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ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DUETS FOR WOODWIND AND
VOICE BY JOHANNA MAGDALENA BEYER

A DOCUMENT APPROVED FOR THE
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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Dedication

I dedicate this paper to my friend, Eric. His friendship meant the world to me, his perseverance inspired me, and his care and love for others encouraged me. He will be missed, but he will never be forgotten.

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Thanks to God for leading me through this past decade of college. Without His patience, mercy, and guidance, I would not have made it to the end. Thank you to Dr. Tirk for four years of incredible teaching, encouragement, and renewal of my love of music. A big thank you to Dr. Lumsden for guiding me in the subject matter of this document and helping me to understand and appreciate a kind of music I never would have encountered had it not been for her. Thank you, also, to Dr. Hewes, Dr. Lee, and Dr. Watts for helping me through this incredibly long “rite of passage.” And thank you to my family and my friends. Though they will probably never read this—or get all the way through it—I am thankful for their love and support. A special thanks to my parents and sister for supporting and encouraging me throughout my years at school. Their prayers and wisdom have helped motivate me to persevere. And last, but certainly not least, thank you to Michael, whose friendship uplifted me through the ups and downs of life.

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Abstract

For forty-four years after her death in 1944, Johanna M. Beyer was a relatively unknown composer. Her name started receiving attention in 1988 after the music ensemble Essential Music organized two concerts consisting exclusively of Beyer's music. On November 10 and 15 of that year, these two concerts were presented in Greenwich House, New York, to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of Beyer's birth. Since then, the biographical and analytical scholarship on her life and works has been slowly increasing. In March 2015, the first comprehensive biography of her was published. Yet, despite the growing amount of literature about Beyer, hardly any substantial theoretical analyses of her works exist.

Among her many neglected works, Beyer's three songs for woodwind and voice—*Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, *Ballad of the Star-Eater* (for clarinet and soprano), and *Have Faith!* (for flute and soprano)—remain practically untouched analytically. The works are fascinating in their construction, being aggressively atonal yet containing an emotional depth and beauty in both text and music. Beyer's application of dissonant counterpoint is seamlessly interwoven into the musical fabric, yet despite the immense influence of dissonant counterpoint on her compositional oeuvre, no scholarly output exists on her application of this style to her compositional method. Additionally, Beyer's use of text painting in her songs is instrumental in the formation of motives and the overall structure of her works, yet no information exists as to how her use of text painting affects the development of her songs. In this document, I examine how Beyer uses the dissonant counterpoint techniques laid out in Charles

Seeger's treatise to construct her works. I also discuss her frequent use of text painting and how it affects the structure of each song. Each chapter consists of three parts: introduction, discussion of motivic development, and analysis of text painting. The first part of each chapter provides historical context for the musical work and the poetry that appears in it, the second part examines how Beyer uses dissonant counterpoint techniques to develop her motives, and the third part examines the places in which text painting is used in each piece and how the technique affects the motives and structure of the work.

Chapter One

Introduction

Background

Johanna Magdalena Beyer (1888–1944) was a German-born composer who moved to New York in the early 1920s and studied composition with Charles Seeger, Ruth Crawford, and Henry Cowell.¹ She was part of an ultramodern circle of composers then situated in New York who experimented with different styles of music and extended techniques.² Although limited information is known about her life and works, one defining feature of her compositions is her use of a new musical style known as dissonant counterpoint. In the mid-1910s, Cowell and Seeger worked together to develop this new discipline in which the rules of tonal counterpoint would be reversed. From 1929 to 1931, Ruth Crawford was instrumental in helping Seeger to further develop the dissonant counterpoint style and systematize it in a treatise on musical composition.³ About this new counterpoint, Seeger wrote:

Dissonant counterpoint was at first purely a school-room discipline—a link between the preparatory studies in harmony, counterpoint, canon and fugue of a regular composition course and the “free” composition of the second decade of the twentieth century. . . . It was based upon the perception of a difference, sincerely felt but also logically postulated,

¹ John Kennedy and Larry Polansky, “‘Total Eclipse’: The Music of Johanna Magdalena Beyer: An Introduction and Preliminary Annotated Checklist,” *The Musical Quarterly* 80, no. 4 (Winter 1996): 720. Beyer also studied briefly with Dane Rudhyar.

² Modern spelling of the word ultramodern does not use a hyphen whereas older spelling of the word does (ultra-modern). In this document, I use the unhyphenated, modern spelling.

³ John D. Spilker, “‘Substituting a New Order’: Dissonant Counterpoint, Henry Cowell, and the Network of Ultra-Modern Composers” (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2010), 4, 103.

between consonance and dissonance. . . . The essential departure was the establishment of dissonance, rather than consonance, as the rule . . . by definition the procedure was on the whole one of negation and contrariness.⁴

This departure from consonance to dissonance allowed the conventional rules of musical counterpoint to be turned upside down. In this style of writing, dissonance became so established that it could be treated as commonly as eighteenth-century consonance. In a similar manner, consonance had to be treated as carefully as eighteenth-century dissonance, “[having] to be prepared and resolved” properly.⁵ In this way, melodic lines were constructed in primarily dissonant intervals, whereas any consonant melodic intervals used were instantly dissonated.⁶ Within these lines, dissonance was so ubiquitous that consonance could sound dissonant within the musical context. Beyer took this concept of dissonant counterpoint and used it as a foundation in which to form her own unique and fascinating style of composing.

Statement of Purpose

Scarcely any substantial theoretical analysis has been done of Beyer’s music. Though dissonant counterpoint was a leading influence in her compositional style, very little research actually shows how she directly applied dissonant counterpoint principles to her music. Brief sketches of many of her works have been documented by Larry Polansky and John Kennedy, but these do not contain thorough analyses of the compositional tools she used to create her music. In “Experimentation and Process in the Music of Johanna Beyer,” Marguerite Boland describes several of the compositional

⁴ Ibid., 90.

⁵ Spilker, ““Substituting a New Order,”” 13.

⁶ David Nicholls, *American Experimental Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 90–91.

features that Beyer “made her own.”⁷ However, she does not examine the dissonant counterpoint principles laid out in Seeger’s treatise, a vital element to Beyer’s music. Among her many neglected works, Beyer’s three works for woodwind and voice, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, *Ballad of the Star-Eater* (for clarinet and soprano), and *Have Faith!* (for flute and soprano), remain practically unexamined. My analysis of these songs focuses on two essential aspects of Beyer’s compositional material: motivic development and text painting. As I explore her development of the motive in each piece, I focus primarily on the technical means by which Beyer builds and develops her motives. These techniques of dissonant counterpoint, laid out in Charles Seeger’s treatise, primarily include continuity, repetition, extension, and intension.⁸ Whereas Beyer utilized many techniques from the treatise and followed many of its guidelines in her compositions, she would often bend or break the rules, thus creating her own voice in dissonant counterpoint. When needed, I will discuss areas in which Beyer breaks tradition to further her own musical ideas. The second important feature in Beyer’s songs is her use of text painting. Here, I examine how text painting helps form particular motives and shapes the overall form of each song. Finally, each chapter concludes with a brief section that provides suggestions for performance based on previously presented material.

⁷ Marguerite Boland, “Experimentation and Process in the Music of Johanna Beyer,” *VivaVoce No. 86, Journal of the Internationaler Arbeitskreis Frau and Musik* (2007): n.p.

⁸ Sequence is also used, though not as commonly. I address specific instances of sequence when discussing text painting in the next chapter.

Need for the Study

For more than half a century, Beyer's music was largely ignored by the bulk of music historians and performers. Her works were virtually unknown until 1988, when the new music ensemble Essential Music organized two concerts consisting exclusively of Beyer's music. These concerts were presented on November 10 and 15 that year in Greenwich House, New York, where Beyer had taught in the 1930s. The concerts were held to celebrate the one-hundredth anniversary of Beyer's birth. Since 1988, interest in her music has gained only slight momentum, including some additional premieres, performances, and recordings.⁹

Review of Related Literature

In March 2015, the first comprehensive biography on Beyer was published. This book, Amy C. Beal's *Johanna Beyer*, pieces together information from manuscripts, letters, and scores found in libraries, universities, records, and museums across the country.¹⁰ In the book, Beal discusses what little is known about Beyer's early life and her move to the United States followed by her years in New York as part of a group of experimental, ultramodern composers. Beal also examines Beyer's work with the Federal Music Project's Composers' Forum Laboratory, acknowledging some of the obstacles she faced when it came to the gendered reception of her music. The book also gives brief overviews of Beyer's compositional oeuvre, including her percussion works and chamber music. Beal had written an earlier biographical sketch on Beyer in 2008 for the

⁹ Kennedy and Polansky, "'Total Eclipse,'" 719–25. For a list of selected recordings of Beyer's music, see appendix D in Beal's *Johanna Beyer*.

¹⁰ Amy C. Beal, *Johanna Beyer* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2015).

American Music Review, but the article does not contain much analytical information as it is a brief summation of the composer's life.¹¹

Melissa J. de Graaf has extensively documented the history and dialogue surrounding the New York Composers' Forum Concerts from the years 1935 to 1940. Her research and writings culminated with *The New York Composers' Forum Concerts, 1935–1940* (2013). Her work is deeply informed by feminist ideology, spending a good deal of time discussing the gendered reception of music and discussing the harsh criticism that was often doled out to modernist women composers, including Beyer. De Graaf also discusses issues such as race and spirituality surrounding the music presented at the forum concerts.

In their article “‘Total Eclipse’: The Music of Johanna Magdalena Beyer: An Introduction and Preliminary Annotated Checklist,” John Kennedy and Larry Polansky provide an introduction to Beyer's life, encompassing the years from her birth in Germany in 1888 through her death in New York in 1944. Along with Beyer's work within Cowell's ultramodern circle, Kennedy and Polansky discuss Beyer's musical style and the importance of her music, including her works for percussion ensemble. Their article contains an extensive list of each of Beyer's published, unpublished, and lost works. For each work, the authors provide a concise description of the basic features of the piece. Instrumentation, analytical highlights/corrections, and manuscript conditions are all included. At times, the article ties biographical information in with the history of particular works, taking into account pedagogical influence from Beyer's

¹¹ Amy C. Beal, “‘Her Whimsy and Originality Really Amount to Genius’: New Biographical Research on Johanna Beyer,” *American Music Review* 38, no. 1 (Fall 2008).

teachers and cultural factors that helped shape her music. Though many of the biographical and analytical publications that appeared after ““Total Eclipse”” are more detailed in regard to particular works or events in Beyer’s life, the research that Kennedy and Polansky did, combined with their efforts to promulgate Beyer’s music in concert and publication, is the central foundation on which others have built to publicize an otherwise unknown composer. A series of smaller articles on Beyer and her music has been compiled online by Polansky.¹² These articles, by a diverse array of authors, offer further biographical, analytical, and performance-based information.

In 2012, Rachel Lumsden published her dissertation on Johanna Beyer and Vivian Fine. Along with analysis of Vivian Fine’s *The Race of Life*, this document focuses on Beyer’s String Quartet No. 2 and enlightens the reader not only about biographical information concerning Beyer, but also on contextual matters surrounding the attitudes toward women during the 1930s.¹³ Here, Lumsden provides an analysis, focusing on Beyer’s borrowing and treatment of themes by Mozart, the similarities and differences between stylistic characteristics of ultramodernism, and gender-related influences. Heavily influenced by feminist theory, her paper notes the dismissive and at times hostile approach to women composers during the 1930s and discusses the obstacles posed to women composers and how a pervasive atmosphere of rejection was reflected in their music.

