional Circles**

Fine lived in Chicago with her family from her birth in 1913 to 1931. When put into the context of American history, it becomes clear just how remarkable and unlikely this young woman's career was. This was during the beginning of the Great Depression, which put tens of thousands of American families out of work and on the streets. Major cities like Chicago and New York were hit hard by this economic collapse. Jobs were scarce and money was tight, but with the support and patience of her family, Fine continued composing and taking lessons with Herz and Crawford. As mentioned earlier, Rose Fine found music lessons to be a worthwhile expense, even moving the family on a few occasions after receiving complaints from neighbors regarding Fine's modern compositions.

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her book *Vivian Fine: A Bio-Bibliography*. This categorizes her compositional output in terms of "creative explosions." Her first creative explosion was 1928-1944, her mid-life Interlude 1944-1964, and the second creative explosion was 1964-1998. Both are accurate in terms of their classifications of her output and voice.

Fine's social and professional circles in Chicago included teachers Djane Lavoie-Herz and Ruth Crawford. Through these women, Fine was acquainted with Henry Cowell, Imre Weisshaus, and Dane Rudhyar, all rising modern American composers. Djane Lavoie-Herz was a Canadian-born pianist and teacher, eventually moving to Europe to study with Alexander Scriabin. In 1920, Lavoie-Herz moved to Chicago. She founded a salon on Grand Boulevard, hosting soirees that featured performances and discussions of Scriabin's music and philosophy.<sup>32</sup> This is where Herz met Cowell and Rudhyar.

Fine's connection to Henry Cowell, a student of Charles Seeger, proved to be Fine's most important professional connection in Chicago. Cowell strongly advocated for music by American composers, specifically American composers of modernist music, Fine being one of them.<sup>33</sup> Through Cowell, Fine's *Solo for Oboe* had its premiere with the Pan American Association of Composers, the program is shown in Figure 1, and her early works were published in his publication *New Music Quarterly*.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Lincoln M. Ballard, "A Russian Mystic in the Age of Aquarius: The U.S. Revival of Alexander Scriabin in the 1960s," *American Music* 30, no. 2 (January 2012): pp. 194-227, <https://doi.org/10.5406/americanmusic.30.2.0194>.

<sup>33</sup> Joel Sachs. Henry Cowell. "Henry Cowell: The Whole World of Music." *Other Minds*. Portola Valley and San Francisco, California, November 12-13, 2009. 12. Cowell was a leading figure in modern music in the 1920s and 1930s. He was a key person in several moments in the genre.

<sup>34</sup> Bruce Duffie, *Bruce Duffie*, 2012, <http://www.bruceduffie.com/fine.html>.

# THE PAN AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMPOSERS, Inc.

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PRESENTS A CONCERT OF WORKS BY COMPOSERS OF  
MEXICO, CUBA AND UNITED STATES  
CARNEGIE CHAMBER HALL  
MONDAY EVENING, APRIL 21ST, 1930  
AT EIGHT-THIRTY O'CLOCK

SOLOISTS: RADIANA PAZMOR, CONTRALTO; IMRE WEISSHAUS,  
COMPOSER-PIANIST; D. DESARNO, OBOEIST; HARRY FREISTADT,  
TRUMPETER; STEPHANIE SCHEHATOWITSCH, PIANIST; JEROME  
GOLDSTEIN, VIOLINIST.

## PROGRAM

I.  
SONATINA FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO CARLOS CHAVEZ  
SOLO FOR VIOLIN HENRY COWELL  
MR. GOLDSTEIN AND MR. WEISSHAUS

II.  
SUITE FOR PIANO IMRE WEISSHAUS  
IN THREE MOVEMENTS  
THE COMPOSER

III.  
SOLO FOR OBOE VIVIAN FINE  
MR. DESARNO

THE NEW RIVER }  
THE INDIANS } (FOR TRUMPET AND PIANO) CHARLES IVES  
ANN STREET }  
MR. FREISTADT AND MR. WEISSHAUS

INTERMISSION

IV.  
SIX PIECES FOR SOLO VOICE IMRE WEISSHAUS  
TWO AFRO-CUBAN SONGS ALEJANDRO CATURLA  
MISS PAZMOR AND MR. WEISSHAUS

V.  
TWO "MOMENTS" D. RUDHYAR  
TWO PIECES FOR PIANO GERALD STRANG  
TWO SARABANDES HENRY BRANT  
PRELUDE ADOLPH WEISS  
SECOND PIANO SONATE GEORGE ANTHEIL  
MR. WEISSHAUS

VI.  
"RAT RIDDLES" (FOR VOICE, OBOE, PIANO AND PERCUSSION)  
RUTH CRAWFORD  
MISS PAZMOR, MISS SCHEHATOWITSCH, MR. DESARNO  
AND MR. WEISSHAUS

Figure 1. Concert Program from the Pan American Association of Composers Concert.

### *Solo for Oboe*

*Solo for Oboe*, composed in 1929, is Fine's first published and performed work. It has no known recordings and very few documented performances. Fine displays great care in melodic writing and knowledge of the limits of the oboe. Even more incredibly, it was written when Fine was 16 years old when she did not know any oboists; she just liked how it sounded and wanted to experiment.<sup>35</sup>

Earlier, it was mentioned that Fine had three stylistic periods in her compositional career. *Solo for Oboe* solidified her first period of composition. This stylistic period is described as "devoid of diatonic writing [with] no suggestion of twelve-tone writing."<sup>36</sup> Fine's first style is like that of her teacher at the time, Ruth Crawford. Crawford's early compositions were devoid of diatonic writing and highly dissonant in terms of harmony and rhythm. This is seen in *Solo for Oboe* and some of her other works composed in this period, such as *Four Pieces for Two Flutes*, where Fine experiments with rhythmic and harmonic counterpoint, like Crawford's *Piano Study in Mixed Accents*, which Fine premiered early into her study with Crawford.

Just one year later in 1930, Ruth Crawford composed *Diaphonic Suite No. 1 for Oboe*. The work is similar to Fine's in its use of rhythmic dissonance to create energy. However, Crawford maintains the time signature and groups notes using uneven tuplets rather than time signatures to indicate any change to the note groupings. Crawford creates innovative rules in serialism in her work. For example, Crawford uses rotational serialism in the third movement of her work to build a phrase.<sup>37</sup> Fine, on the other hand, has no indication of using set theory or

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<sup>35</sup>Von Gunden, *The Music of Vivian Fine*, 5.

<sup>36</sup> Wallingford Riegger, "The Music of Vivian Fine," *Bulletin of American Composers Alliance*, 1958, pp. 2-4, 2.

<sup>37</sup> Joseph Nathan Straus, *The Music of Ruth Crawford Seeger* (Cambridge, Ma: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 73.

rules to compose her work and reuses motives, keeping them the same or transposing them as seen in the second movement of *Solo for Oboe*.

A common theme in Fine's compositional career is experimentation with various concepts heard throughout her study. Fine, still a student at this point, experiments with three main ideas in *Solo for Oboe*; dissonant intervals resolved by consonance, a shifting pulse to create energy, and the use of motivic material to indicate form and phrasing. The work's overarching experiment is using the oboe as a solo instrument and finding her voice as a modern composer through serially informed technique.

From the first movement, Fine proves to be enamored with a collection of 8 non-diatonic pitches and established this as the opening melodic fragment as seen in Figure 2. Fine uses this fragment to build the scaffolding of the movement. This fragment reappears many times and is augmented using octave displacement and note alteration to change the shape of the line, creating variation within that motive.

Throughout *Solo for Oboe*, Fine begins phrases with a large leap of a dissonant interval and finishes them with smaller intervals, particularly major seconds or major thirds. This is established in measure one of her first work, where a descending augmented eighth is resolved by an ascending major third, also seen in Figure 2. This dissonance at the end of the phrase is resolved by a restatement of the first four notes of the first measure, which resolves in the consonant interval. The movement ends on a major third which resolves from a minor ninth.



Figure 2. Solo for Oboe Movement I, Measures 1-2

Fine's experimentation with a specific motive is continued in the second movement. The second movement is in a binary form. Each section opens with a tritone resolved by a half step. Again, Fine plays with her technique of resolving dissonant intervals with consonant intervals. Fine fully resolves this tritone seven bars later with a consonant interval of a descending minor sixth, as seen in Figure 3. While this is still a large leap, the final interval is consonant to resolve the dissonance. The movement ends with another tritone between G and C sharp and is resolved in an interval of a minor seventh, as seen in Figure 4.



Figure 3. Solo for Oboe Movement II, Measures 1-6

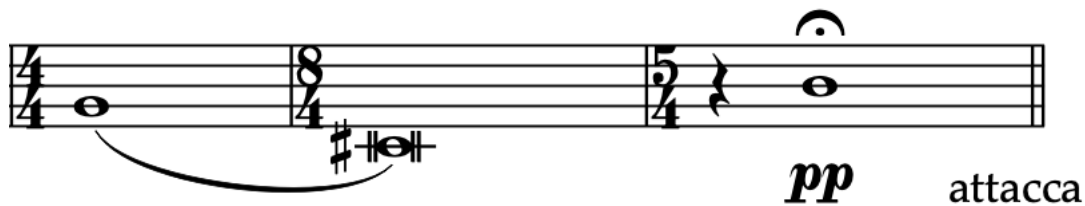


Figure 4. Solo for Oboe Movement II, Measures 15-17

Finally, in movement three, this is seen again in the first measure. As seen in Figure 5, the work begins on a half-step, and the phrase resolves in a descending major second. The end of

movement three includes direct quotations of the past themes from movements one and two and transitions into the theme from movement three by a half step. The work ends on a major third between G and B, ending on a consonant interval which can be found in Figure 6. This concept creates a sense of finality to each phrase due to the dissonance resolved through the consonance.



*Figure 5. Solo for Oboe Movement III, Measures 25-31*



*Figure 6. Solo for Oboe Movement III, Measure 68*

Fine cleverly uses material from the first two movements to help construct form and tie the third movement to the rest of the work. Fine restates the first motive from the opening of movement one in measures 38 and 39. Fine then underscores the tritone motive from the second movement, using a *lento* tempo mark. Again, this motive indicates the form of the piece.