¹² The information provided by Larry Polansky can be found at http://eamusic.dartmouth.edu/~larry/misc_writings/talks/beyer.index.html. This link includes books, articles, essays, biographical information, programs, liner notes, recordings, live performances, and scores related to Beyer.

¹³ Rachel Lumsden, “Beyond Modernism’s Edge: Johanna Beyer’s String Quartet No. 2 and Vivian Fine’s *The Race of Life*” (PhD diss., City University of New York, 2012).

Thomas Nevill has discussed Beyer's six pieces for percussion ensemble. His dissertation looks at biographical aspects of the composer's life, events surrounding the birth of the percussion ensemble in the 1930s, and a measure-by-measure performance-centered approach to the percussion works themselves.¹⁴ The majority of the document consists of scores of each of Beyer's works for percussion ensemble.

Marguerite Boland wrote a brief article in 2007 for *VivaVoce* called "Experimentation and Process in the Music of Johanna Beyer." In this article, Boland discusses Beyer's compositional techniques. The article is short but informative as to several of the compositional tools Beyer used to form her works.

Charles Seeger authored a treatise on dissonant counterpoint that serves as a guide to the compositional tools Beyer used in writing her works for woodwind and voice. The treatise, though at times challenging to read, provides a list of the rules and guidelines by which dissonant counterpoint can be approached. Important techniques such as dissonating a neume, dissonating a phrase, and constructing a multivoiced texture are discussed. The structural foundation to any work grounded in dissonant counterpoint can be analyzed using the principles and procedures laid out in this treatise.¹⁵

¹⁴ Thomas James Nevill, "Rediscovering a Forgotten Voice: The Percussion Ensemble Music of Johanna Magdalena Beyer" (PhD diss., University of Nevada, 2005).

¹⁵ Charles Seeger and Ann M. Pescatello, *Studies in Musicology II, 1929–1979* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 1994. Ruth Crawford was instrumental in the creation of Seeger's treatise. Though she is not listed as a coauthor, the treatise is dedicated to her and mentions her invaluable contribution to the studies recorded in the book.

The research surrounding Beyer has focused almost exclusively on biographical or cultural information, with only occasional and fleeting inquiry into theoretical analyses of her works. Music theorist Rachel Lumsden writes, “Unfortunately, Beyer’s fascinating music has received no in-depth analytic attention from scholars.”¹⁶ Of her fifty-six known compositions, few have been thoroughly examined, leaving a large gap in the analysis of her compositional style.¹⁷ Though slightly more research on Beyer’s oeuvre has appeared in recent years, most analytical writings are either performance-based or too superficial to allow readers to gain a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical structure and design behind her work.¹⁸ This study aims to rectify the gap in the scholarship by exploring how Beyer uses the concept of dissonant counterpoint to compose her works and how she incorporates text painting in three particular pieces between the woodwind and the voice.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

Since it has already been provided in abundance from the several music theorists and musicologists just mentioned, this document will not focus solely on biographical information. When biographical material is presented, it is used in hopes of providing further insight into understanding Beyer’s compositional schemes and structures.

The bulk of each chapter examines Beyer’s compositional choices through the guidelines laid out in Seeger’s treatise. Though many of the ultramodern composers in

¹⁶ Lumsden, “Beyond Modernism’s Edge,” 11.

¹⁷ Beal mentions fifty-six compositions, but Frog Peak Music lists only fifty-three available scores found in the New York Public Library Collection.

¹⁸ This comment is made in reference to Thomas Nevill’s *Rediscovering a Forgotten Voice: The Percussion Ensemble Music of Johanna Magdalena Beyer*. Nevill’s work is almost entirely performance-centered and offers a measure-by-measure approach to the music.

Cowell's network embraced twelve-tone writing as a way to intensify their use of dissonant counterpoint, this document will not focus on twelve-tone's influence in the works of Beyer. It is important to briefly note the crossover between ultramodernism and twelve-tone writing. About this, music theorist Joseph Straus writes:

The small group of self-described "ultramodern" composers gathered around Cowell (Adolph Weiss, Wallingford Riegger, Carl Ruggles, Ruth Crawford) adopted Schoenberg's twelve-tone method because it intersected and amplified some of their own compositional concerns, including a linear/contrapuntal approach to music (reacting against a Romantic texture of melody and chords) and a commitment to "dissonance" (that is, non-triadic, atonal harmony).¹⁹

Despite the overlap between the two methods, the ultramodern composers were not just following Schoenberg, but maintained their own ideas about aggregate completion and non-repetition of tones.²⁰ Weiss's handling of the aggregate as a fundamental structural unit resulted in significant pitch class repetition. His method encouraged repetition of tones rather than avoiding them. Ruggles had little information regarding Schoenberg's twelve-tone method, but nonetheless sought to incorporate it in his work *Evocations II* in an effort to amplify his own dissonant counterpoint.²¹ In the same manner, some of Beyer's compositional techniques employ twelve-tone aggregates and will be briefly discussed, but historical documentation of the crossover between the twelve-tone method and ultramodern method will not be provided.²²

¹⁹ Joseph Nathan Straus, *Twelve-Tone Music in America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 3.

²⁰ For a definition of aggregate completion, see the section entitled Beyer's Compositional Techniques.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 7–13.

²² The comment on Beyer's compositional techniques is made in reference to her use of aggregate completion. As seen more explicitly in *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, Beyer plays around with aggregates of twelve tones, but in a nonconsecutive manner and with larger

Aside from *Three Songs*, *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, and *Have Faith!*, Beyer wrote two other song settings: *Three Songs* (1933) for soprano, piano, and percussion, and *Sky Pieces* (1933) for soprano and piano. Both of these pieces are set to texts by Carl Sandburg. Beyer also composed a number of choral pieces, including: *The Robin in the Rain* (1935), *The Federal Music Project* (1936), *The Composers Forum-Laboratory* (1937), *The People, Yes* (1937), and *The Main-Deep* (1937). These pieces are not part of this document so that I may focus exclusively on Beyer's duos for woodwind and voice. All of these vocal works would also benefit from further analytic examination.

Motivation Driving the Research

Before taking my doctoral exams in late 2014, I had never heard the name Johanna Beyer. In both performance and musicology, my favorite music has originated primarily from Europe and North America, spanning the late Romantic era through the end of World War II. However, I had some sparse knowledge of the circle of ultramodern composers expanding the musical scene in New York during the 1920s—40s. Certainly, many students come across Henry Cowell in their studies (with staples such as his *Banshee* being briefly viewed in many undergraduate musicology curriculums) and perhaps Ruth Crawford Seeger at some point, but as for some of their ultramodern colleagues, like Johanna Beyer, their life, works, and ideas remain relatively veiled even to most music enthusiasts. When I began analyzing Beyer's *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano* for my exams, I came into an unknown territory of ultramodernism and dissonant counterpoint. My interest was piqued in Beyer's songs by three features: their

structural implications. For further information regarding the development of the twelve-tone method in the ultramodern circle, see Joseph Straus's *Twelve-Tone Music in America*.

exceptional and thought-provoking poetry; text painting, especially with use of the woodwinds; and the reversal of conventional contrapuntal practices.

Compositional Overview and Techniques

Two major areas of highly sophisticated writing are evident in Beyer's works for woodwind and voice: her development of motives and her use of text painting. She developed her motives and transformed them through the dissonant counterpoint style promulgated by her teachers Charles Seeger and Ruth Crawford Seeger. According to this compositional style, motives and phrases can be reduced to basic building blocks of fundamental note groupings called "neumes." A neume describes specific note patterns of three to four tone-beats, or notes.²³ When one tone-beat moves to another, this is referred to as a progression. Two-progressions would be three tone-beats (notes), and three-progressions would be four tone-beats; a progression is merely one note traveling to another note, thus constituting two total notes per progression. Thus, for example, a four-progression neume would consist of five tone-beats. Throughout her songs, Beyer constantly develops neumes and phrases by using a plethora of techniques from Seeger's "Treatise on Musical Composition," which can be found in Seeger and Pescatello's *Studies in Musicology II, 1929–1979*.²⁴ Beyer's text painting is expertly applied between the voice and instrument. The instrumental voice is predominantly

²³ Neumes can be considered longer than three or four tone-beats, but typically break down into fundamental groupings of three or four tone-beats.

²⁴ Ruth Crawford was integral in the development of this treatise, and Charles Seeger even dedicated the work to her. The dedication reads, "To Ruth Crawford—of whose studies these pages are a record and without whose inspiration and collaboration they would not have been written." Further information on the development of Seeger's treatise over the period of time covering Crawford's involvement can be found in Nancy Rao's 1997 article "Partnership in Modern Music: Charles Seeger and Ruth Crawford, 1929–31."

subject to immediately imitating the text in the voice line. At times, considering the use of *Sprechstimme*—the combination of song and speech—and the directional line of the phrase, the voice is textually evocative as well. Though the text in and of itself constitutes stand-alone literature, Beyer’s text painting permeates the music and enhances the vivid imagery to the listener. Each section of this document devoted to text painting examines how its use influences the overall development of the musical phrases and structure.

Beyer’s Compositional Techniques

Terms discussed in Seeger’s treatise that are relevant to a study of Beyer’s compositions, and that are discussed in this document, are listed below. Terms 1 through 10 that follow are taken directly from Seeger’s treatise.²⁵ Examples and brief descriptions of each are given in chapters 6 and 7 of Seeger’s treatise.²⁶

- 1) **Continuity:** One neume transforming into another neume on a tonal (pitch-related) and/or rhythmic basis.²⁷
- 2) **Dissonant Counterpoint:** This primary structural device incorporates dissonance as the new consonance. A listener can now, as the norm, expect the regular rules of counterpoint to be reversed so that dissonance is the predominant force in the assembly of the harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic aspects of the works and consonance is used with extreme care, almost always

²⁵ The terms are listed in alphabetical order. Though the terms are found in Seeger’s treatise, the definitions are in my own wording.

²⁶ Chapters 7 and 8 of Seeger’s treatise contain pertinent information regarding the form of the neume and the form of the phrase. Each of these chapters provides examples and descriptions of each term listed here.

²⁷ Seeger and Pescatello, *Studies in Musicology II*, 153–54.

resolving to dissonance. The following compositional techniques derive from this fundamental concept.

- 3) **Extension:** The addition of tones or beats at the beginning, middle, or end of a neume or phrase. Matching the exact duration of the original neume or phrase is not mandatory; the original may be rhythmically augmented (in which the note lengths are made longer) or diminuted (in which the note lengths are made shorter) in conjunction with one or more extensions.²⁸
- 4) **Intension:** The opposite of “extension,” intension subtracts tones or beats from the beginning, middle, or end of a neume or phrase. As with extension, the exact duration of the neume or phrase may vary in conjunction with the use of intension.²⁹
- 5) **Repetition:** Near ubiquitous in Beyer’s works for woodwind and voice, her neumes are constantly repeated through exact repetition or a modified transformation by augmenting or diminuting the pitch and/or rhythmic constructs. Though repetition is a term that Seeger used, I will refer to a subcategory of this as *motivic replication*—the repetition of a melody or motive in another voice with particular combinations of rhythmic diminution, augmentation, alteration, intervallic reconfiguration, and/or stylistic modifications that vary it within the texture.³⁰

²⁸ Ibid., 153.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 150. Whereas repetition is generic and may be applied to any neume or phrase, I have created the term “motivic replication” as a way to refer to prominent melodic material that Beyer imitates between the instrument and voice.

- 6) **Rhythmic Centricity:** A rhythmic pattern becomes predominant through repetition and/or by its relationship to other rhythmic patterns.³¹
- 7) **Rhythmic Modification:** A means to transform a neume through the use of augmentation and diminution of a rhythmic level.³²
- 8) **Sequence:** The restatement of a neume or motif at a lower or higher pitch in the same voice. This can occur as an exact sequence or a modified (using augmentation or diminution) sequence.³³
- 9) **Tonal (Pitch) Centricity:** One tone becomes predominant through repetition and/or by its relationship to other tones (for example, aggregate completion).³⁴
- 10) **Tonal (Pitch) Modification:** A means to transform the pitches of a neume through the use of intervallic augmentation, diminution, similar or contrary motion.³⁵

Terms 11 and 12 are not discussed in Seeger's treatise but are essential techniques in some of Beyer's songs.

- 11) **Aggregate Completion:** In music, an aggregate is the set of all twelve pitches of the chromatic scale. In an aggregate completion, the last of the twelve pitches in a particular chromatic collection is avoided throughout the work until the end of

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 145–46.

³³ Ibid., 150–53.

³⁴ Ibid., 155–56. When talking about tonal centricity, I use the term “pitch” (as opposed to “tonal”) to avoid confusion between key relationships and pitches. Beyer's songs are atonal, and the use of the word “tonal” could potentially confuse the reader.

³⁵ Ibid., 144–45. Again, the word “pitch” is used in this document when talking about tonal modification or tonal transposition.

a section or movement of the piece, when it is used to signal the end of the section or movement.³⁶

12) **Static/Active Dialogue:** An antiphonal effect in which one voice moves actively over another unmoving, or static, voice. These static pitches may be held notes, but can also be trills.

In the following chapters, I explore how Beyer uses these techniques to construct her songs for woodwind and voice. I also discuss how text painting affects the motives and structure of each song. For each example and ordered collection of pitches in *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano* and *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, I have transposed the clarinet part to concert pitch so the reader can easily see the pitch relationships between both the voice and instrument.

³⁶ Boland, “Experimentation and Process.”

Chapter Two

Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano (1934)

Introduction

Beyer's *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano* was completed in 1934.³⁷ As the title suggests, the work is divided into three movements. The first and third movement ("Total Eclipse" and "Universal-Local") contain poetry dated from August and July 1932, whereas the second movement ("To Be") contains poetry from December 1934. In 1936, the principal clarinetist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Rosario Mazzeo, premiered the work at the Composers' Forum-Laboratory concert, a federally funded program designed to help musicians promote their oeuvre and find work.³⁸

Beyer wrote the poems for all three movements of *Three Songs*. Though examples of her nonmusical work are scarce, the few poems she wrote communicate her longings, views of life, and hopefulness despite struggle. Of these poems, Kennedy and Polansky write, "Much of their language poignantly reflects Beyer's life and yearnings, with an earnest optimism in eternity and a sacramental appreciation of nature and life. In retrospect, knowing the conflict in her life adds a tragic irony to these poems."³⁹ The struggle the authors mention may have included a lack of recognition for her compositions and challenges in her personal life stemming from her deteriorating

³⁷ All the excerpts from *Three Songs* have been selected from scores provided by Frog Peak Music. These versions were copied and edited by Mark Warhol as part of the Johanna Beyer Project.

³⁸ Amy C. Beal, *Johanna Beyer* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 49.

³⁹ Kennedy and Polansky, "Total Eclipse," 726–27.

friendship with Cowell and finances.⁴⁰ Through all of this, her poetry still seems to balance hopefulness with cynical reality.

The first of her poems in *Three Songs* and the first movement are titled “Total Eclipse.” Both the poetry and work are divisible into four parts. The original text to the poem reads as such:

Part 1: Moving of masses,
Stirred by astro-phenomena,
Directing matter,
Their slave, yet their master,
Still to be.

Effort, research, action,
Thought bearing power, strength,
And courage abundant
To wrestle from the elements
The secret kept.

Part 2: The world is aghast,
Nature pales in hush
And feeble protesting
Sinks into last motions,
Activity before death.

Birds and beasts bow in fear,
Frightened leaves tremble,
Emaciated sunbeams die below swaying grass,
Leaving the planet colorless,
Faint, deathlike at rest.

Part 3: Here and yonder,
Beads of light—lost,
Erring through valleys of the moon,
Still shed their love upon earth,
While shadow-bands pattern designs.

But behold the heavens,
Phenomenous climax!
Bursting the shielding surface,

⁴⁰ For further information on Beyer’s personal and artistic life, refer to Amy Beal’s biography, *Johanna Beyer*.

The fiery glow of the corona
Circles its dance of life.

Part 4: And its secrets alight,
Reaching out beyond spheres,
Expanding toward searching,
Restless thoughts of men,
Begging to be known, to be loved.

But though men try,
Time and again,
These longing elements flee back,
Hiding their shame—"misunderstood"—
Wearing mourning-veils another time untold!⁴¹

This poem describes the manifestation of a total eclipse. Beyer describes the slow motion of the moon as it obscures the sun from view. Below, the creatures of earth cower in fear as this cosmic phenomenon passes over them. Great detail is used to describe the shadows cast upon the earth and the blazing rim of the corona as the eclipse is completed. Furthermore, Beyer's beginning and ending verses suggest mankind's futile efforts to grasp an understanding of these awesome heavenly powers. It would seem for Beyer that human efforts to "wrestle secrets from the elements" are hindered continually because the elements retreat into obscurity after appearing, leaving the "restless" thoughts of people to grapple with the mysteries behind these celestial wonders.

In the analysis of "Total Eclipse," I will show how the motivic development through both the voice and the instrument is formed around a "short-long" motive that both begins and ends the movement. I then discuss Beyer's development of this motive

⁴¹ Beyer's poems are included in their respective editions. The poem "Total Eclipse" is included at the end of the Frog Peak edition (ed. by Mark Warhol).

and a prominent septuplet motive through her use of continuity—one neume transforming into another neume, as Seeger described it.⁴² Her use of imitation, which I refer to as motivic replication (as the motives are often rhythmically altered and placed within another voice), is another important technique I examine. Concerning her use of text painting, I provide a summarized version of each of the four sections of text/music and then look more closely at each section.

Though the poems to the first and third movement were written in 1932, “To Be,” the last of the three-poem set, was written in December 1934. However, the actual musical composition “To Be” was composed the same year as the other movements (1934). Interestingly, the text of the poem “To Be” does not begin with a heavy emphasis on the astronomical, as do the other two poems. Instead, the more earthbound text begins with a wistful daydream and later transitions into the more serious, cosmic-centered nature of the third movement. The poem “To Be” reads:

To be a sunbeam, a sparkling ray,
To fall as raindrop, chattering gay,
To be a grain of sand, bathing in sun and wind,
Waiting for tides to come and go—
To be a tiny shoot, just from home “root,”
To leaf off from the stem that holds you firm,
To be a blossom, oh, with spellbound hue,
Forthcoming fruit promise, crystallized in dew –
To be a wandering cloud, sailing along,
To shine as star above, meet moons and suns,
To rise and fall in curves, in space and time,
Thus, an enduring cycle, majestic, sublime.⁴³

Diverging from the melancholic, yet ambitious feel of the music of the first movement and the uniform, ethereal nature of the music of the third, the “To Be”

⁴² Both motives are found in the clarinet line.

⁴³ Beyer’s poems are included in their respective editions. The poem “To Be” is included at the end of the Frog Peak edition (ed. by Mark Warhol).

portion of the composition exudes a lighthearted, even humorous character. The title of the piece, along with the poetic content, paints a picture of a whimsical daydream in which the dreamer is musing over what it would be like to become various things in nature. The poetry conveys these items in an optimistic light, as if to be like each gave the dreamer a kind of serenity and freedom. The phrase “to leaf off from the stem that holds you firm” may, for Beyer, have suggested a desire to be free from the obscurity that seemed to envelop her career. As the poem continues, the dreamer’s eyes keep ascending higher and higher, pondering the existence of a wandering cloud, and then contemplating the splendor of the stars above. Using a fixed 6/8 time with simple antecedent/consequent phrasing in the dissonant contrapuntal style, Beyer creates a contrast between rhythm and harmony based on its familiar phrase structures.

In the analysis of “To Be,” I show exactly how Beyer treats the motivic development between the voices. Beyer’s motivic replication is altered through techniques known as “exact” and “modified” repetition. Her use of text painting is present but minimal, especially considering the brevity of the movement. Nonetheless, I do discuss how she approaches text painting within the movement and list examples of it.

The third and last movement, “Universal-Local,” was based off Beyer’s poem of the same title. The poetry to this movement was written at the same time as the poem “Total Eclipse” in 1932. When put to music in 1934, this work was devised with a much different character than that of the first movement, yet with a similar theme of cosmic wonders and their infinite beauty versus the finite, drudging creatures of earth. The original text reads:

Stars, moons, suns,
Penetrating love—
Endless time, infinite space—
Forever—
Boundless beauty—

Sleepers, toiling with a minute,
With a grain of soil—
Poor, forgotten creatures, dragging on—
But void,
Where could be wings!⁴⁴

This text uses expansive adjectives such as “endless,” “infinite,” and “boundless” to describe the vast cosmos. Humanity, the extreme contrast to this sweeping description of the universe, is described in the last stanza, the tone poignant in comparison to the awe of the previous stanzas. Beyer’s description of people as “sleepers” indicates humankind toiling away on earth, dragging on their existence. The cynical outlook turns hopeful as she muses, “Where could be wings!” This statement, as will be discussed later, indicates humanity having an ability to rise above, or be freed from, the constraints of a rather empty existence.

In the analysis of “Universal-Local,” I discuss the similarities and differences between the voices, and the lack of the common compositional techniques that so prevalently influence Beyer’s other woodwind/voice duos. I also look at Beyer’s distinct treatment of the clarinet line and how it breaks many of Seeger’s rules as to how to create a dissonant line. When it comes to text painting, I look at each case of a music-to-text relationship and how it influences the construction of the movement.

⁴⁴ Beyer’s poems are included in their respective editions. The poem “Universal-Local” is included at the end of the Frog Peak edition (ed. by Mark Warhol).

Motivic Development

“Total Eclipse”

In his *Treatise on Musical Composition*, Seeger examines the features necessary to create an independent unit of music. This independent unit should have the capability of performing functions of pitch and rhythmic centrality, of preparing and resolving on a harmonic or melodic level, of modulating, and of indicating tempo fluctuations. Seeger reaches the conclusion that the smallest unit available with the capability of accomplishing all these tasks is a grouping of three tone-beats called a *neume*. Seeger rejects the idea of a smaller grouping of two tone-beats forming a unit:

two tone-beats may have significance in a musical context, but may not be regarded as forming an independent unit. They cannot give tonal or rhythmic centrality or perform essential musical functions such as preparation and resolution, modulation, rubato, etc.⁴⁵

“Total Eclipse,” however, reveals Beyer’s comprehensive development of a two-note motive that not only carries enormous significance throughout the work, but also provides centrality on both a rhythmic and pitch level. In musical example 2.1, observe the “short-long” unison G. Although the two-note motive is not considered a *neume* by the standards of dissonant counterpoint, it forms the primary structural foundation for the entire first movement of *Three Songs*.

⁴⁵ Seeger and Pescatello, *Studies in Musicology II*, 138.

Example 2.1

Beyer, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, “Total Eclipse,” mm. 1–7

The image shows a musical score for Soprano and Clarinet, measures 1-7. The Soprano part is in 3/4 time and consists of three measures of whole rests, starting with a first ending bracket. The Clarinet part is also in 3/4 time and consists of three measures. The first measure has a dynamic marking of *mf* and features a half-dotted half note followed by a quarter note, both with a slur underneath. The second measure has a whole rest. The third measure has a half-dotted half note followed by a quarter note, with a slur underneath and a dynamic marking of *f*. The Clarinet part is divided into two systems: measures 1-3 and measures 4-7. Measures 4-7 show a more complex rhythmic pattern with eighth and sixteenth notes, and a seventh measure with a dynamic marking of *f*.