The third movement contains two new motives, one melodic and one rhythmic, which is defined as the A theme, shown in Figure 7. This A theme returns, making the form of this movement a modified rondo. The A theme is found in measures 1-23, the B theme in 25-31, and the short C theme in measures 31-42. An A' theme follows in a deconstructed rhythm and meter



which leads to a transition into the A theme to conclude the piece. This motivic play shows Fine's experimentation in using motives to create form, as in Ruth Crawford's *Preludes for Piano*, where Crawford uses stylistic markings and specific chords to indicate the starts of each section, including a total restatement of the first movement.



Figure 7. Solo for Oboe Movement III, Melodic and Rhythmic Motive

Finally, Fine creates energy using an uneven and changing pulse. She constantly changes time signatures, grouping notes together differently through slurs and stylistic markings. The inconsistency of meter is felt throughout the work, never staying in a single time signature for more than a few bars at a time. Fine also uses slurs to indicate where phrases should begin and end, with no two phrases being the same length. In the third movement, Fine creates a similar effect using stylistic markings instead of slurs, as seen in Figure 8. However, these markings are found on downbeat pulses in uneven time signatures. Fine uses these devices to inform the performer of the pulse of the work and create energy.



Figure 8. Solo for Oboe Movement III, Measures 14-24

### *Teaching Solo for Oboe*

When teaching *Solo for Oboe* to a student, it is essential to direct the student to these aspects of metric and intervallic dissonance, as well as to various stylistic markings and how they relate to the phrasing and cohesion of the work. Given the work's non-diatonic nature and unique structure, a student may need additional guidance on phrasing and motivic realization when preparing the piece. The constantly changing time signatures combined with the varying length of phrases can be challenging to a student unfamiliar with avant-garde music.

Fine informs the player of her intended phrasing through breath marks and slurs. However, the note and pulse groupings of two and three can be argued based on each note's proximity to other notes. For example, bars 12-17 are one long phrase in unmarked quarter notes. A student may not know how to group those notes and will need guidance on grouping each note based on their proximity. Measure 12 should be grouped in 4+2 based on the leap between the E-flat and the E-natural a seventh below. Measure 13 should be grouped in 2+3 based on the change in direction between the C and the E-natural. This is an essential aspect of grouping the student should be made aware of to facilitate the cohesion of the work.

Motivic awareness should be stressed when teaching the second movement. The student should know that a new phrase is signified by a descending tritone resolved by a half step in the opposite direction. The student should also be aware of the energy produced through silence at the ends of phrases and how this can highlight dissonance and resolutions. The student must also be made aware of the importance of dynamics in terms of energy. Measure 7 is the only time Fine repeats two notes back-to-back in the entire work. Fine has two Cs marked with opposing dynamics with a crescendo and a rhythmic grouping of two and three for each note. Here, Fine

highlights dissonance through dynamics and rhythm; the student should be aware of this to create more energy.

Motivic awareness and attention to stylistic markings are crucial in the third movement. The student could easily be led astray by the time signature and the number of stylistic markings. The student must know the consonance that marks the ends of phrases. A great way to guide the student to this is for the teacher to take the student bar by bar and point out consonant and dissonant intervals. The teacher can highlight stylistic markings that line up with these consonant intervals. The teacher should also have the student point out older motives from other movements, locating the beginnings and endings of phrases.

Shortly after *Solo for Oboe*'s premier Crawford moved to New York, so Fine began taking lessons from Crawford's former teacher, Adolf Weidig. The now 17-year-old Vivian, a published and performed composer, was surrounded by great composers (who were also her colleagues), and they were eager to assist Fine in her growth, urging her to move to New York to continue her study. Ruth Crawford was the first to suggest this to Fine, as she had just made the same move for similar reasons. Dane Rudhyar wrote to Vivian:

What you need, more than [to] study rules and technique, is to *grow as a creative personality*: to gain self-assurance, self-knowledge and to experience many conditions of life. Modern music is up against a wall; and only the heroic soul will ever pierce through this wall and into the future... one you know was given a chance and apparently did not succeed so well. But *you* are strong, and I trust you shall prove it—to yourself, whether or not others see it or approve of it.<sup>38</sup>

Cowell also encouraged 18-year-old Vivian Fine to move to New York to further her study with Charles Seeger. In a letter to Fine, he wrote:

These works which you have just sent, seem to be in your familiar style, but there is a distinct attempt to branch out, particularly in counterpoint. I think you should try to study dissonant counterpoint. The work shows a lack of apprehension, I think of the specific

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<sup>38</sup> Von Gunden, *The Music of Vivian Fine*, 15.

detail of dissonant counterpoint. The tessitura of your work is too low, and there is not enough arrival at some particular point, in the form as a whole.<sup>39</sup>

Before leaving, Rudhyar cautioned: “The air is crowded with incoming events, and much will take place within a few years. So be prepared to face all and to be able to stand on your own feet and earn your own living.”<sup>40</sup>

In 1930, Ruth Crawford won a Guggenheim Fellowship and was able to travel to Europe for 12 months to study composition. During these travels, Crawford kept Vivian Fine very close through letters, referring to her as “Dear Lovable Vivian” in a letter dated January 26, 1931. This poetic letter gives Fine words of encouragement as well as advice in her studies.<sup>41</sup> This letter indeed shows the friendship that developed between Fine and Crawford during their study. This proved to be valuable to the young woman as she embarked on her next stage of life. In the fall of 1931, Rose and David Fine gave their 18-year-old daughter fifty dollars for a ticket from Chicago to New York.<sup>42</sup>

### **A New Teacher and a Shift to Tonality**

Upon Fine’s arrival in New York, the city had been profoundly impacted by the Great Depression. This economic downturn put many American families on the streets and desperate for some sort of relief. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt passed the New Deal in 1933 and the Second New Deal in 1935. To many Americans, the New Deal was considered radical and contributed to a socialist uprising. On the contrary, “Roosevelt, like his predecessor Hoover, was a fiscal conservative who believed in balanced budgets as a key to restoring economic

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid. Letter from Cowell to fine August 30, 1931

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 16. Letter from Rudhyar

<sup>41</sup> Judith Tick and Paul E. Beaudoin, *Music in the USA a Documentary Companion* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008), 451.

<sup>42</sup> \$50 in 1913 is about the equivalent of about \$950 in 2022

stability.”<sup>43</sup> This, too, added to the Red Scare, which significantly impacted the social circles Fine navigated in New York City.

Fine felt lonely when first coming to New York. Ruth Crawford was still in Europe, and Vivian was far from her family with very little money. While Fine’s focus had turned to composition, she still had exceptional talent as a pianist and was desperate for a job. So, she auditioned to be a dance accompanist and was offered a job accompanying for Gluck Sandor, a well-known modern dancer, at fifty cents an hour.<sup>44</sup> This opened many doors, including befriending Doris Humphrey and Martha Graham, for whom she eventually composed ballets and other dance music.

Her loneliness was short-lived when Ruth Crawford Seeger, who had since married Charles Seeger, returned from Europe. Fine was introduced to Blanche Walton through Henry Cowell, who offered her several opportunities to perform for many prominent musicians, including staunch supporters of the avant-garde.<sup>45</sup> Around this time, Fine was also introduced to Aaron Copland. Aaron Copland became a big advocate for young musicians at this time and was asked to oversee a new group called the Young Composers’ Group, formed by composer Elie Siegmeister. This group’s formation was a significant moment in Fine’s career.

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<sup>43</sup> Charles Post, “*The New Deal and the Popular Front*,” *The New Deal and the Popular Front* | International Socialist Review (International Socialist Review, March 1, 2018), <https://isreview.org/issue/108/new-deal-and-popular-front/index.html>. The New Deal was an effort to save capitalism amid the Great Depression. With the rise in unemployment came an effort by communists and the American Worker’s Party to organize and later unionize the unemployed of America. This allowed a formal organization of these leftist organizations. This, combined with the controlled distribution of media sources that went against the Espionage Act, resulted in even more widespread panic over the possibility of a communist rule in the United States.

<sup>44</sup> Von Gunden, *The Music of Vivian Fine*, 16. The top salary for a dance accompanist at the time was \$1.50 an hour; Fine remembers never receiving payment for her services

<sup>45</sup> Von Gunden, *The Music of Vivian Fine*, 16. Walton’s patronage proved to be crucial to the survival of modern composers and musicians.

This group met biweekly in Copland's apartment and was described as "a volatile assembly of highly opinionated young men (and one woman)"<sup>46</sup>. The regulars were Arthur Berger, Henry Brant, Bernard Herrmann, and Jerome Moross. The Young Composers' Group alleviated the isolation Fine felt after moving to New York.<sup>47</sup> Brant described Fine and Moross as "vital members of the group" in a letter to Aaron Copland after Berger published an article about the group in *Trend*.<sup>48</sup> Through this group, Fine was introduced to her future husband, Benjamin Karp, by Israel Citkowitz.<sup>49</sup> "They [The Young Composers' Group] were it— The Modern Composers" Fine recalls.<sup>50</sup> These individuals were a constant throughout her career.

Fine had finally found her place in New York. She had a great community of like-minded composers and mentors to help navigate her career and was working doing what she loved: making music. Originally, Fine moved to New York to study composition with Charles Seeger but only took one lesson with Charles Seeger, unsure why it never worked. Despite this, Fine quickly found a great mentor in Roger Sessions at the Dalcroze School in 1934.

This is where Fine's voice as a composer shifts from the Scriabinesque atonality to a more diatonic-focused style and "becoming more aware of tonality and the role of consonance and dissonance." Fine recalls that Sessions taught her: a "greater awareness of consistent musical

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<sup>46</sup> Charles Turner, "Jerome Moross: An Introduction and Annotated Worklist," *Notes* 61, no. 3 (2005): pp. 659-727, <https://doi.org/10.1353/not.2005.0038>, 661.

<sup>47</sup> Von Gunden, *The Music of Vivian Fine*, 17.

<sup>48</sup> Copland and Perlis, *Copland: 1900 through 1942*, 194.