This motive persistently recurs as a short-long pulse through the end of the piece. Even when the motive contains two notes of identical rhythmic value (such as the two quarter notes in m. 6, examples 2.1 and 2.2), the staccato and tenuto help to retain the original quarter/half-dotted half value of the initial unit (example 2.1). Furthermore, the substantial number of double-noted motives that contain a similar rhythmical formation help solidify this particular rhythm as the central rhythmic force driving the movement. Nearly three dozen of these rhythmic variants exist within the first movement, sometimes with modified pitches and sometimes without.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Pitch modification is the augmentation or diminution of particular pitches in a motive or neume. The pitches in a motive may be altered through transposition or intervallic shifting while still maintaining the rhythmic or stylistic integrity that trace back to the originating motive/neume.

The G-G motive seen in example 2.1 is heard on a regular basis in both voices, appearing sixteen times with an addition of two strong resolution points on G in mm. 38–39 and m. 55.⁴⁷ The perpetual return to G during statements of the principal motive clearly establishes this as the pitch center in the primary structure. The work both begins and ends with the same G-G motive. Example 2.1 can be compared to example 2.2, in which the six boxed motives show some of the ways Beyer varies her use of the primary motive.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ These resolutions are mentioned separately from the others—including the final resolution in the last measure—due to their more drastically altered rhythmic state (lacking the two-note pulse).

⁴⁸ Each description of the boxed examples is compared to the original two-note motive in mm. 1–2 set on a G3.

Example 2.2

Beyer, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, “Total Eclipse,” mm. 4–15

The image displays three systems of musical notation for the vocal line (Soprano, S) and the clarinet line (Cl.).

- System 1 (mm. 4-7):** The vocal line is mostly silent. The clarinet line features a melodic motif. Annotations include "Rhythmically Diminished", "Accented", and "Tonally Modulated" pointing to a specific phrase. A dynamic marking of *f* is present at the end of the system.
- System 2 (mm. 8-11):** The vocal line has lyrics: "Mass - es, mass - es, mov - ing of". Annotations include "Rhythmically Diminished", "Non-accented", and "Octave Displaced" for the first two notes of the vocal line. The clarinet line has annotations for "Rhythmically Diminished", "Non-accented", and "Tonally Augmented". Dynamic markings *pp*, *p*, and *mp* are shown.
- System 3 (mm. 12-15):** The vocal line has lyrics: "mass - es, stirred by as - tro - phe - no". Annotations include "Rhythmically Diminished", "Non-accented", and "Tonally Modulated" for the first two notes of the vocal line. The clarinet line has annotations for "Octave Displacement" and "Exact Repetition". Dynamic markings *mf* and *mf* are shown.

The use of rhythmic diminution, placement of accents, and pitch modification are the three primary ways in which Beyer develops this motive. Although three tone-beat functions typically form the foundation for rhythmic and pitch centricity, Beyer realizes a definitive rhythmic and pitch centricity through the use of this simple, two tone-beat motive.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Seeger and Pescatello, *Studies in Musicology II*, 138.

The development of the primary motive as seen in example 2.2 is referred to as “continuity.” The term continuity primarily refers to the transformation of one neume into another neume. Whereas the smallest neume is comprised of a mere three tone-beats, fluctuations in the tempo can allow for a neume consisting of up to eight or twelve tone-beats.⁵⁰ The larger the neume, the more variations or modifications of it that are possible. On continuity, Seeger states that “any neume can be transformed into any other neume . . . provided it is done gradually, this process may be made use of in composition.”⁵¹ In order to prove this point, he writes an illustration of neumatic transformation in which the opening horn motive from Schubert’s Ninth Symphony is transformed into the primary motive from Strauss’s *Till Eulenspiegel’s Merry Pranks*. In a mere seven steps, Seeger crosses fifty-five years of musical development and two radically different themes.⁵² This model is purposefully exaggerated to show the potential of the continuity from one motive to the next. In actual practice, though, this radical kind of transformation was used as an exercise to help one master neume conversion.⁵³ In *Three Songs*, Beyer’s application of continuity does not typically involve excessive modification of the neume or phrase—most certainly not to the

⁵⁰ Ibid., 143. In chapter 7 of his treatise, Seeger discusses fundamental neume forms: binary and ternary. The binary form consists of two progressions (or three tone-beats) and the ternary of three progressions (or four tone-beats). Although the basic examples he gives of these forms consist only of three to four tone-beats, he talks about larger neumes with four to five progressions that tend to break down into the fundamental neumes. He later admits that tempo can drastically affect how widely the neume can expand. In slow tempos, six to seven progressions typically maximize the amount of stress possible until it is necessary to create another neume. In quicker tempos, as many as eleven progressions may be perceived.

⁵¹ Ibid., 149.

⁵² Ibid., 147.

⁵³ Judith Tick, *Ruth Crawford Seeger: A Composer’s Search for American Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 202–203.

degree of Seeger’s model. Instead of evolving one neume into a completely different neume, Beyer tends to shape the neumes by adjusting them slightly over time—but the original neume is still recognizable after the adjustments.

For example, by following a three tone-beat neume from the beginning of m. 25 through the next five measures, we are able to observe the simple transformation Beyer uses to achieve a slightly modified neume in m. 30. To chronicle each instance of this kind of transformation taking place in Beyer’s composition is unnecessary, but examining this one set of measures illuminates the fundamental process by which she composes her songs.⁵⁴ In example 2.3, one may envision Beyer producing a simple neumatic conversion according to Seeger’s model. The transformation to a different neume in the example requires only one step: the upward major seventh shift of the first two notes and the upward octave shift of the final note.

Example 2.3

Beyer, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, “Total Eclipse,” mm. 25 and 30

The image shows two musical staves in 3/4 time. The first staff, labeled '25', contains three notes: a quarter note with a sharp sign (F#), a quarter note, and a quarter note with a flat sign (Bb). Below the first two notes are upward-pointing arrows labeled 'd8', and below the third note is an upward-pointing arrow labeled 'P8'. An arrow labeled 'becomes' points to the second staff, labeled '30', which contains three notes: a quarter note with a sharp sign (F#), a quarter note with a flat sign (Bb), and a quarter note with a flat sign (Bb) that is positioned higher on the staff, indicating an octave shift.

The continuity here is basic; the subtle ways in which Beyer modifies her neumes typically accumulate over time and ultimately demonstrate much more diverse

⁵⁴ A lengthy example of continuity will be discussed when talking about *Ballad of the Star-Eater* in Chapter Three, example 3.8.

modifications. Another way to think of it is as a slow evolution of one neume over the duration of a work. A more complex example is examined below.

Example 2.4 takes the two-progression neume from example 2.3 and places it in the context of surrounding measures. The measures contain each statement of the full neume (original and modified). After its first appearance in m. 7, the septuplet motive in the clarinet line is successively manipulated throughout the duration of the movement. Through extension—the addition of tones or beats—and octave displacement, the neume in m. 7 is altered to become the neume(s) of mm. 25–26. The modification of the neume in mm. 25–26 then happens in mm. 30–32. Here the transformation becomes more prominent, with pitch modifications to the first two notes, extension used once, a retrograde of the notes D and F♯ (enharmonic respelling of G♭), and five notes transposed up an octave.

Although each transformation that appears in “Total Eclipse” is not examined here, this technique is common throughout the work.

Example 2.4

Beyer, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, “Total Eclipse,” mm. 7–9, 25–26, 30–32⁵⁵

Clarinet

The image shows three staves of music for Clarinet in 3/4 time. The first staff (m. 7) shows a 7-measure phrase with a slur over measures 7-9. The second staff (m. 25) shows an 8-measure phrase with a slur over measures 25-26. The third staff (m. 30) shows a 9-measure phrase with a slur over measures 30-32. Annotations include 'P8' and 'Aug7' between m. 25 and m. 30, and 'M7 M7 P8' and '----P8----' under m. 30. A note in m. 30 is marked with 'x' and 'D and F#(Gb) switched' with arrows pointing to it. Notes in m. 25 and m. 30 are circled, and notes in m. 30 are boxed.

Not all neumes are so easily recognizable as a transformation of a previous neume; this happens when their connections are not as strong to the neumes or phrases from which they originated. Take, for example, m. 36 (example 2.5), in which a series of connected neumes form a series of pitches that appear to be entirely unrelated to the original neume in m. 7 (example 2.4). But a closer look at m. 36 reveals a connection. The initial six pitches of m. 36 (<489352>) are found in the previous modified neume in m. 30. A relationship thus exists between m. 7 and m. 36 through the use of continuity.

⁵⁵ Each following phrase from m. 7 is compared to the one immediately preceding it. Notes circled are extension, x's are intension, and boxed notes are altered. Octave displacement and enharmonic spellings are present but not indicated.

Example 2.5

Beyer, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, “Total Eclipse,” mm. 30–31 and 36

Clarinet

The image shows two staves of musical notation for Clarinet in 3/4 time. The top staff shows measures 30 and 31. A box labeled '9' highlights a nine-note phrase in measure 31. An arrow points from this box to a box labeled '11' in the bottom staff, which shows measure 36. The bottom staff also shows measure 37, where the phrase is extended to a twelve-note phrase. The notation includes treble clef, 3/4 time signature, and various notes and rests.

The continuity progresses further, until nearly the end of the movement, as example 2.6 indicates. In m. 100, Beyer uses intension—the removal of notes from the beginning, middle, or end of the neume—and extracts the first note, raises several notes up an octave (and one two octaves), and transposes the final two notes up an octave and a major sixth. In m. 114, the phrase is repeated, but with the initial E reinserted and the last two notes transposed down a major sixth (though the last note is technically dropped a diminished seventh, considering the enharmonic respelling). The neume in m. 36 is rhythmically accelerated by an extension of a twelve-note neume in the next measure (m. 37). Even this continuation is used again, in m. 116 toward the end of the work. The repetition is nearly the same in terms of the pitches, with all but one note being displaced up an octave (and the last F \sharp retains its original placement from m. 37).

Example 2.6

Beyer, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, “Total Eclipse,” mm. 36–37, 100, 114, and 116

Clarinet

36

100

114

116

11

10

10

11

x

P8

2xP8

--M6--

M6

Dim7

x

P8

Beyer also gathers fragments from various motives, phrases, and neumes in order to merge them into larger phrases. In example 2.7, pitches combined from m. 90 and m. 100 are used to reconstruct familiar motivic material, similar to the clarinet introduction at the beginning of the piece. Some of the pitches are modified (instead of G natural, for instance, we find a short-long G \sharp), and the two primary motives in the clarinet part are placed adjacent to each other. Through intension of particular pitches in m. 100 (the notes not boxed) and the rhythmic modification between m. 90 and m. 100,

Beyer constructs an altered version of the “short-long” motive (mm. 1–2) and the septuplet motive (m. 7).