<sup>49</sup> Ben Karp was a sculptor employed by the Works Progress Administration, part of FDR's New Deal in 1933. These programs passed under the New Deal included several social welfare programs, improved labor relations, and created millions of jobs for unemployed Americans, among many other things. The programs of the new deal were seen as radical and added fuel to the fire that was the Red Scare.

<sup>50</sup> Von Gunden, *The Music of Vivian Fine*, 17.

thought.”<sup>51</sup> This was Sessions’ goal as a teacher, as the Foreword of Sessions’ textbook,

*Harmonic Practice*, says:

It seems to me, however, that the goal of harmonic study must be precisely that of liberating the ear, through mastery of resources. The aim is that of enabling the ear to become constantly more aware of, and more sensitive to the relationships between tones and between aggregates of tones, and constantly more resourceful in making coherent use of these relationships... For possibly a style may be most truly understood on the basis of intimacy with musical materials as such, rather than on the basis of an attempt to codify them in terms of general usage.<sup>52</sup>

Fine’s shift to tonality happened in conjunction with an overall shift in the style of American music. With the Great Depression raging on, more composers were making music more appealing to the people. This was music rooted in folk songs, class awareness, and music for the people.<sup>53</sup> While Fine was not a populist, her music of this style contained more tonal centers and a more established form, erring on the side of neo-baroque.

Alongside her composition lessons with Sessions, Fine began studying piano with Abby Whiteside in 1937. Whiteside’s teachings revolved around a more holistic idea of learning rather than just focusing on the fingers’ muscle memory. Whiteside is the author of *Abby Whiteside on Piano Playing: Indispensables of Piano Playing- Mastering the Chopin Etudes and Other Essays*. Whiteside goes more into depth on her philosophy of piano playing, which focuses on topics beyond fingers. Whiteside stresses the importance of rhythm, the body’s posture, hand position (rather than just the fingers), and having a good ear.<sup>54</sup> This is similar to the ideas of

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<sup>51</sup> Von Gunden, *The Music of Vivian Fine*, 25.

<sup>52</sup> Roger Sessions, *Harmonic Practice* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace, 1951), xv.

<sup>53</sup> Steve Schwartz, *Nationalist and Populist Composers: Voices of the American People* (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), xv.

<sup>54</sup> Abby Whiteside, *Abby Whiteside on Piano Playing: Indispensables of Piano Playing & Mastering the Chopin Etudes and Other Essays* (Portland, Or: Amadeus Press, 1997), 4-5.

Roger Sessions and, to an extent, Weidig. Fine established a good sense of rhythm from a young age and had perfect pitch, even being called a prodigy at multiple points in her life.

Fine's study with Sessions and Whiteside were very useful in her career as she began gaining traction as both a composer and pianist. This is also where Fine discovered she deeply loved writing and performing contemporary music. Whiteside had Fine play primarily classical music. Fine found a "fixed need to be involved with music and composing."<sup>55</sup>

In 1943, Fine undertook her first work for orchestra, *Concertante for Piano*, as a challenge. In this undertaking, Fine decided to take a semester course with George Szell, who was teaching a course at the Mannes School. Fine's plan of attack was to write the piano score and then orchestrate it. Szell met the score with praise, calling it "quite good." Fine then brought the score to Sessions, who sang the work's praises, calling it better than the *Concertante* by his teacher, Ernest Bloch.<sup>56</sup> Not soon after, Sessions referred to Fine as a colleague, and Fine was no longer his student.

Fine saw many changes in her life in the years that followed. In 1945, the same year Fine was officially made a member of the ACA, Fine was hired as an adjunct at New York University, teaching piano to music education majors. She held that position until 1948. Fine discontinued lessons with Whiteside in 1946, the same year she underwent yet another change in compositional style and stepped into her next period of life.

### *Sonatina for Oboe and Piano*

In 1939, during this stylistic change, Fine composed *Sonatina for Oboe and Piano*, one of Fine's more unique pieces. The *Sonatina for Oboe and Piano* is composed in Fine's newfound

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<sup>55</sup> Von Gunden, *The Music of Vivian Fine*, 39.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 45



voice under Sessions, contrasting to *Solo for Oboe*. In this period of writing, Fine turns from atonality to tonal melodies and harmonies. This piece hints at a quasi-Baroque writing style. Rather than using exact keys, Fine uses tonal centers and modes, mostly Phrygian, which are seen in the *Sonatina for Oboe and Piano*.

This work was written for oboist and musicologist Josef Marx, whom Fine befriended while living in New York City. *Sonatina for Oboe and Piano* was composed after Fine completed two large projects, *Tragic Exodus for Baritone and Piano* and *They Too are Exiles for Piano Duet*, for Hanya Holm.<sup>57</sup> This work was written five years after Fine began studying with Roger Sessions. “She [Fine] learned a more refined craftsmanship, exhibited in longer, lyric melodies, a tonal fabric integrated with nonharmonic tones, and a formal and melodic sense of symmetry.”<sup>58</sup> Fine seemingly abandons her serialist voice in this creative period, but not her love of dissonance. New developments in her style found in *Sonatina for Oboe and Piano* include tonal centers peppered with non-diatonic tones in her harmonic and melodic writing, experimentation with impressionist style and counterpoint, and a solidified formal structure, like baroque formal structure, again established through motives.

The *Sonatina* is Fine’s only work for oboe and piano. However, it shows great developments in Fine’s oboe writing since composing *Solo for Oboe* a decade before, as well as Fine’s mastery of her primary instrument. Experimentation is again present in *Sonatina for Oboe and Piano*. At this point, Fine was now an accomplished and known composer. Fine’s new techniques in *Sonatina for Oboe and Piano* include using tonal centers, playing with impressionistic styles, and using motivic devices to inform phrasing.

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<sup>57</sup> Hanya Holm was considered one of the ‘Big Four’ in Modern Dance

<sup>58</sup> Leslie Jones, “*The Solo Piano Music of Vivian Fine*” (dissertation, 1994), 139.

Fine's earlier styles included highly dissonant and serially informed melodic lines. *Sonatina for Oboe and Piano* uses tonal centers rather than set keys, establishing a sense of tonality that is not seen in her other oboe works. This can be seen in each movement of the *Sonatina*. The first movement has an overall tonality of F major, quickly shifting tonal centers to D flat, followed by a development in G flat, ending in the original key of F major. This is seen again in the second movement with an overall tonality of C Phrygian in the oboe and C major in the piano line, creating a cloudy dissonance between the two voices. The third movement constantly shifts in tonality beginning in A flat, transitioning to G, back to A flat, then ending in the key of F Major, despite the marked key signature.

In this stylistic period, Fine's voice becomes reminiscent of the impressionist writing style. Some traits of impressionistic writing are dissonant rhythmic counterpoint, static harmony, an emphasis on instrumental timbres, and surface ornamentation that obscures or substitutes for melody.<sup>59</sup> This is explicitly seen in her piano voice in the second movement. Figure 9 displays this in the piano voice of measures 16-21, specifically in the left hand. This heavily ornamented left hand adds density to the texture and overtakes the melody in the right hand. When the oboe voice is added, a new color is formed, and the texture thickens even more. Contrasting rhythms between the oboe and piano voices create murky energy, resolved through octaves in the piano.

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<sup>59</sup> Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopedia. "Impressionism." Encyclopedia Britannica, February 4, 2020. <https://www.britannica.com/art/Impressionism-music>.

The image displays three systems of musical notation for the second movement of the Sonatina for Oboe and Piano. The first system shows the Oboe and Piano parts. The Oboe part is in the upper staff, starting with a dynamic marking of *mp*. The Piano part is in the lower staff, starting with a dynamic marking of *pp*. The second system shows the Piano part in both treble and bass clefs, with a dynamic marking of *p*. The third system shows the Piano part in both treble and bass clefs, with a dynamic marking of *p*. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings.

Figure 9: *Sonatina for Oboe and Piano* Movement II Measures 16-23

Finally, Fine uses motives in each movement, similarly to *Solo for Oboe*, to establish the form of *Sonatina*. The ternary form of this work is indicated through motives. The first motive, seen in Figure 10, is the A theme played in both the oboe and piano voices throughout the work. The second theme is seen in Figure 11 and is more frequently heard throughout the movement in

various tonalities. The second movement has a more clear-cut form, with a very distinct B section separating the two A sections. Finally, this movement is built off a running 16th note motive, seen in Figure 12. This motive is heard throughout the work and as mentioned earlier, is transposed through many tonalities. This motive makes the movement resemble a binary shape.

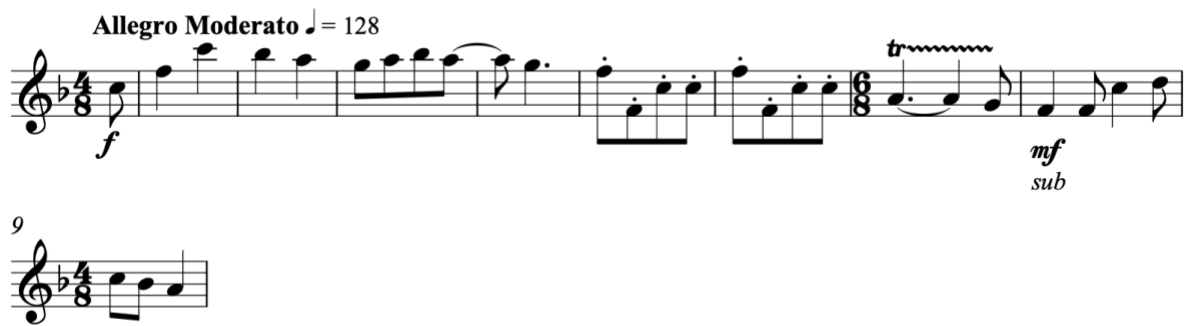


Figure 10. Sonatina for Oboe and Piano Movement I, A Theme



Figure 11. Sonatina for Oboe and Piano Movement I, B Theme



Figure 12. Sonatina for Oboe and Piano Movement III, Motive

### *Teaching Sonatina for Oboe and Piano*

The *Sonatina* is Fine's most performed and recorded work for the oboe. The charming melodies and energetic feel make for an exciting piece to perform. The work is also accessible to a diverse ability level of oboists. A young high school student with a solid understanding of eighth-note pulse could prepare and perform the first and second movements. In contrast, an advanced high school student could successfully prepare and execute the entire *Sonatina*. Fine shows great understanding of the instrument and its limits through her *Sonatina for Oboe and Piano*.

### **The Culture Surrounding American Composers**

Bringing attention to some of the other influences in Fine's story, the lives of those who surrounded her in her musical upbringing, and the culture surrounding Fine, is also crucial to our understanding of her development. The significance of a young girl being under the tutelage of Herz and Crawford, two accomplished women, has already been mentioned. However, the culture within Fine's New York and Chicago circles enormously impacted the unfolding of Fine's career.

Much of the community surrounding modern music consisted of individuals who either believed in the ideas of communism, considered themselves communists, or were card-carrying Communist Party members. The Ultramodern front also proved to be welcoming to members of the LGBTQ+ community. For example, Henry Cowell was a "clinically diagnosed bisexual."<sup>60</sup> Cowell was rather fond of the communist ideologies, which he began realizing after traveling to

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<sup>60</sup> Michael Hicks, "The Bohemian Legacy," in *Henry Cowell, Bohemian* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2002), pp. 116-149, 135. Being a member of the LGBTQ+ community in the 1920s and 1930s was considered taboo, more so than being affiliated with the communist party and one could be arrested for participating in homosexual acts. Cowell was arrested for homosexual acts in 1936 and his family hired a psychologist while he was on trial who mapped out Cowell's sexual history, diagnosing him as a bisexual, rather than a homosexual

the Soviet Union, noting that everyone's basic needs were met.<sup>61</sup> Ruth Crawford Seeger recalls having a friendship "like mad falling in love" with American composer Marion Bauer. Crawford referred to Bauer as the "Lesbian Subject" and claims, although Bauer denies it, "the two had come close to sexual expression."<sup>62</sup>

Virgil Thomson and Aaron Copland are other examples of members of this circle who identified with the LGBTQ+ community. While both kept their homosexuality private, going as far as to suppress it in their memoirs, they both had romantic entanglements with other men, knowing they could go to prison for being caught. While secretive in their sexuality, these composers supported and promoted each other's music. Cowell, for example, published and promoted the music of other gay composers.<sup>63</sup>

Vivian Fine is never documented as being a member of the LGBTQ+ community. However, she had close friendships with many gay and bisexual composers and was a strong supporter of them and their work, making Fine an extremely progressive individual at the time. This ties further into the unfolding of Fine's story because the politics of the culture Fine navigated influenced the music she wrote. When she was 14, Fine attended a march supporting Sacco and Vanzetti, Anarchists who received the death penalty after an unfair trial. Fine writes "I felt as if I had seen and heard something that raised me above the pettiness and narrowness of the

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 119

<sup>62</sup> Judith Tick, *Ruth Crawford Seeger: A Composer's Search for American Music* (New York, NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000), 107. There is another instance of Crawford alluding to being attracted to other women, such as Djane Lavoie-Herz, which Crawford is described to have an "adolescent adoration" for.

<sup>63</sup> Michael Hicks, "The Bohemian Legacy," in *Henry Cowell, Bohemian*, 127

middle class.”<sup>64</sup> This becomes important as class consciousness is key in the grand scheme of American politics of the 1930s.

It must be noted that most of Fine’s social circles were communist or communist sympathizers.<sup>65</sup> For example, Fine’s colleague from Chicago, Imre Weisshaus, an “ardent Communist,” was thrilled to see that Ruth Crawford Seeger had shifted further Left throughout her career. The ongoing depression and trip to Europe funded through her Guggenheim Fellowship had radicalized her into believing more leftist ideologies.<sup>66</sup> Pete Seeger described Ruth and Charles as “very local fringe members of the communist front.”<sup>67</sup> Rudhyar, while not being noted as a vocal supporter of communist ideas, had a “passionate espousal of utopian modernism.”<sup>68</sup>

Knowing the political culture of Fine’s circles is essential because of the culture in the United States at the time. Even with the Espionage Act, the fear of communism in the United States persisted, specifically with its rising popularity amongst labor leaders and intellectuals in the 1930s. The fear of communism was exacerbated by World War II, leading to the Alien Registration Act in 1940, making it a crime to be:

Knowingly or willfully advocate, abet, advise or teach the duty, necessity, desirability or propriety of overthrowing the Government of the United States or any State by force or violence, or for anyone to organize any association which teaches, advises or encourages such an overthrow, or for anyone to become a member of or to affiliate with any such association.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Vivian Fine, “Account of Meeting in Support of the Sacco and Vanzetti Case of the 1920s,” *Account of Meeting in Support of the Sacco and Vanzetti Case of the 1920s* (1927).

<sup>65</sup> Most of these figures were not actual card-carrying communist party members, as that was going against the many acts brought forward by the US government.

<sup>66</sup> Crawford won a Guggenheim and toured Europe, returning to New York in 1932.

<sup>67</sup> Judith Tick, *Ruth Crawford Seeger: A Composer's Search for American Music*, 189.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 49

<sup>69</sup> Alien Registration, 8 U.S.C. § 457 Suppl. 1. (1940).

The Alien Registration Act forced the registration of all adult non-resident foreign citizens. Many modern composers, like Imre Weiss Haus or Dane Rudhyar, important figures in Fine's early development, were immigrants from countries associated with communist ideologies and considered potential threats.<sup>70</sup> A lot of "potential threats" were involved in composing modern music. This is perhaps because it went against the Western Music Tradition that they found oppressive.

The start of the Second World War drastically transformed America's Musical Landscape. It became common for these modern composers, like Aaron Copland, to move away from their modern voices and transition into music better suited to the masses.<sup>71</sup> The WPA Federal Music Project was soon disbanded due to the cost of the Second World War, and many projects ceased to exist. Luckily, Vivian Fine could continue making a living composing through the connections she made as a dance accompanist during her early days in New York City. Between 1938 and 1940, Fine composed several works for various choreographers that were well received by both the dancers and the audience.

### **Back to Her Roots: Returning to Atonality**

The years during and after the Second World War proved very lonely for Fine. While she had her husband and firstborn daughter, Vivian's social circles had slowly split into their separate paths. Ruth Crawford Seeger had begun studying folk music and was no longer composing, and the members of the Young Composers' Group had gone their separate ways. The years of composition lessons with Sessions and piano lessons with Whiteside had set Fine up for great

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<sup>70</sup> Schwartz, *Nationalist and Populist Composers: Voices of the American People* xv.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 132-133.



success as both a composer and a pianist; however, Vivian had grown tired of lessons.<sup>72</sup> This led to the conclusion of her lessons with Abby Whiteside. In these periods of loneliness, Fine found significant growth in her compositional voice, once again writing for the piano and expanding her compositions to include writing for singers and other chamber groups.

Fine was still teaching as an adjunct at New York University, and without the time constraints of lessons, she was able to continue composing. Fine found a return to her roots in serialism, against the norm of her former New York circle of that time, who was now turning to a more simplistic approach to composition.<sup>73</sup> In 1946, Fine composed a landmark composition, *Capriccio for Oboe and String Trio*, where she shifted back into her old serialism style.<sup>74</sup>

### **America's Evolving Musical Landscape**

Aaron Copland described the *Workers Song Book*, published in 1934 by the Communist Workers Music League, as “a powerful weapon in the class struggle.”<sup>75</sup> Copland was the leading force of the Popular Front in music and sought to make what was in the public's best interest. Copland's association with leftist politics aligned with the Great Depression and the Second World War. This proved to be an issue for Copland in 1953 when he was called before the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations and questioned about his affiliations with the Communist Party.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Von Gunden, *The Music of Vivian Fine*, 39.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Cody. *Vivian Fine: A Bio-Bibliography*, 16.

<sup>75</sup> Elizabeth B. Crist, “Aaron Copland and the Popular Front,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 56, no. 2 (2003): pp. 409-465, <https://doi.org/10.1525/jams.2003.56.2.409>, 409.

<sup>76</sup> Senator Joseph McCarthy was the leading force of this and was responsible for hundreds of investigations into suspected communists, threatening them with treason charges

Arthur Berger, a former member of the Young Composers' Group, claims in his biography of Copland that "it was hardly accidental that [Copland's] turn towards simplification and a broader audience should coincide with the later depression years, when artists and intellectuals who had formerly been escapist became aware of politics and economics."<sup>77</sup> Berger later admitted to having omitted a significant amount of information surrounding Copland's political associations due to the ongoing "witch hunt" at the time one of his works was published.<sup>78</sup>

However, Berger was also a victim of McCarthyism, not on a national level but through a lawsuit brought against him by the Yaysnoff Sisters, a British piano duo. The Yaysnoff Sisters sued Berger's review of one of their performances, claiming the review was libel. One of the arguments against Berger claims that he was a member of "a communist organization." While Berger, like Fine, was associated with several left-leaning organizations, Berger never had any strong affiliations with any leftist or communist organizations.<sup>79</sup>

Vivian Fine was never investigated for her political leanings, nor was she ever vocal about them in her early writings. Given the ongoing trials of that time, it is understandable that Fine didn't have any clear associations with the Communist Party and wasn't vocal about her political leanings at that time. However, Fine's later works hinted at her political awareness, including her final work, *Memoirs of Uliana Rooney* (1993). Regardless of the pressures of the Second Red Scare and the communist associations with modern music, Fine continued to write in her modernist style.

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<sup>77</sup> Elizabeth B. Crist, "Aaron Copland and the Popular Front," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 412.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Olga Haldey, "Words on Music, Perhaps: The Writings of Arthur Berger" (dissertation, University of Maryland, 2020), pp. 60-61.

### *Capriccio for Oboe and String Trio*

As mentioned earlier, Fine composed her landmark composition, the *Capriccio for Oboe and String Trio* in 1946. After hearing Mozart's *Oboe Quartet in F major*, Fine was inspired to compose this for Oboe, Violin, Viola, and Cello. When Fine composed *Solo for Oboe* 17 years earlier, she had not met an oboist yet, so she was only experimenting with the sound. In the case of *Capriccio for Oboe and String Trio*, Fine had never combined strings with oboe, so she was experimenting with the sound of the new instrumentation. This work marked the beginning of Fine's third stylistic period of her compositional career.