Example 2.7

Beyer, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, “Total Eclipse,” mm. 90, 100, and 110–12

Clarinet

The image shows three staves of music for Clarinet in 3/4 time. The first staff, labeled '100', shows a septuplet of eighth notes with a bracket and the number '10' below it. The second staff, labeled '90', shows a septuplet of eighth notes with a bracket and the number '9' above it. The third staff, labeled '110', shows a triplet of eighth notes with a bracket and the number '3' above it, followed by a septuplet of eighth notes with a bracket and the number '9' above it. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Another way in which Beyer develops the compositional material is by interweaving the melodic contour between the voices. An example of this is found in mm. 9–17 when the voice enters (see example 2.8). Observe the construction of the voice entry; this phrase is a rhythmically altered rendition of the opening clarinet line using the exact same pitch material. This kind of transformation, as briefly described in the compositional techniques list, is referred to as “motivic replication” in this document. With this technique, the motives introduced by one instrument are then rhythmically altered and placed within another voice. Beyer wrote of this method in “Total Eclipse”: “Here I use the same tonal material for both voice and instrument, yet different rhythmical patterns. There is often imitation by the voice or vice versa, but in

the development the themes vary so, that they become truly dissonant counterpoint.”⁵⁶

The transformation of this type in example 2.8 happens primarily through rhythmic modification, in this case expansion, with an extension of concert C.⁵⁷ Although there is nearly an exact pitch repetition in the voice line, as shown in the example, the rhythmic augmentation and octave displacement of several notes help to alter the motive enough to create a fresh variation of the original phrase. This technique is used regularly throughout the movement and is instrumental in the development of motives found in Beyer’s other works for woodwind and voice.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ In example 2.8, the circled C in m. 14 is the only extension added to the soprano line; the C did not appear in the clarinet version of the motive.

Example 2.8

Beyer, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, "Total Eclipse," mm. 1–19

The musical score is arranged in systems for Soprano (S) and Clarinet (Cl.).

- System 1 (Measures 1-3):** Soprano part is silent. Clarinet part begins with a *mf* dynamic, playing a series of notes with a slur.
- System 2 (Measures 4-7):** Soprano part is silent. Clarinet part continues with a slur and ends with a *f* dynamic. A fermata is placed over the final note.
- System 3 (Measures 8-11):** Soprano part begins with lyrics: "Mass - es, mass - es, mov - ing of". Dynamics are *pp*, *p*, and *mp* respectively. Clarinet part has a long note with a slur.
- System 4 (Measures 12-15):** Soprano part continues with lyrics: "mass - es, stirred by as - tro - phe - no". Dynamics are *mf* and *mf*. A circled note is present in the soprano part. Clarinet part continues with a slur.
- System 5 (Measures 16-19):** Soprano part begins with lyrics: "me - na, mass - es, mass - es". Dynamics are *pp* and *p*. Clarinet part continues with a slur.

Similar examples of motivic repetition are found in the second section (mm. 40–75) of “Total Eclipse.” Beyer’s <468017432> in mm. 48–54 foreshadows the <46807432> in mm. 56–58, which the clarinet adopts as a new melodic idea. As seen in the clarinet line, Beyer uses intension to subtract the C# on the word “motions.” The overarching phrase in mm. 48–55 is cut off as a descending perfect fifth cadences on the word “death,” creating a dramatic silence encased between two fermatas. The phrases in mm. 48–51 and in mm. 56–57 are both close in proximity; the pitch material links them together, making the seemingly new material beginning in m. 56 sound familiar to the listener.

Example 2.9

Beyer, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, “Total Eclipse,” mm. 48–55 and 56–59

Soprano

48 *mp* *p* *rallentando molto*

and fee - ble pro - test - ing, sinks in - to last

mp *pp*

mo - tions, ac - tiv - i - ty be - fore death!

Clarinet

56 *pp*

At other locations in the composition, Beyer follows a comparable pattern, yet reverses particular note orders, such as the <793E42> in mm. 15–19 in comparison to the <793E24> in mm. 18–21 (example 2.10).

Example 2.10

Beyer, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, “Total Eclipse,” mm. 15–19 and 18–21

The image shows a musical score for Clarinet and Soprano. The Clarinet part is in 3/4 time, starting at measure 15. The Soprano part is in 3/4 time, starting at measure 18. The lyrics for the Soprano part are: "mass - es, mass - es, di - rect - ing ma - tter, their". The score includes dynamic markings: *pp* (pianissimo) for the first measure, *p* (piano) for the second measure, and *mp* (mezzo-piano) for the third measure. There are also some musical notations like slurs and ties. Two arrows point from the Soprano part to the Clarinet part, indicating a comparison of note orders.

“To Be”

In her Composers’ Forum-Laboratory 1936 Concert program notes, Beyer writes about this movement, “Here I also start using the same tonal material for both voice and instrument, but in entirely different rhythms and developments.”⁵⁸ In the first movement, the motivic development is unified throughout, but here in “To Be,” Beyer’s use of continuity and motivic replication becomes increasingly sparser as the work progresses. Although quite prominent in the first half of “To Be,” the pitch material between the voices becomes increasingly dissimilar in the second half.

⁵⁸ Beal, *Johanna Beyer*, 49. Beyer’s use of the word “tonal” infers pitches, not key center.

Example 2.11

Beyer, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, "To Be," mm. 1–12

The musical score for "To Be" by Beyer is presented in a system with two staves: Soprano and Clarinet. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor) and the time signature is 6/8. The tempo is marked as $\text{♩} = 152$. The score is divided into four numbered sections:

- No. 1, Repetition:** Measures 1-3. Soprano: *mp* To be a sun-beam, a spar-king ray, to fall as
- No. 2, Repetition:** Measures 4-6. Soprano: rain-drop, chat-ter-ing gay, to be a grain of sand, bath-ing in
- No. 3, Repetition:** Measures 7-9. Soprano: sun and wind wait-ing for tides to come and go to
- No. 4, Modified Repetition:** Measures 10-12. Soprano: be a ti-ny shoot, just from home "root", to leaf off from the stem that holds you-

The Clarinet part features several flourishes: a *pp* flourish (5 notes) in measures 1-3, a *pp* flourish (5 notes) in measures 4-6, a *pp* flourish (6 notes) in measures 7-9, and a *pp* flourish (9 notes) in measures 10-12. A dynamic change to *f* occurs in measure 14, and a *p* dynamic is marked in measure 7.

Continuity in this movement is less focused on pitch alterations and more on the placement of the notes; thus, motivic replication is prominent throughout the first half of "To Be." Rapid clarinet flourishes juxtaposed with longer and more fluid vocal lines,

octave displacements, rhythmic compression, and tessitura variances provide enough melodic displacement to make the transformation extreme.⁵⁹

In example 2.11, the pitch material is broken down into four groupings labeled nos. 1–4. Here, Beyer uses phrase construction techniques referred to as “exact” and “modified” repetition. Similar to the opening of the first movement, in the beginning of “To Be,” the bulk of the pitch material in the voice is imitated verbatim in the clarinet line. When m. 3 is compared to mm. 1–2, one can see that the clarinet line exhibits octave displacement of up to two octaves, extreme rhythmic diminution from eighth notes to thirty-second notes, and an alteration of the opening voice line into two elided twist neumes.⁶⁰ Despite these alterations, the pitch material remains the same. Each time a vocal motive is hidden in the clarinet line like this, the motive is manipulated in a similar fashion (see transformations in example 2.11).

As Beyer stated, she started with the same tonal (or pitch) material in the clarinet and voice lines, but this changes in the second half of the work. In example 2.12, the repeated material becomes less common as the two parts deviate from each other.

⁵⁹ Pitches B (m. 3) and A (m. 5) are excluded through the use of intension in the clarinet line.

⁶⁰ A twist neume is a group of three notes that follows a pattern of up-down or down-up. For example, A4 traveling up to B4 and back down to A4 would be considered a twist neume.

Example 2.12

Beyer, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, “To Be,” mm. 13–15

The new material is only partially repeated;
here it is integrated with non-repeated material

This divergence seems to be fueled by the textual implications about halfway through the movement, which will be discussed in the section on text painting. The pitch material beginning in m. 11 starts to deviate from the previously shared melodic content. By m. 17, the pitch material in the clarinet line becomes completely detached from the pitch material in the voice line. At this point, from m. 16 on, any resemblance to the first half of the movement stems entirely from the rhythmic structure in the voice line.⁶¹ Whereas the phrase in the voice maintains a similar rhythmic feel to the rhythm used in the beginning of the work, the pitch material in m. 17 of the clarinet line begins to adopt a new character of its own. The pitch material here is unrelated to the soprano line.

⁶¹ The rhythmic similarities are seen within each phrase (verse) grouping. Typically, each phrase follows a series of eighth notes (and sixteenth at times) and ends on a dotted quarter. The pitch material, however, is not shared between the voices, as shown in example 2.13.

Example 2.13

Beyer, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, "To Be," mm. 13–27

No imitation between voice and clarinet from m. 15 through end

The musical score consists of five systems, each with a Soprano (S) and Clarinet (Cl.) staff. The music is in 6/8 time. Dynamics include *p*, *mp*, *mf*, *f*, *pp*, and *sfz*. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. A 'New Material' section is marked in the Clarinet staff at measure 16. The lyrics are: firm, to be a blos-som, oh, with spell-bound hue, forth com-ing; fruit prom-ise, crys-talled in dew to be a wan-dering cloud, sail-ing a-; long, to shine as star a-bove meet moons and; suns, to rise and fall in curves in space and time, thus an en-; dur-ing cy-cle, ma-jes-tic, sub-lime.

“Universal-Local”

Beyer’s approach to motivic development in “Universal-Local” is noticeably different than in the previous two movements. Apart from the brief retrograde of a two-progression neume in example 2.14, the soprano and clarinet lines are independent of each other in regard to both pitch and rhythm. In the instance of retrograde, the first three distinct pitches in the voice line (mm. 4–9) are derived from m. 2 in the clarinet line.

Example 2.14

Beyer, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, “Universal-Local,” m. 2 and mm. 6–8

The image displays a musical score for two instruments: Soprano and Clarinet in B \flat . The top system shows measures 2 and 3. The Clarinet line begins with a low note, followed by a half note, and then a quarter note. The Soprano line is silent in these measures. The bottom system shows measures 6, 7, and 8. The Soprano line has the lyrics "stars,", "moons,", and "suns," with notes corresponding to the first three notes of the Clarinet line in measure 2. The Clarinet line in the bottom system has a melodic line with dynamics *mp*, *pp*, *p*, and *pp*. Arrows indicate the derivation of the Soprano line's first three notes from the Clarinet line's notes in measure 2.

After this, Beyer melodically distances the voice line from the clarinet line.

The dissonant ostinato in the clarinet line (example 2.15) is comprised of two twist-line neumes, <54T5> and <3E5E>. These neumes combine to form a short phrase, which employs a total of five distinct notes, two of which are repeated. The entire

clarinet line is composed of exact repetitions of this phrase, with rhythmic changes in the second half of the movement. This is an excellent example of the economical writing that Beyer utilizes throughout her compositions.

Example 2.15

Beyer, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, “Universal-Local,” mm. 1–3



Whereas there are no pitch modifications to the clarinet line whatsoever, and the order of pitches remains constant, there are several cases of rhythmic diminution that alter the character of the piece in the second half of the movement. It is in this half that Beyer breaks up the longer phrase into several shorter, two-progression neumes (example 2.16). In m. 23–25, the short motives in the clarinet line are separated into three twist neumes.

Example 2.16

Beyer, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, “Universal-Local,” mm. 23–25

The musical score for Example 2.16 is presented in two staves: Soprano and Clarinet. The time signature is 6/8. The Soprano staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are: "grain of soil - poor, for - got - ten crea - tures,". The Clarinet staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It features triplet patterns in the first two measures. Dynamics are indicated as *pp* for the first two measures and *mp* for the third. There are 'X' marks above the Soprano staff in measures 2 and 3, indicating specific notes.