This new stylistic period of writing was shaped by her study with Roger Sessions along with the return of her voice found through her study with Ruth Crawford. Fine uses tonality, but not in a traditional sense. Tonal centers are present, but the harmonic structure is non-triadic. Another common characteristic in Fine's earlier works is that they were often split into shorter movements. This is not the case for the *Capriccio for Oboe and String Trio*. This single-movement work is split into 4 sections and a coda rather than separate movements and starts a trend of her writing longer works.

Fine experiments with texture, color, and different compositional devices to create counterpoint in *Capriccio for Oboe and Strings*. The work's overall experiment is using the oboe with string trio. As stated earlier, Fine got inspiration from Mozart's *Oboe Quartet in F major* and wanted to experiment with the sounds she could create.

I have a *Capriccio for Oboe and String Trio* from 1946, the same combination as the Mozart Quartet in F Minor [sic]. I knew the Mozart work, what the combination sounded like, and the problems involved. Actually, I think one could write for string quartet and anything—trombone, for example.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Strings, *Strings*, 1991, pp. 74-87.

The instrumentation of the *Capriccio* is for the oboe, violin, viola, and cello. This allowed Fine to use a wide range of colors and timbres to work within the piece. Throughout the work, Fine uses different accents and trills to dictate style. For example, at the beginning of the work is an oboe melody accompanied by accented bowed strings, which creates dense texture between the four-person ensemble. Later, Fine combines the oboe, viola, and cello in a unison line of groups of three eighth notes that accompany the violin line, as seen in Figure 14. This creates a dense texture that overtakes the melody. This is similar to the impressionistic style in Fine's *Sonatina* for Oboe.

A shift in the density of the instrumentation occurs in measure 35, creating a lighter texture and change in mood. This is done through pizzicato strings accompanying the legato and slurred oboe line. Fine used different string techniques, like pizzicato, to create different textures and densities. The following section is a canon of pizzicato strings, with the oboe being the primary voice. This again creates a light texture that contrasts the dense bowed sections. Fine slowly rebuilds this density by gradually adding the bow back into the canon in measure 90. This creates a slow build in dynamic and density through the next section.

Fine uses unison octaves to create dynamic power in the piece. The instrumentation of the work allows for a wide dynamic range. This is seen in measure 160, where a unison melody spans three octaves, making the ensemble appear much larger in terms of dynamics and texture. At the end of the work, Fine uses mixed techniques to build and deconstruct color and texture. The final technique Fine uses to create new colors is the use of trills to create motion and harmony. This is found in the work's coda, which begins in measure 271. These trills are passed through the string section under the oboe melody, which is a restatement of the main melody, and are used to create harmonic texture.

Fine also experiments with various compositional devices in the *Capriccio* to create counterpoint. The most prominent example of this is a canon introduced in measure 68 by the violin. This transforms into an accompanimental line as other voices enter with the melody. Once the entire ensemble has played the canon's theme it is restarted, this time in the viola, and the oboe joins in with a theme briefly introduced in measure 40. This creates a new texture through the counterpoint of the two melodies. A common theme seen in this work is a counter melody of consistent quarter notes that add harmony and direction to otherwise long melodies. This is seen throughout the work, as there are very few moments of sustained notes with no motion in any of the voices. This use of counterpoint creates a harmonically and rhythmically dense work that displays Fine's ability to compose energetic and captivating musical phrases combined with texture.

### ***Teaching Capriccio for Oboe and String Trio***

*Capriccio for Oboe and String Trio* is a difficult piece and must be performed by players of an advanced level, preferably college upperclassmen, graduate students, or professional musicians. This is due to the technical ability and musical awareness required to prepare and perform this work successfully. When teaching the work, the student should have motivic awareness throughout, not only of rhythmic motives but melodic motives as well, as Fine puts these in different voices and settings. For example, a student might not make a connection between the original melody and the coda, where the melody is composed in an elongated fashion, altering the melody of the work.

Fine uses distinct compositional devices throughout the work that must be highlighted. For example, the teacher should point out the canon to the student in the third section and bring awareness to the motives as the melody is slowly deconstructed. Other things to bring attention

to are the phrases and how these are differentiated between melodic lines and accompanimental lines, even as the distinction between them becomes blurred. Because of Fine's clear indication of phrasing through slurs and stylistic markings, the student should easily identify phrases. It is important, however, to guide the student and the ensemble through sections where the melody is passed through different voices to help achieve a cohesive melodic line while maintaining balance through the ensemble.

After composing *Capriccio for Oboe and String Trio*, Fine turned her attention to writing for voice and chamber ensemble with her composition *The Great Wall of China* in her newly established writing style. Using the text of Franz Kafka, Fine develops a new voice metrically, creating melodic lines that mimic speech patterns. This work is reminiscent of *Capriccio for Oboe and String Trio* in terms of its harmonic dissonance with melodies that contain tonal centers and a texture that is slowly built over time to add to the energy of the work.

### ***Second Solo for Oboe***

Fine revisits the unaccompanied oboe 18 years after her *Solo for Oboe* with *Second Solo for Oboe*. This 1947 work sat dormant for almost a decade, not performed until December 21, 1958, by oboist Lois Wann. The work has one recording from its premiere at the Nonagon Gallery in New York City.<sup>81</sup> The composition of this contemporary work aligns with the start of the Second Red Scare, while the work's premiere happened after it waned. This could signify Fine's acceptance of her new voice without the fear of it being associated with other suspected communists who wrote similar styles of music at the time.

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<sup>81</sup> Joellen Bard, *Tenth Street Days: The Co-Ops of the 50's: The Galleries, Tanager, Hansa, James, Camino, March, Brata, Phoenix, Area: An Artist-Initiated Exhibition, Works from 1952-1962* (New York, NY: Education, Art & Service, Inc., 1977), IV. The Nonagon Gallery was part of the Tenth Street Galleries, a collection of co-operatives galleries of avant-garde art and music.

*Second Solo for Oboe* further solidifies Fine's new voice in composition like that of *Capriccio for Oboe and String Trio*. It can be seen as a revisiting of her first composition, *Solo for Oboe* because it is so similar in its form and harmonic composition, almost a rebirth of her career. The work was described in the New York Times as containing "long beautifully wrought phrases."<sup>82</sup> In this work, Fine experiments with using serially informed technique as a way of developing structural form and creating energetic and uneven phrases in the absence of meter.

Throughout the work, Fine establishes a clear understanding of serially informed technique, a concept she was only experimenting with 18 years prior in *Solo for Oboe*. This is found in all three movements, where Fine's B section is the inverse of her A section. The only time this inversion is interrupted is in measure 38 of the first movement, where Fine transposes the motive up a half step to facilitate the range of the oboe. Aside from that single transposition, they are identical. Each movement ends with a coda. The first and second movements conclude by playing the first four notes followed by their inversion then slowly deconstructing the melody until a single note remains. The third movement uses a similar technique, but creates a new motive in the coda, deconstructing and then rebuilding it down an octave to conclude the piece. Fine used serialism in this instance to create musical form.

Fine's other means of experimentation in this work are found in the second and third movements. Each movement is composed using no meter and no bar lines. Slurs indicate phrasing, and the pulse is indicated by the shortest rhythmic value found in that movement. In the second movement, this value is a quarter note. In the third movement, that value is an eighth note. Due to the lack of meter, the phrases have a more organic structure, reminiscent of human speech or Gregorian chants due to their uneven nature, specifically in the second movement. The

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<sup>82</sup> *Strings*, *Strings*, 1991, pp. 74-87.

third movement uses these uneven phrases that constantly shift between groupings of two and three to create unnerving energy. Fine also creates dissonance by barring the eighth notes, either in two or three. This indicates to the performer where the emphasis should be placed within the melodic line. The absence of a meter and a bar line allows for a more organic phrasing as it is not constricted to specific meters and pulse levels.

*Second Solo for Oboe*, much like *Solo for Oboe*, is composed of three movements. The first movement is fast and is felt with a quarter-note pulse, the second movement is slow and is felt with a shifting meter, and the third movement is felt with a quick eighth-note pulse. A significant feature of this work is the lack of a tempo marking for the first movement and a lack of time signature or bar lines in the second and third movements. In Fine's earlier works, she is very specific about the tempo and different stylistic markings, while in her later works, she gives general performance times at the ends of each movement.

Both *Solo for Oboe* and *Second Solo for Oboe* are exercises in creating energy through dissonance. *Solo for Oboe* contains shorter phrases, with obvious restatements of motives and at times a vague sense of the form. The *Second Solo for Oboe* has a greater understanding and command of serial technique and utilizes it cleverly to create the work's form. When put side by side, these two works show the unfolding of Fine's career.

### ***Teaching Second Solo for Oboe***

*Second Solo for Oboe* can be classified as an early advanced work due to its technical demands, the range required to perform the work, and the physical demands of an unaccompanied work. The piece is ideal for an advanced high school student up through graduate-level study. When teaching the work, it is important to focus on awareness of phrases



and awareness of note groupings. Fine marks each phrase using slurs, rests, and other stylistic markings.

The student should be aware of the foundations of serially informed technique, to a level at which they can identify inversions. This can be taught by having the student examine the rhythm in both the A and B sections and see if they notice any patterns between the two. The student should notice that the rhythms are identical. The instructor can then describe how an inversion is similar to holding a mirror to the notes and point out the contours of each line.

### **Why the Oboe, Vivian?**

Fine makes it clear from her first composition that she enjoys experimentation when writing her music. Gunden states in her book,

Fine was juggling a professional career as a pianist and composer while studying. The composition lessons and work as accompanist and interpreter of modern music were Fine's way of learning about music, which she would synthesize and assimilate in her compositions, thus performing and composing, rather than studying scores and reading what others wrote about music, was her learning style.<sup>83</sup>

Experimentation is shown throughout her career, starting with *Solo for Oboe* (1929). Most composers will begin writing a piece for their instrument. Fine's career, however, begins with a composition for the oboe despite only being a pianist, albeit an accomplished one. Despite this, she chose the oboe to experiment with her compositional voice.