Despite the rhythmic alterations, the pitch material remains the same. Seeger advised following a plethora of rules in his discussion of how to create an “ideal” dissonant phrase, so it is interesting to note that aside from the intervallic motion of the progressions in the clarinet line, Beyer disregards several essential rules found in Seeger’s treatise. In this case, the rules are broken due to the textual material. The liberties Beyer takes are these: in the opening line, skips are used exclusively, and there is no stepwise motion. This directly contradicts Seeger’s fourth rule of his general procedures in the tonal (pitch) dissonation of the neume, which states that “In twist-neumes, care must be taken to avoid the excessive use of skips, especially skips of the same degree.”⁶² The pitches F and B are both repeated by Beyer, with F being used three times within the phrase.⁶³ Not only is F reused, but it maintains its position as the zenith of the line, thus being more easily discernable as a repeated tone, and sharing the same octave.⁶⁴ In his rules eight, ten, and eleven, Seeger discourages the use of repeated

⁶² Seeger and Pescatello, *Studies in Musicology II*, 173.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 173–75.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* In Seeger’s general procedures for the tonal (pitch) dissonation of the neume, four of the fourteen rules are related to the avoidance or repeated tones. Seeger strongly

tones, and in his twelfth rule informs the reader that the highest or lowest notes of a neume are more easily discernable as a repeated note. The next section on text-painting, which offers further analysis of the poetry portion, helps clarify why Beyer deviated from following these basic rules of dissonant counterpoint.

discouraged using repeated tones at unison, or any octave, especially if the pitches were at exposed locations. However, he did give leeway for incorporating repeated tones if they were used for special effect.

Text Painting

“Total Eclipse”

It should be noted that the text of the poem that appears in “Total Eclipse” is slightly altered from the wording of the original poem. The text in the song contains repeated words not found in the original poem. In mm. 9–10 of the first movement (see example 2.17), the short-long motive containing the word “masses” is set twice before the introductory line of the poem, “moving of masses.” Again, an interpolation of the same repeated motive is set in mm. 18–19. The last relocation of the word “masses” is found in m. 26, but it is only used once in this instance. Although Beyer offers no comment as to why these minor changes were made to the poetry for the purposes of the musical composition, it may be that she wished to emphasize both the primary motive and the main subject matter, that is, the moon and sun (masses).

The music and text of “Total Eclipse” can be divided into four sections.⁶⁵ In Part 1, Beyer makes copious use of the repeated short-long motive (see example 2.1). This two-progression motive not only serves as a unifying theme, but represents the slow-moving nature of cosmic masses. This motive returns in the last section; the cyclical aspect suggests broader implications for human life. In mm. 9–11, Beyer introduces three prevalent intervals that play a crucial role in the development of the musical ideas.⁶⁶ These intervals are the unison, the tritone, and the perfect fifth. Whereas the

⁶⁵ Part 1, mm. 1–39, contains the introduction of the masses. Part 2, mm. 40–75, describes the fear that grips the world as the eclipse nears completion. Part 3, mm. 76–108, portrays the shadow cast upon earth and the corona surrounding the total eclipse. Part 4, mm. 109–40, is the end of the eclipse, but with a foreshadowing of a return to the beginning.

⁶⁶ The original intervals can be found in mm. 4–5, but the rhythmic alterations through the motivic replication place a heavy emphasis on the reiteration in mm. 9–11.

initial two-progression motive comes back in the last section of the movement, an intervallic conflict will also reoccur in the last section between two of these prominent intervals: the tritone and an inverted perfect fifth. In this first section, the text focuses on the movement of the masses and the efforts of people to understand its mysteries.

In Part 2, a more subdued atmosphere is established through the use of a reduced range in the vocal line, which rises no higher than a B4. This restrained and rather timid range, combined with sparsely populated melodic contour and low tremolos in the clarinet, is stylistically supportive of the text as the world “pales in hush” and its creatures “bow in fear.” *Sprechstimme* is used on four separate occasions, including in the two bars prior to this section on the words “the secret kept.” The song-speech combination creates a heavier mood as a sense of terror descends upon the earth. The use of *Sprechstimme* will be discussed further later, but the technique is applied predominantly in this section.

Part 3 of the movement contains two prominent parts: mm. 76–94 and mm. 95–108. The light beams cast patterns across the earth and moon in mm. 76–94. Here, a static/active dialogue emanates between the two voices. This section is more transitory, preparing for the climactic fourth section. In mm. 95–108, the use of wild, expansive trills, the ascending range of the voice up to G#6, the extreme intervallic gestures in both parts, and the perilously high range of the clarinet up to a Bb6 bring the first movement of the piece to its climax. Awkward trills, extended technique with glissandos, and extremely rapid, high-ranged passages provide a sense of unrepressed excitement in the clarinet line. The text in this section describes the appearance of the corona, thus signaling the full arrival of the eclipse. As the corona becomes visible,

spewing rays of light around the “shielding surface” of the moon, the text reads, “But behold the phenomenous climax.”

In Part 4, the opening two-progression motive returns, immediately followed by melodic material from the first section. A sudden change in mood occurs as the voice drops more than an octave in m. 124. The monotone voice line is underscored by the vacillating clarinet line, which alters back and forth between an A3 and an Ab3. In an interesting twist to the dissonant counterpoint style, the end result of the single D4 tone in the voice is that the interweaving two notes in the clarinet create a vertical tension between a perfect fourth and a tritone that is not resolved until the last measure of the movement. Yet instead of one of the battling intervals winning over the other, the movement concludes with a resolve to a perfect fifth. This measure is a return to the beginning, reliving the short-long motive one last time, symbolizing not only the end of the total eclipse, but foreshadowing its return.

Although the previous paragraphs encapsulate the essence of the text painting used in each section of “Total Eclipse,” Beyer’s overarching textual implications in the movement bear closer attention. After the mysterious-sounding clarinet introduction, the voice enters with the words “Masses, masses, moving of masses.” Here, the moving of masses is represented by a disjunct intervallic progression that swells rapidly (example 2.17). The outward expansion, or “moving,” from unison to tritone to perfect fifth to minor seventh in mm. 9–12 is but the first of many examples of subtle mirroring of text to music.

Example 2.17

Beyer, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, “Total Eclipse,” mm. 8–11

The image shows a musical score for Soprano and Clarinet, measures 8-11. The Soprano part is in 3/4 time and features lyrics: "Mass - es, mass - es, mov - ing of mass - es," with dynamic markings *pp*, *p*, and *mp*. The Clarinet part is in 3/4 time and features a short-long motive in the first measure, followed by rests in the subsequent measures.

Even the use of unison on the word “masses” carries significance considering the opening measure in the clarinet line. The short-long motive suggests a kind of lumbering motion, one of dragging, perhaps. Interestingly, the lower range of the note, combined with its steady two-beat pulse, also resembles the rhythm and sound of a beating heart. This lumbering and beating may serve a double function as not only the musical representation of the hulking, slow movement of the masses, but also of the essence of life. The subtle heartbeat motive seems to suggest, as does the text, the frailty of life when compared to the tremendous powers of the heavens.

Another technique Beyer uses to amplify the text is *Sprechstimme*, or literally, speaking-voice. This half-singing, half-speaking technique is used in all her songs for woodwind and voice. In “Total Eclipse,” *Sprechstimme* is primarily found in mm. 40–75. In order to indicate *Sprechstimme*, Beyer writes an “x” over each note. Below, the text marked with *Sprechstimme* in the score appears in italic type.

To wrestle from the elements
*The secret kept.*⁶⁷

⁶⁷ This use of *Sprechstimme* falls at the end of the Part 1 and provides an eerie transition into the next section.

The world is aghast,
Nature *pales in hush*
And feeble protesting
Sinks into last motions,
Activity before *death*.

Birds and beasts bow in fear,
Frightened leaves tremble,
Emaciated sunbeams die below swaying grass,
Leaving the planet colorless,
Faint, *deathlike at rest*.

Throughout the second section of the movement, the text suggests an overwhelming sense of fear and awe at this cosmic phenomenon. The use of *Sprechstimme* helps to enhance a feeling of melancholy by creating an unstable series of pitches that more or less slide from one to another. Although this technique is not always used for macabre scenarios, Beyer uses it in this case to enhance the tone of gravity, the permeating stillness and eventual death-like trance that falls upon the earth.

The third section contains some of the movement's most explicit examples of text painting. In mm. 78–93, the text focuses on the rays of light beaming past the moon as the hulking mass proceeds further into the eclipse. Where the words “erring through valleys of the moon” are written in the piece, two series of four-note groupings are written in the voice line.⁶⁸ Until now, the voice has maintained a fairly regular 3/4 meter, but as the above text is sung, the rhythms begin to deviate from their normal patterns (example 2.18).

⁶⁸ Erring as in “going astray.”

Example 2.18

Beyer, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, “Total Eclipse,” mm. 80–95

The image displays a musical score for Soprano (S) and Clarinet (Cl.) in 3/4 time, spanning measures 80 to 95. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into four systems, each with a Soprano line and a Clarinet line. Measure numbers 80, 84, 88, and 92 are indicated at the start of their respective systems. The lyrics are: "der, beads of light, lost, err ing through val - leys of the moon, still shed their love up - on earth, while shad - ow - bands pat - tern de - signs." The Clarinet part features several melodic lines, some marked with dynamics like *pp* and *ppp*, and includes articulations such as slurs, ties, and fingerings (7, 8, 9, 4). The Soprano part includes lyrics and some melodic lines with slurs and ties. The score is presented in a standard musical notation style with a grand staff for each instrument.

The leap followed by stepwise motion in m. 84 is loosely imitated down a half-step through a modified sequence in the next measure, indicating a wandering motion. A more chromatic rendition of this is found in mm. 91–92 as the text reads “while shadow-bands pattern designs.” Immediately following this statement on pattern

designs, the clarinet engages a rigidly even sequence of two eighths–two sixteenths, sequenced through further use of continuity.⁶⁹ Taking into account Beyer’s rhythmically uneven writing for the clarinet line as a whole, this contrasting moment forms a pattern design unheard of up until this point.

Mm. 97–107 reach the climax of “Total Eclipse.” Here, both the clarinet and voice build to a zenith of range and intensity. As the text reads “climax,” the clarinet sprints through a ten-note run up to a B \flat 6. As the voice continues on with “Bursting the shielding surface,” a tremolo of a perfect fourth sounds underneath, eventually ending with an upward portamento.

⁶⁹ The words “pattern design” are circled, with an arrow drawn to the sequenced pattern in mm. 93–94, to indicate that the clarinet is creating a musical depiction of a strict pattern design.

Example 2.19

Beyer, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, “Total Eclipse,” mm. 96–103

The trill is then continued a whole step lower as the text reads “the fiery glow of the corona circles its dance of life.” On the words “circles its dance of life,” the voice line begins circling, or oscillating, in a series of rapidly expanding intervals. With F5 as the constant note, the changing notes descend from a minor second to a perfect fourth, then altering the constant to a tritone on F♯, then a perfect fifth on G. The downward glissando following the climax serves as a transition into the final section of the movement.

Example 2.20

Beyer, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, “Total Eclipse,” mm. 104–107

The image shows a musical score for Soprano (S) and Clarinet (Cl.) in 3/4 time. The Soprano part is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The Clarinet part is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The lyrics are: "glow of the co-ro-na cir ___ cles ___ its ___ dance ___ of life." The Soprano line has a five-measure rest in the first measure of the excerpt, followed by a melodic line. The Clarinet line has a long note in the first measure, followed by a series of notes. A box highlights the lyrics "cir ___ cles ___ its ___" in the Soprano part. The word "gliss." is written at the end of the Clarinet line.