Throughout her career, Fine favors the oboe as a wind instrument. Of Fine's 140 pieces, 24 of these works include oboe or English horn parts, and 11 contain significant moments that feature the oboe or English horn. This does not include the 4 pieces written specifically for the oboe. Fine befriending Josef Marx and Lois Wann while living in New York contributed to the

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<sup>83</sup> Von Gunden, *The Music of Vivian Fine*, 28.

development of her oboe writing.<sup>84</sup> The relationship she maintained with these performers allowed her music to be performed by notable players like Marcel Tabuteau, Patricia Stenberg, and James Ostryniec during her lifetime.

Highlights of Fine's output for chamber ensemble or full orchestra with major oboe moments include *Alceste*, which opens and ends with an English horn solo; *Drama for Orchestra*, which has multiple significant moments for oboe; *After the Tradition*, of which the second movement primarily features the oboe and English horn; and *Chamber Concerto for Cello and Six Instruments*. While this final example is a concerto for cello, the oboe has many significant moments and acts as a soloist when the cello is resting. It is all subjectively quality writing for the oboe. The lines are written in good ranges for projection, and Fine mixes the timbres of the orchestra with the oboe's color masterfully.

### **A "Fine" Contribution to the Oboe Repertoire**

Today, it is common to hear live solo oboe works composed in the baroque and classical eras. Most oboe pedagogy is rooted in teaching music from these eras. With few exceptions, it is rare to hear a modern oboe work live in a concert hall. Fine's contribution to the oboe repertoire fills several gaps in American music. As an American woman of Jewish descent, Fine is a part of multiple communities that are underrepresented in composition and performance, and her works highlight styles for the oboe that are rarely presented, such as serially informed music, unaccompanied music, and chamber music.

These four works for oboe are great pieces to perform and each offer valuable lessons in oboe pedagogy, music theory, and music history that can be taught to oboists of all ages and

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<sup>84</sup> Josef Marx was the English horn player for the New York Metropolitan Opera and Lois Wann was the oboe professor at the Julliard School. The Sonatina was composed for Marx and Wann was responsible for many performances and premieres of Fine's music.

ability levels. These pieces also further diversify the oboe repertoire, which consists primarily of music by white European men from the Baroque and Classical eras. In the last 150 years, several women and non-white individuals have contributed greatly to the oboe repertoire. Sadly, their music, much like that of Vivian Fine, is not considered standard and is not commonly performed outside of a collegiate setting.<sup>85</sup> Many young musicians never encounter music written by living women or non-white composers.

Advocating for Vivian Fine's oboe music goes further than getting her music performed. Advocating for Fine's music encompasses learning more about American music written by women that do not follow Eurocentric standards of harmony and melody and making that music more accessible to all audiences. These works for the oboe deserve a place in the standard oboe repertoire as they will allow more students to access music written by American women.

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<sup>85</sup> Many states in the United States have set lists for students to select music from to learn and compete on. These lists are comprised of mainly music written by men from European countries and do not include many American composers, let alone women composers.

## Interlude

-August 2020-

“Can you hear me?” He asked through a computer screen, waving his hand at the camera to check if the video conferencing program was lagging.

I could hear him, but I wasn't paying attention. I didn't want to be there, talking about giving a recital amidst a global pandemic, and I definitely didn't want to be playing another long, drawn-out work by yet another dead white man (I meant it this time).

“I'll be honest, this program seems rather, well... dead, white, and male,” He remarked as his Zoom screen froze. My 10-year-old computer fan began to hum loudly atop the same desk from the small apartment years earlier.

I chuckled. “Yeah, I guess you're right.”

“Well, do you know of any other rep you'd want to play?” He asked.

I suddenly remembered the score still in the desk drawer, untouched since 2015.

“Have you heard of Vivian Fine?” I asked quickly, pulling open the drawer and pulling the score out from under some old folders, essays, and other miscellanies. I opened the folder. The score appeared to glow in the light of the heatless LED lamp I kept on my desk.

“I have not,” he responded. “Do some research on her and let me know what you find.”

“Sounds good,” I said, “Have a great day!”

The Zoom meeting ended, and I immediately looked up “Vivian Fine, Oboe.” I found three other works for the oboe, and next to no recordings existed of them. I was amazed by both the amount of music and the quality of her music. It was all so good.

“Why aren't people playing her music?” I asked myself. “It just doesn't make sense.”

“Vivian, *I'll* play it!”.

## Chapter Three

*“That’s all I ever wanted, really—to write the music and have good performances of it. These are the two components of a good life for a composer”<sup>86</sup> -Vivian Fine*

### What Happened to Vivian Fine?

The years following the compositions of *Capriccio for Oboe* and *Second Solo for Oboe* saw great changes for the Fine family. 1948 welcomed a new member of the Karp family, Nina. Not soon after Nina's birth, the family relocated to Montclair, New Jersey, isolating Fine further from the New York music scene. 1948 also saw the premiere of *Capriccio for Oboe and String Trio*, the work that marked Fine’s entrance into her third stylistic period.

In 1951, Fine’s husband began working at New York State University, and the family moved to New Platz, New York. Fine was again separated from her New York City circle; however, she continued composing. That summer, Fine took a job teaching a composition course to middle and high school music teachers at the State University of New York at Potsdam. This was the start of Fine’s career as a composition teacher, though it would not become her full-time career for several years.

After her summer teaching composition at the State University of New York at Potsdam, Fine was appointed director of Batsheva de Rothschild Foundation for Art and Sciences. The foundation was formed to promote Martha Graham, from Fine’s days as an accompanist in New York, as well as contemporary dance, art, and music.<sup>87</sup> Through the foundation, Fine, now 41 years old, received her first commission to compose *A Guide to the Life Expectancy of a Rose* in

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<sup>86</sup> Strings, *Strings*, 1991, pp. 74-87.

<sup>87</sup> Graham was an important figure in the dance world. Fine befriended Graham when she was a dance accompanist in New York in the 1920s.

1954. Martha Graham directed the work.<sup>88</sup> Fine's 13-year-long appointment as director of the foundation proved invaluable. Fine was able to take advantage of the facilities and resources of the foundation to perform her works for an audience.

In 1964, Fine was contacted by her colleague from the Young Composers' Group, Henry Brant, about teaching part-time at Bennington College. Fine taught part-time for the year, commuting to and from the school a few times a week. Fine was a valued member of the Bennington faculty, with the college going as far as to schedule rehearsals around her days on campus. This led to a full-time appointment in 1969, which relocated the Karp family to Vermont.

Fine received many major awards while teaching at Bennington, including an appointment to membership of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters and a Guggenheim Fellowship. Fine also continued taking commissions and composing while on faculty at Bennington, receiving requests from major groups such as the San Francisco Symphony. The commissions continued rolling in, demanding more and more of Fine's time. After 18 successful years at Bennington College, 74-year-old Vivian Fine retired from her position, once again turning her focus to her compositions.

Post-retirement, Fine took on several major commissions. A few of these include *Dancing Winds* (1987) for the Catskills Woodwind Quintet, *Triple Goddess* (1988) for the Harvard University Band, and *Memoirs of Uliana Rooney* (1994) for the Dallas Opera.<sup>89</sup> Much like in her days as a young composer, Fine was able to spend five to six hours a day in her home

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<sup>88</sup> Von Gunden, *The Music of Vivian Fine*, 45, 56-57. Bathsheva de Rothschild was an avid supporter of Fine's work from her early years in New York, hiring a part-time nanny for Fine, granting her a short break from motherhood each day to focus on composing.

<sup>89</sup> This is not an exhaustive list of Fine's compositions. More information about Fine's commissions and compositions can be found in Judith Cody's *Vivian Fine: A Biobibliography*.

composing, studying, and learning on her own time. Her career had come full circle. Fine lived out the remainder of her days at her home in Bennington, Vermont. Fine passed away in 2000 in an automobile accident at age of 87.<sup>90</sup>

### **The Importance of Ruth Crawford Seeger as an Early Exemplar**

One of the most crucial factors in Fine's success was the mentorship of Ruth Crawford. This allowed Fine to develop as a musician in space created by another woman who succeeded in a male-dominated field.<sup>91</sup> Crawford had a musical upbringing similar to Fine and was surrounded by other women mentors during her study at the School of Musical Arts in Jacksonville, Florida.

One of these mentors was Bertha Foster, an unmarried and dedicated career woman. Foster was described in Crawford's diary as "radiating happiness, joy and life wherever she goes."<sup>92</sup> Through Foster, Crawford met her other teacher and mentor, Valborg Collett, who pushed Crawford further toward her modernist voice.<sup>93</sup>

Crawford's musical background was fostered by these women, allowing her the confidence to grow and thrive as a young woman composer, providing the same mentorship to

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<sup>90</sup> Vivian Fine's legacy is kept alive through her daughter, Peggy Karp, and the Vivian Fine Estate. Fine's scores can be accessed through IMSLP and the Vivian Fine Website, [www.vivianfine.org](http://www.vivianfine.org). Manuscripts, letters, writings, and concert programs of Vivian Fine are housed at the Library of Congress and the New York Public Library.

<sup>91</sup> Howard Pollack, *Aaron Copland: The Life and Work of an Uncommon Man* (New York, NY: Henry Holt, 1999), 213, 611. Fine gives many instances of back-handed discrimination she faced in her career. One instance is when Aaron Copland was surprised to see a woman wanting to become a composer when Fine approached him. Copland is also quoted as saying: "Is it possible that there is a mysterious element in the nature of musical creativity that runs counter to the nature of the feminine mind? ... The future may very well have a different tale to tell; for the present, however, no woman's name will be found on the list of world-famous composers." While this isn't an offense that deems Copland as a "villain" in American music, it is an important quote must be considered when teaching about women in American music history. This gives more context to a woman's experience when navigating American music.

<sup>92</sup> Tick: *Ruth Crawford Seeger: A Composer's Search for American Music*, 178.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 18. Collett went through the repertoire that Crawford brought to lessons and throw out what she deemed "trash." This led to Crawford playing much music by Chopin and other European composers, resulting in the further development of her modernist voice.

<sup>93</sup> Cody, *Vivian Fine: A Bio-Bibliography*, 5.

her pupil. To Fine, Crawford was “an avant-garde composer as [my] teacher... it made [me] feel that it was completely natural to be a woman and write adventurous music.”<sup>94</sup> In fact, on many occasions, Fine is insistent that she is not a woman composer but a composer who also happens to be a woman.<sup>95</sup>

Fine fondly remembered how Crawford treated her work as a student. She says in an interview:

I remember how she listened to it. When I turned around and looked at her, she was looking very thoughtful... and her response to it played a critical role in my life. She listened to it very carefully; I could tell she was really paying attention. I think this was a critical experience for me.<sup>96</sup>

Having an encouraging mentor from a young age that she could relate to with similar interests was crucial to Fine’s development. In Fine’s case, that similar interest was contemporary music. That bond was crucial to their successful student-teacher relationship and fostered a healthy learning environment.

Because of this, Fine never felt like an outcast because of her sex, even when surrounded by men in most of her professional circles. She was described as “very thick-skinned and unbothered to be blown off course by the prevailing winds of prejudice much later in her career.”<sup>97</sup> Fine made being a composer who happens to be a woman look natural while navigating a world where she would have been the exception in any other case.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Contemporary Music Review, *Contemporary Music Review*, 1997, pp. 21-26.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Tick: *Ruth Crawford Seeger: A Composer's Search for American Music*, 59.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>98</sup> Oral History of American Music, *Oral History of American Music* (The Vivian Fine Estate, June 28, 1975), <https://www.vivianfine.org/main/writings/interviews/11musser.htm>.



Once she began her career at Bennington College, Fine realized how similar her situation was to Ruth Crawford's years earlier. "Looking back, I realize that it was of incalculable importance that I had Ruth Crawford as a teacher and as a model in my life. This is why it feels natural to me to be a composer. And without that, I might have felt a little bit like a fish out of water," Fine recalls in an interview.<sup>99</sup> Vivian Fine's mentorship from Crawford was a critical factor in her success as an American composer.

### **Ultramodern Music and Women**

The final piece to Fine's story is Ultramodern music and its community. Ultramodern music is just a piece of the puzzle that is American contemporary music. The music of this genre was meant to go against the constructs of the European musical tradition. This can be seen in correspondences from different modern composers, including a letter to a reader from Virgil Thomson. He writes: "German music has been smelling bad for a long time. It is largely from this fact that I concluded it must be dead."<sup>100</sup>

As a result, this community proved to be a space welcoming to "outcasts" of the music world. Many women found refuge within these circles as composers, patrons, performers, and consumers of Ultramodern music. The space was also inclusive to gay composers. Famous figures such as Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson, and Henry Cowell could exist in this space without the fear of being outed and ostracized for their sexuality.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Virgil Thomson, Tim Page, and Vanessa Weeks Page, *Selected Letters of Virgil Thomson* (New York, NY: Summit Books, 1988), 191.

<sup>101</sup> Steve Schwartz, *Nationalist and Populist Composers: Voices of the American People* (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), 139.

The composers of this genre of music were filtered into two groups, The League of Composers and the International Composers' Guild.<sup>102</sup> Many American composers that surrounded Vivian Fine, who was still a teenager at this point, belonged to both the League of Composers and the International Composers' Guild. Within these two camps of modern music, smaller societies emerged. One of these societies was the Pan American Association of Composers, the association responsible for Fine's premiere of *Solo for Oboe*. Despite the divisions within this community, Fine was uplifted by its members when they saw that she had the potential and motivation to become a successful composer.

Many notable patrons of Ultramodern music were women. One of these notable patrons was Blanche Walton, who as stated before, was instrumental to the success of both Ruth Crawford and Vivian Fine by providing them with performance opportunities to notable audiences in New York City. It is suspected that Walton is responsible for Crawford being able to study in New York, as she had received a scholarship from and was housed by Walton.<sup>103</sup> A similar offer was made to Fine upon her arrival in New York, offering temporary housing as she settled in. This is not to mention the countless performance opportunities she offered the young women, exposing their music to many other notable musicians and patrons in New York City.

While this community was much more welcoming of women than many others, there were still prejudices women were forced to navigate, mostly brought on by modern music critics.

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<sup>102</sup> Michael Broyles, *Mavericks and Other Traditions in American Music* (New Haven, Ct: Yale University Press, 2004) (pg). The League of Composers was formed in response to some non-conventional rules set International Composers' Guild. The Guild was led by Varese and included rules such as no repeated performances and featured the music of more European composers than American composers. The League of Composers created an "open door" policy to a wider range of composers, although they still excluded composers like Amy Beach for writing music that was too traditional. The League of Composers concerts started with mostly American composers and even included several women. After about three years, however, it was overtaken mostly by European men, dominated by performances of music by Stravinsky and Schoenberg. Both groups attracted large audiences of people interested in supporting and consuming modern music.

<sup>103</sup> Matilda Gaume, *Ruth Crawford Seeger: Memoirs, Memories, Music* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Pr., 1986), 57.

This criticism of women composers was jarring and full of distasteful and sarcastic remarks. “Did you try hard to be original? Did you succeed? Do you really believe that your music is the future music of America? If so, then I Pray for its deliverance.” This is just one comment made after a performance of Crawford’s music<sup>104</sup>. On the other hand, a comment made to Edwin Gerschefski: “Occasionally, here and there a few bars or so ring out poetically, then you seem to recede into clouds of meaningless dissonances”<sup>105</sup>

Fine was not immune to these comments, being asked if she had done the orchestration to one of her ballets herself. Fine responded by asking the unnamed composer if he did his orchestrations all by himself, refusing to be intimidated by the patronizing question.<sup>106</sup> Again, Fine was unbothered, as she was self-assured in her ability as a composer.

The non-modernists, on the other hand, continued to conform to the more “classical” European music tradition, where very few women maintained active and fruitful careers as composers or performers. Composers like Amy Marcy Cheney Beach and Florence Price had seen great success in their careers. Beach's *Gaelic Symphony* was the first symphony to be composed by an American woman. Price saw great success with her *Symphony No. 1*, and its premiere with the Chicago Symphony in 1933 was the first work by a Black American woman to be performed by a major symphony orchestra. These successes were short-lived, and their music slowly fell out of favor in American music until the 21st century. Beach and Price were seen as exceptions rather than significant parts of history.

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<sup>104</sup> Ray Allen and Ellie M. Hisama, *Ruth Crawford Seeger's Worlds: Innovation and Tradition in Twentieth-Century American Music*. 97.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Oral History of American Music, *Oral History of American Music* (The Vivian Fine Estate, June 28, 1975), <https://www.vivianfine.org/main/writings/interviews/11musser.htm>.

The Ultramodern music space proved to be more than a collection of societies, but a community where women were able to succeed as composers. This space allowed young women like Vivian Fine to flourish early in their careers. It also gave Fine access to a support system that gave her opportunities to find her voice and place in the music community.

## Chapter Four

### Accessing the Oboe Music of Vivian Fine

Vivian Fine's life and music have had very little exposure in the last 20 years. Very little scholarly writing has been done about her music compared to the size of her compositional output and the significant social circles in which she navigated throughout her life. Similarly, her pieces, including those written primarily for oboe, are not often performed for an audience. This study aimed to view the unfolding of Fine's career through her solo works for the oboe and to put them into the context of the time and culture she navigated. Furthermore, it advocates for the performance and study of her works for the oboe; two of the four works are not easily accessible because the only copies are handwritten manuscripts.

This study resulted in engraved scores and parts for *Sonatina for Oboe and Piano* and *Capriccio for Oboe and String Trio* and a further understanding of the significance of Fine's career. Included in this document are two appendixes. Appendix A: Annotated Bibliography of Oboe Works by Vivian Fine includes performance times, publishers, and brief program notes. Appendix B: Complete List of Works Including the Oboe by Vivian Fine lists works that include the oboe, their performance times, the instrumentations, and where to access the scores if available. This makes finding Fine's works for the oboe and other works that include the oboe easier for individuals interested in performing her works as a soloist or in a larger setting.

### Conclusion

Vivian Fine is truly an outlier in American music history. Fine's story became more impressive as she successfully navigated her career surrounded by many notable and famous individuals during a rather tumultuous period of American history. Through the early mentorship of Ruth Crawford, Fine was able to navigate this male-dominated field with grace and

conviction, never seeing herself as the odd woman out. The outpour of support and nurturing she received contributed to Fine's success through the Young Composers' Group, the American Composers' Alliance, and the various communities present in the Ultramodern music scene. These factors contributed to Fine's fruitful 70-year-long career as a composer, pianist, and teacher.

Fine's career unfolded in three stylistic periods, which can be traced through her oboe music: *Solo for Oboe*, composed in her first stylistic period of atonality with some indication of serialism; *Sonatina for Oboe and Piano*, which was composed in her second stylistic period which consisted of tonal writing with a deeper understanding of musical form; and *Capriccio for Oboe and String Trio* and *Second Solo for Oboe*, composed in her third period which is characterized by atonal writing with some tonal centers and non-triadic harmony. Not only did Fine contribute greatly to the oboe repertoire, but she also created works that can be used as pedagogical tools in teaching young oboists about American women composers and different styles and techniques of contemporary music. This demonstrates why Vivian Fine deserves to be known as an important figure in American music history, and her music needs to be performed.

### **Considerations for Further Study**

Exploring the life and music of Vivian Fine has posed far more questions than answers. Why has Vivian Fine's music been overlooked despite her fruitful career? Why is Vivian Fine seemingly erased from American music history today? How did a young woman in the 1930s, born in poverty, become a prominent composer who stood beside significant figures such as Aaron Copland before the age of 20? All these questions deserve answers. I hope others ask these questions and further investigate these many "Fine" compositions.

## Epilogue

*“Vivian, play it!”*

An enthused group of young composers exclaims as 19-year-old Vivian is handed Darius Milhaud’s *The Misfortune of Orpheus*. Vivian sits at the piano and begins to play as the Young Composers’ Group attempt to sing the, as Aaron Copland described, “drugged” harmony specific only to Milhaud.<sup>107</sup>

The rather volatile group gathered in Copland’s apartment, listened to new music and heatedly discussed their compositional preferences, occasionally lampooning Copland for his immense wealth and success as a composer.<sup>108</sup>

“It stinks!” Benny exclaimed in a thick New York accent (he said this after any work was played).<sup>109</sup> The group erupted in a dull roar of back-handed comments and laughter. Aaron sat in the back of the room, watching each member interact and making sure the group followed its two rules: **Only composers under the age of 25** and **No polemics**.