At the beginning of the last section (mm. 109–40), there is a clear return to the main thematic points. As both the voice and clarinet lines begin to relax rhythmically, settling into a middle range, the voice suddenly drops an octave in m. 124 and remains on a D4 for the remainder of the movement. With the oscillating perfect fourth and tritone, Beyer portrays a struggle between the humans’ attempt at understanding the mysteries and the elements “fleeing” from them. Instead of either interval gaining victory, a perfect fifth sounds at the end on the initial short-long G-G motive. In a song clearly composed in dissonant counterpoint, this consonant interval is quite unusual. In his treatise, Seeger reassures the reader that “conventional chords need not be feared, but if used they must be rigorously dissonated.”⁷⁰ He also states that “preparation and resolution of consonance means *dissonating the consonance*.”⁷¹ Given that many of her consonances are prepared and resolved according to the regular guidelines, Beyer has provided a calculated decision in which to go against the fundamental basis for dissonant counterpoint at the end of the work. Given her awe-inspiring descriptions of the heavens in music and text, perhaps this final statement reflects the kind of perfection

⁷⁰ Beal, *Johanna Beyer*, 214-215.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 203.

she saw in the cosmos that she did not see on earth. This return to the beginning seems also to suggest a cyclical pattern, one that leaves the impression of “to be continued.”

Example 2.21

Beyer, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, "Total Eclipse," mm. 136–40

The musical score is divided into five systems, each with a Soprano (S) and Clarinet (Cl.) part. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4.

- System 1 (mm. 124-127):** Soprano part: "But though men try time and a - gain,". Clarinet part: p . Two boxes highlight intervals: "TT" (Tritone) between m. 125 and m. 126, and "P4" (Perfect Fourth) between m. 126 and m. 127.
- System 2 (mm. 128-131):** Soprano part: "these long - ing el - e - ments flee back, hid - ing their". Clarinet part: pp . A box labeled "Oscillating Intervals (Tritone, P4)" spans from m. 128 to m. 131, with dynamics p , pp , p , pp , p , pp indicated below.
- System 3 (mm. 132-135):** Soprano part: "shame: 'mis - un - der - stood', wear - ing". Clarinet part: p , pp , p , pp , p , pp .
- System 4 (mm. 136-139):** Soprano part: "mourn - ing veils an - oth - er time un - told!". Clarinet part: p , pp , p , pp , p , pp , p , pp .
- System 5 (mm. 140):** Soprano part: ppp . Clarinet part: ppp . A box labeled "P5" (Perfect Fifth) is shown between the two parts.

“To Be”

The text painting within “To Be” is, overall, not as explicit as in the other two movements. The atmosphere, though, of this portion of the composition is noticeably different from that of movements one and two. “To Be” is written with an antiphonal, or call and response, texture.⁷² The antiphonal structure fits perfectly considering the perpetually repeated intro to almost each verse. The soprano begins almost each phrase with the words “to be,” then the clarinet mimics the pitch material at the end of the phrase. As the movement continues, the clarinet flourishes at the end of each phrase become progressively more complex (see example 2.11). As shown in example 2.13, the pitch material in the clarinet line becomes increasingly more elaborate and more distinct from the soprano line. This distinction between the voices may reflect the ever growing divide between the more earthbound text at the beginning and the ascension to the more cosmic-bound text at the end. Beginning in m. 19, the text states, “to shine as star above meet moons and suns, to rise and fall in curves in space and time, thus, an enduring cycle, majestic, sublime.” The text here begins to foreshadow the third movement, and the final repeated F5s in the soprano line are indicative of the first three F5s in the soprano line in “Universal-Local” (see example 2.24).

Two specific examples of text painting are noticeable in the second movement that help to shape two particular phrases. The first (example 2.22) is in m. 11, with “root” being the lowest note available to the singer in the movement.

⁷² Beal, *Johanna Beyer*, 49.

Example 2.22

Beyer, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, “To Be,” m. 11

The second (example 2.23), and weightier of the two, is found in mm. 21–23.

Example 2.23

Beyer, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, “To Be,” mm. 21–23

After the song peaks on an A5 in m. 21, the music begins to sequence downward in major sixths beginning on the G5.⁷³ At this time, the text reads “to rise and fall in curves in space and time.” When the lyrics indicate a circling, curviness, or change in direction, Beyer often closely mirrors that change in the music, as seen in example

⁷³ Although the notation for the ascending minor sixths—beginning on B4 in m. 21—is twice enharmonically respelled as an augmented fifth, the interwoven sequence of descending major sixths indicates that the B in m. 22 may be a pickup to a primary descending sequence.

2.23.⁷⁴ This is similar to what one sees in examples 1.17 and 1.19, in which text having to do with oscillating or circular motion forms up-and-down intervallic motion in one or both voices.

⁷⁴ See “Total Eclipse,” mm. 69–70, 104–107, for further examples.

“Universal-Local”

As with “Total Eclipse,” the text of the poetry that appears in the third movement is altered slightly from the original poem. The only change in the text of “Universal-Local” from the original poem occurs in the use of the first word, “stars,” which is repeated three times on an F5 at the beginning of the song.

Example 2.24

Beyer, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, “Universal-Local,” mm. 4–11

'Stars' repeated 3x

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system (mm. 4-7) shows the Bb Clarinet (Cl.) and Soprano (S) parts. The Cl. part plays a single note (F5) in each measure, with dynamics *mp* in the first three measures and *p* in the fourth. The S part sings "Stars, stars, stars, moons," with dynamics *p*, *pp*, *mp*, *pp*, and *p* respectively. The second system (mm. 8-11) shows the Cl. part playing a five-note sequence (F5, G5, A5, B5, C6) and the S part singing "suns, pe - ne - trat - ing love -" with dynamics *pp*, *p*, *pp*, and *mp*.

Beyer’s parsimonious configuration of the clarinet line together with the telling vocal line is one of the most profound examples of text painting in her songs. Using a mere five notes throughout the entirety of the clarinet line, Beyer maintains a constant order of the pitches while manipulating only the rhythmic and dynamic elements. Beal says that this may represent the “repetitious regularity of the “universal.”⁷⁵ About her

⁷⁵ Beal, *Johanna Beyer*, 50.

own music Beyer writes: “[In] ‘Universal-Local,’ the clarinet part keeps repeating a simple, austere motive, just changing into a faster rhythmical pattern in part 2. I tried to get the never changing, sublime, universal atmosphere.”⁷⁶ Here, as discussed in the section on motivic development, we see why Beyer has chosen to ignore the rules from Seeger’s treatise and make the rules of dissonant counterpoint subservient to the text. In order to paint a musical depiction of the unchanging atmosphere, she creates a repetitious line, and just as the text refers to the stars and other heavenly bodies, the musical intervals are spread out to reflect how the stars, suns, and moons are vastly spread out from each other.

Beyer’s description of the universe, with words such as “endless,” “infinite,” and “forever,” helps paint a picture of the uniformity of the cosmos. The clarinet line depicts a kind of mundanity, due to its unchanging repetition of the five notes. But when the voice comes in on the fourth measure, a new dimension is opened up in the text-to-music relationship. With the universal represented in the opening collection <76051> on a horizontal level, a vertical hierarchy of cosmic masses appears.⁷⁷ Stars, being the farthest away from Earth, are set on an F5, suns are set on an Eb5, and moons, being the closest to Earth, are set on a B4 (example 2.25).

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Example 2.23 shows the hierarchy of the masses in context, whereas example 2.24 shows them in order of highest to lowest pitch.

Example 2.25

Beyer, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, “Universal-Local,” mm. 4, 7, and 8

The image displays three systems of musical notation for Soprano and Clarinet in 4/4 time. Each system is bracketed together. The first system (measures 4-5) features a Soprano line with a half note on G4 and the lyrics "Stars," and a Clarinet line with a half note on B3. The second system (measures 6-7) features a Soprano line with a half note on G4 and the lyrics "suns," and a Clarinet line with a half note on B3. The third system (measures 8-9) features a Soprano line with a half note on G4 and the lyrics "moons," and a Clarinet line with a half note on B3. Dynamics include *mp* above the first Soprano staff, *p* above the second Soprano staff, and *pp* above the third Soprano staff. Crescendos are shown below the Clarinet staves in the first and third systems.

The noticeable change of tone and range in the voice beginning in m. 21 indicates a switch from the universal to the local. Phrases such as “sleepers,” “toiling with a . . . grain of soil,” and “poor, forgotten creatures, dragging on,” seem to suggest the finite or more fragile life on earth. The use of *Sprechstimme* on “poor, forgotten creatures” further amplifies the pitiful suggestions in the text. *Sprechstimme* is also used

on the word “void” in m. 29. This seems to insinuate an emptiness, or meaninglessness for the “toil[s]” of the “sleepers.” The work ends with the hopeful words “where could be wings.” “Wings” is set on an F#5.

Based on the range in the vocal part, the only note to surpass the F5 on “stars” is an F#5 on the second half of the word “beauty” and on the word “wings.” It is no coincidence that the highest note found at the end of the movement is placed over the word which symbolizes an ability to *rise above*.

Example 2.26

Beyer, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, “Universal-Local,” mm. 30–31

The image shows a musical score for the final measure (m. 31) of the piece. It features two staves: a B♭ Clarinet (Cl.) staff in the upper part and a Soprano (S) staff in the lower part. Both staves are in 6/8 time. The lyrics are "where could be wings!". The clarinet part has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The soprano part has a soprano clef. The note for "wings!" is a high F#5, which is highlighted with a box in the original image. The soprano part has a whole rest for the first three notes and then a whole note for "wings!".

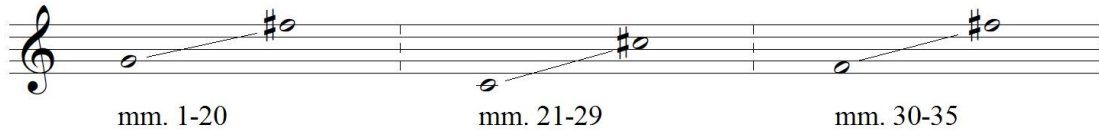
In effect, the independence of the soprano and clarinet lines is structured around the text. Even the title, “Universal-Local,” provides a dichotomy between the earthly and the cosmic. Apart from the high-ranged clarinet line representing the cosmic wonders, the dynamics also emulate the pulsing of stars. In example 2.24, observe the constant flux in dynamics underneath the long tones (mm. 4–7, 9–11). This dynamic pulse between the held notes is consistent throughout the work, and seems to emulate the flickering of stars in the distance. The “Local” (or earthly) in mm. 21–29, is set in the lower part of the singer’s range. The text here reads: “Sleepers, toiling with a

minute, with a grain of soil—poor, forgotten creatures, dragging on—but void.” The text of the poetry seems to influence the range. In example 2.27, the soprano range in mm. 1–20 is set to the description of the cosmic wonders. In mm. 21–29 the range drops significantly when discussing the Earth-focused topic, but then returns to a similar range as the first section in mm. 30–35. This return to the higher range coincides with the lyrics “where could be wings.” As mentioned earlier, this text suggests an ability to rise above, providing a poetry-driven reason for increasing the range.

Example 2.27

Beyer, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, “Universal-Local,” Soprano range in mm. 1–20, 21–29, and 30–35

Soprano Range



The musical notation consists of a single treble clef staff. It is divided into three measures by vertical bar lines. The first measure, labeled 'mm. 1-20', contains a whole note on the second line (G4) with a sharp sign (#) above it. The second measure, labeled 'mm. 21-29', contains a whole note on the first line (E4) with a sharp sign (#) above it. The third measure, labeled 'mm. 30-35', contains a whole note on the second line (G4) with a sharp sign (#) above it. Slanted lines connect the notes in each measure to the notes in the following measure, indicating a melodic line across the sections.