Aaron approached Vivian. They began talking about the complexities of the Milhaud as the group continued their separate discussions, some more heated than others.

Virgil Thomson, who had been invited to that meeting by Copland, approached the two.

“Vivian Fine.” He says with a grin. “I must say, you have a good name for a composer.”

“You wouldn’t like her music,” interjects Copland with a lighthearted laugh.<sup>110</sup>

Vivian smiled, as she knew Thomson would disagree.

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<sup>107</sup> Aaron Copland and Vivian Perlis, *Copland: 1900 through 1942* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Griffin, 1999), 193.

<sup>108</sup> Copland and Perlis, *Copland: 1900 through 1942*, 192.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid

<sup>110</sup> Vivian Fine, *Vivian Fine* (The Vivian Fine Estate, June 28, 1975), <https://www.vivianfine.org/main/writings/interviews/11musser.htm>.

-53 Years Later-

“What size orchestra will be available?” Vivian asked. Her heart was pounding. It’s not every day that John Adams calls asking for a commissioned work.

“Go for broke, Vivian.”<sup>111</sup> He said, “it is the San Francisco Symphony.”

A smile appeared on Vivian’s face.

“This is going to be a dramatic work, John,” she said, holding back her excitement “I’m sure you’re aware that the instrumentation will reflect this”

“I’d expect nothing less from you,” John replied.

The rest of the call was a blur. The excitement she felt from the request from the San Francisco Symphony brought her back to that evening, sitting at the piano in Aaron’s apartment. It was almost as if they all just *knew* she was destined for greatness.

Her years after retiring from Bennington College saw several incredible accomplishments, including a Guggenheim Fellowship... Not many people can say that they had received a Guggenheim. This commission felt different. She was able to compose without limits, knowing the work would be performed, regardless of its demands.

The excitement from the phone call subsided. Vivian sat down at her desk, took a deep breath, and got to work.

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<sup>111</sup> Von Gunden, *The Life and Music of Vivian Fine*, 114.



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Appendix A

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SOLO WORKS FOR THE OBOE BY VIVIAN FINE

Works are cataloged by JC numbers as they are in *Vivian Fine: A Bio-Bibliography* by Judith Cody. Works are presented by: Catalogue number. *Title (year)*. Duration. Publishing company/score access.

JC1. *Solo for Oboe (1929)*. 4'45". TrevCo Music Publishing. 2012.

Written when she was only 16 years old. Fine showed great intuitive writing from a young age, "I would not have been conscious of cells or motifs at that time. I just wrote intuitively."<sup>112</sup> Young Fine writes this work in three movements: I. Allegretto; II. Lento; III. Con Spirito. Young Vivian Fine is fearless in her experimentation with the oboe's color, range, and technical ability, making beautiful melodies in the process.

JC32. *Sonatina for Oboe and Piano (1942)*. 7'30". Manuscript available on IMSLP. Engraved by Robin Michelle Sweeden. 2020

Currently her best-known work, this still rarely performed *Sonatina* features Scarlatti-like lines in modal tonalities and dancing time signatures. The first movement is a joyful fanfare titled Allegro moderato. The second movement titled *lento sostenuto* is a sultry tango that turns into an impassioned song before going back to a tango. The third movement is a jubilant allegretto in a Lydian mode. The overall work shows the oboist's ability to play flowing melodies and displays their technical prowess.

JC43. *Capriccio for Oboe and String Trio (1946)*. 10'. Manuscript available on IMSLP.

Considered a "landmark work"<sup>113</sup> by Fine scholars, Fine revisits her roots in atonality in this piece, straying from her mostly diatonic "mid-life interlude". The work features solo oboe accompanied by string quartet. The one-movement piece is divided into four sections. A moving and thought-provoking work to bring Fine back to her roots in atonality.

JC46. *Second Solo for Oboe (1947)*. 5". TrevCo Music Publishing. 2012.

"The Piece shows Fine's technique of building up a structure out of long, beautifully wrought phrases," Eric Salzman of *The New York Times* describes Fine's *Second Solo for Oboe*<sup>114</sup>. The work is in three movements: I (no tempo marking is indicated); II. Lento Espressivo; III. Allegro. The work displays the oboe's ability to play smooth, delicate phrases contrasted by pointed and quirky technical lines.

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<sup>112</sup> Heidi Von Gunden, *The Music of Vivian Fine* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1999), 5.

<sup>113</sup> Judith Cody, *Vivian Fine: A Bio-Bibliography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 19.

<sup>114</sup> Eric Salzman, *The New York Times*, (December 22, 1959), [https://imslp.org/wiki/Second\\_Solo\\_for\\_Oboe\\_\(Fine%2C\\_Vivian\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Second_Solo_for_Oboe_(Fine%2C_Vivian)).

Appendix B

COMPLETE LIST OF WORKS INCLUDING THE OBOE BY VIVIAN FINE

Works are cataloged by JC numbers as they are in *Vivian Fine: A Bio-Bibliography* By Judith Cody. Works are presented by: Catalogue number. *Title (year)*. Duration. Instrumentation. Publishing company/score access.

### **First Stylistic Period**

JC1. *Solo for Oboe (1929)*. 4'45". TrevCo Music Publishing. 2012.

JC2. *Four Pieces for Two Flutes (1930)* (also Called Four Pieces for Violin and Oboe). 5'30".  
No Known Score

JC9. *Divertimento (1933)*. 5' Chamber Music. Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Piano, Percussion. 5'.  
No score available

### **Second Stylistic Period**

JC27. *The Race of Life (1938)*. Orchestra. 2-2-3-2, 4-2-2-1-0 Timpani, Percussions, Piano, 1 or 2 harps, Strings. 10'. Score Available on IMSLP.

JC32. *Sonatina for Oboe and Piano (1942)*. 7'30". Manuscript available on IMSLP. Edited and Engraved by Robin Michelle Sweeden. 2020

JC42. *Concertante for Piano and Orchestra (1944)*. Orchestra. 2-2-2-2, 2-2-0-0, Timpani, Strings. 17'30". Score available on IMSLP

### **Third Stylistic Period**

JC43. *Capriccio for Oboe and String Trio (1946)*. 10'. Chamber Music. Manuscript available on IMSLP.

JC46. *Second Solo for Oboe (1947)*. 5". TrevCo Music Publishing. 2012.

JC57. *Valedictions (1959)*. 16'. Chamber Music. Soprano, Tenor, Mixed Chorus, Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in A, Bassoon, Bb Trumpet, Horn in F, String Quartet.

JC59. *Alcestis (1959)*. 10'45". Orchestra. 2-2\*-2-2, 2-2-2-0, Harp, Piano, Percussion, Strings. Score available on IMSLP

JC71. *Chamber Concerto for Cello and Six Instruments (1966)*. 10'. Chamber Music. Solo Cello, Oboe, Violin, Viola, Cello, Double Bass, Piano. Score Available on IMSLP.

JC78. *Sounds of the Nightingale (1971)*. 12'. Chamber Music. Soprano, Female Chorus, 2 Flutes, Oboe/English, Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, Violin, Viola, Cello, Percussion. Score available on IMSLP.



- JC84. *Meeting For Equal Rights 1866 (1976)*. 20'. Orchestra. 2-2-2-2, 2-2-2-0, Percussion, Organ, Bass-Baritone, Mezzo-Soprano, Narrator, Strings. Score available on IMSLP
- JC87. *Sonnets for Baritone and Orchestra (1976)*. 10'. Orchestra. 2-2-2-2, 2-4-2-0, Timpani, Percussion, Strings. Score available on IMSLP.
- JC93. *Nightingales, Motet for Six Instruments (1979)*. 5'. Chamber Music. Flute, Oboe, Violin, 2 Violas, Double Bass. Score available on IMSLP.
- JC98. *Oda a las Ranas (1980)*. 6'. Chamber Music. Women's Chorus, Flute, Oboe, Cello, Percussion. Score available on IMSLP.
- JC99. *Music for Flute, Oboe and Cello (1980)*. 10'. Chamber Music. Flute/Alto Flute, Oboe/English Horn, Cello. Commissioned by the Huntingdon Trio. Score available on IMSLP.
- JC101. *Drama for Orchestra (1982)*. 16'. Orchestra. 4\*-4\*-4\*-4\*, 6-4-2-1, Bs Tbn, Timpani, Piano/Celeste, Harp, Strings. Score available on IMSLP.
- JC106. *Quintet for Violin, Oboe, Clarinet, Cello, and Piano. (1948)*. 11'. Chamber Music. Commissioned by Sigma Alpha Iota. C.F. Peters Inc.
- JC107. *Poetic Fires (1948)*. 14'. Orchestra. 2-2-2-2, 4-2-2-1-1, Timpani, Percussion, Harp, Strings, Solo Piano. Commissioned by Koussevitzky Foundation. Score Available on IMSLP.
- JC119. *Dancing Winds (1987)*. 12'. Woodwind Quintet. Commissioned by the Catskill Conservatory on behalf of the Catskill Woodwind Quintet with assistance of the New York Council on the Arts<sup>115</sup>. Score available on IMSLP.
- JC124. *After the Tradition (1987)*. 11'. Orchestra. 2-2-2-2, 2-1-1-0, Timpani, Percussion, Strings. Commissioned by Bay Area Women's Philharmonic.
- JC128. *The Triple-Goddess (1988)*. 8'30". Wind Ensemble. Piccolo, 4 Flutes, Oboe, 3 Bb Clarinets, Bassoon, 4 Bb Trumpets, 4 Horns In F, 2 Tenor Trombones, Bass Trombone, Euphonium, Tuba, Alto Sax, Tenor Sax, Baritone Sax, Timpani, Percussion. Commissioned by the Harvard Wind Ensemble. Score available on IMSLP.
- JC135. *Songs of Love and War (1991)*. 16'. Chamber Music. Soprano, violin, oboe, bassoon, percussion, piano. Score available on IMSLP.

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<sup>115</sup> Judith Cody, *Vivian Fine: A Bio-Bibliography*. 251.