Performance Implications

Beyer's distinctive approach to motivic development and copious use of text painting make for strong performance implications. In "Total Eclipse," her use of continuity and imitation in treating the primary motives provides an opportunity for both performers to experiment with a range of interpretative possibilities. For instance, the first nine measures in example 2.8 (p. 34) include both the G-G motive and the rising septuplet motive (mm. 7–9) in the clarinet line. The clarinetist may interpret these recurring motives in various ways. For example, since the short-long (G-G) motive seems to represent the masses as well as life (the heartbeat reference), the clarinetist may choose to alter the tone of the motive to better fit whichever interpretation he or she chooses. Should the motive be presented with a heavy sound, like that of a large moving mass, or more mysteriously and subtle, like the sound of a beating heart? Because the continuity is slight throughout the movement, new moods should be applied to different repetitions of the initial G-G motive. As the text reads "The world is aghast, nature pales in hush," the clarinet immediately follows (in m. 48) with a reiteration of the initial motive. Instead of the interpretation listed for the initial G-G motive, the clarinetist should choose to play this motive at a softer dynamic than at the beginning due to the lyrical context.

The soprano should also consider how she approaches dynamics when singing the initial motive, so as not to under-sing them. For instance, mm. 9–15 in example 2.2 (p. 25) contain terraced dynamics and a crescendo that help build the phrase to a climactic point. Here the singer should sing the first iteration of "masses" even softer than pianissimo so there is room to grow to a climactic forte or fortissimo on the word

“astrophenomena” in mm. 14–17 (as seen in example 2.8, p. 34). Care must be taken to make sure each dynamic marking is discernably louder than the previous, as if the masses are moving closer to the audience.

The rising septuplet motive seen in mm. 7–9 of example 2.2 is found primarily in the clarinet line, but at times in the soprano (see mm. 13–17). The upward direction of this line is similar to a musical question mark, sounding quizzical and somewhat mysterious. Because the primary compositional material for this motive is in the clarinet part, the clarinetist should interpret each reoccurrence with the textual implications. With the introduction of the masses and struggle to understand the astronomic wonders in section 1, the clarinetist should play the motives with intensified crescendos. The subdued and fearful atmosphere in section 2 should influence the playing of the motive more timidly, with a soft dynamic and no inflection on the upward bend. The continuity surrounding this motive has taken many forms, so these modified motives should be dealt with in a similar manner as the initial septuplet motive. Examples 2.4 and 2.6 (pp. 29 and 31) present modified renditions of the septuplet motive in the clarinet line; the performers can emphasize the slight alterations between the evolving phrases to vary the tone of each motive. For example, the third B \flat in m. 25 may be stressed more due to the extension of the preceding note, thus bring familiarity to the lowest note in the initial motive in m. 7. In other cases, notes are either added or subtracted through intension and extension, and the performer should try to bring out the overall shape of the line by emphasizing, perhaps through the use of tenutos, notes particular to the initial septuplet.

The motivic imitation between the voices also presents the performers with an

opportunity to highlight various aspects of the piece that the listener may have already heard in a different form. Areas like this, found in places such as mm. 1–17 (as seen in example 2.8, p. 34) or mm. 48–58 (as seen in example 2.9, p. 35), are suitable places in which the soprano or clarinetist can shape the similar phrases in different ways. In example 2.9, the clarinet immediately repeats the pitch material in the preceding soprano line. As the soprano sings “and feeble protesting, sinks into last motions,” she should make the C4 on “sinks” slightly louder than the following notes to emphasize the text painting as the music “sinks” down an augmented fifth. The clarinet should follow suit in mm. 56–57, also providing inflection on the low C4, in reference to the text painting in the soprano line.

“To Be” is short and does not rely heavily on text painting to reveal musical ideas. Thus, it would be beneficial for the performers to focus more on the overall mood of the movement rather than on specific passages of text painting. Specific areas such as those found in examples 2.22 and 2.23 (p. 55) may be emphasized, but the overall mood of the movement should be decided based on the meter, melodic line, and phrasing. With the tuneful melodies interwoven in an antiphonal texture (as seen in example 2.11, p. 37), one suggestion to the performers would be to portray a lighthearted, even wistful mood. The soprano should approach her line gaily, with 6/8 meter somewhat reminiscent of a rousing drinking song. The clarinetist, usually interrupting with rapid bursts of thirty-second notes, should play each motive lightly, without becoming overpowering on the hairpin dynamics, such as m. 9 (as seen in example 2.11). As the pitch material in the clarinet line begins to diverge more significantly from the pitch material in the soprano line (as seen in example 2.13, p. 40), both performers may

consider shifting to a more thoughtful or serious tone. Here in the second half of the movement, the soprano should emphasize each tenuto in mm. 21–23 to bring out the circular motion that is suggested in the text. The clarinetist likewise should also fade away rapidly in dynamics, becoming merely a low drone by the time he or she reaches the F in m. 23.

Interpretative suggestions for “Universal-Local” include the overall atmosphere of the work and the individual interpretations of each voice. Based on Beyer’s description of the work and the repetitious nature of the compositional contour, the clarinet line may be seen as representing the uniform nature of the cosmos, or perhaps stars in the distance. Even the fluctuating dynamics (as seen in example 2.24, p. 56) in the clarinet line seem to imitate the flickering pulse of a star. Example 2.15 (p. 42) shows the entirety of the pitch material used in the clarinet voice, and the clarinetist should consider perhaps a more static (somewhat monotone) sound to emulate the “never changing atmosphere” wording Beyer uses to describe the part.⁷⁸ Therefore, the clarinetist should approach the moving notes in the clarinet line with an unchanging dynamic and give a slight pulsation to the held notes. Keeping in mind the emphasis the universe and distant stars, the clarinetist should not let the staccati become overpowering, treating the staccato notes as detached, but not pecky. Each detached note should be rounded, without clipping the end too short.

The voice may be thought of as having two settings, a more ethereal presence in the first half of the movement, yet a more earthly presence in the second half, based on

⁷⁸ Beal, *Johanna Beyer*, 50. This segment of a quote is taken from Beyer’s description of “Universal-Local.”

the text. The singer may consider interpreting the mood differently based on the text and the shifting vocal range seen in example 2.27 (p. 60). In the first twenty measures, the soprano should sing with light phrasing and legato phrasing. When the range drops in m. 21, the singer should make use of the *Sprechstimme* and range to take on a more gloomy tone, in keeping with the nature of the text. In these contrasting sections, the somber description of the “sleepers” in example 2.16 (p. 43) and the stunning description of the heavens (as seen partially in example 2.24, p. 56) are two areas in which the moods should be amplified. Example 2.26 (p. 59) shows the highest note in the soprano line, an F#5, on the word “wings.” Combined with the textual significance of this word in the poem, the crescendo leading up to it, and the peak on which it rests, I consider this phrase the most important. Here, the soprano should crescendo to a forte, being sure to surpass the dynamics of the F#5 in m.17.

Chapter Three

Ballad of the Star-Eater (1934)

Introduction

Ballad of the Star-Eater is based upon a poem written by (Alice) Bonaro Wilkinson Overstreet. Bonaro and her husband, Harry Allen Overstreet, were interested in adult education and mental health, including psychological theory. In 1931, she published *The Poetic Way of Release*, a case for the psychological importance of verse. This work may have influenced Beyer, who wrote several poems after 1932—including the poetry to *Three Songs* and *Have Faith!*—that contain significant psychological and existential implications.⁷⁹

In the case of *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, the poem underlying the work is a story of a person beset with intense hunger; Beal describes the piece as a song about “hunger, creativity, and strength.”⁸⁰ The narrator futilely searches for food, and eventually realizes he or she can feed on the stars. The narrator then begins to climb the “wall of the sky.” After a lengthy ascent, the climber reaches the top and discovers a feast of stars, likened to “rare, ripe nuts on a heaven’ly tree.” After feasting on them and being filled with strength, the invigorated narrator returns back to the ground where newfound strength and carefree attitude inspire the final statement, “I fear no hunger with sharp, cold pain / if it dare assail me I shall climb again.” The text exemplifies despair,

⁷⁹ Beal, *Johanna Beyer*, 48.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

struggling, and victory. This topic would have been quite appealing for Beyer, who was constantly struggling through difficulties she faced in her own life.⁸¹ Beyer was at times even on Home Relief—a kind of welfare at the time—as described in a letter from her close friend Bertha Reynolds to Cowell.⁸² Her struggle to put food on the table may have made for an ironic choice of poetry to which she set the music. The poem reads:

Part 1: Hunger assailed me with sharp, cold pain.
I had searched for food, and searched in vain.
I had found no berries, no pulpy root;
and the boughs above me bore no fruit.

So I lay in the grass and gnawed a blade
and I can't be sure, perhaps I prayed.
I only know that suddenly
a splendid knowledge came to me.

Stars were twinkling overhead;
on these I knew that I might be fed.

Part 2: So up I rose with quick, glad cry
and began to scale the wall of the sky.

Here was a crevice, there a cleft,
so I went climbing, right hand then left.
My breath came short, the quick air strong,
but I thought brave songs as I climbed and clung.

Below the horizon stretched and grew
'til the earth spun free in a tide of blue.
Weary and stiff but fiercely proud
I swung at last to a ledge of cloud.

Then stars were around and over me
rare, ripe nuts on a heavenly tree.
I crushed and cracked them and crunched the meat.
Oh, they were rich and spicy sweet!

I crushed and cracked them and from my hand

⁸¹ For further information about Beyer's personal struggles, see the introduction to chapter 4.

⁸² Beal, *Johanna Beyer*, 84-85.

the shells slipped down in a meteor band.

Part 3: The strength flowed through me from toe to crown,
I left my cloud perch and came on down.

I can still see the sky-dust on toe and heel
where I dug for footing; and I still can feel
the curve of clouds, where I clung to these
with gripping fingers and gripping knees.

Now I walk the earth without care,
though roots elude me and boughs are bare.
For stars still prickle my finger-tips,
and the taste of stars is warm on my lips.

I fear no hunger with sharp, cold pain;
if it dare assail me I shall climb again

Beyer composed the music to *Ballad of the Star-Eater* in 1934, the same year she completed her *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*. Polansky speculates that the work may have been performed along with the *Three Songs* on the 1936 Composers' Forum-Laboratory Concert under the title "Suite for Soprano and Clarinet."⁸³ Considering her acquaintance with Rosario Mazzeo, the principal clarinetist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Beyer may have written this and *Three Songs* for him to play at the Forum concert.⁸⁴ Three versions exist of this work: version 1, version 1a, and version 2. Unlike the three versions of *Have Faith!*, there are only minor differences between the versions of *Ballad*.⁸⁵ Version 1a contains some additional clarinet passagework and version 2 was transposed up a major second, making it ready as a

⁸³ Kennedy and Polansky, "Total Eclipse," 738.

⁸⁴ Beal, *Johanna Beyer*, 48.

⁸⁵ The three versions of *Have Faith!* will be discussed in the next chapter.

performing copy (for those who do not wish to transpose the work from concert pitch).⁸⁶ In this chapter, I will examine version 2.

The following analytic discussion focuses primarily on Beyer's use of continuity and its application through techniques such as extension, intension, rhythmic modification, and pitch modification. After this, I show how Beyer's use of a technique known as "aggregate completion" plays a crucial role in the end of the first section. With regard to text painting, I discuss both how and why the poetry and the music are divisible into three sections.⁸⁷ I then examine Beyer's use of extended techniques including portamenti and *Sprechstimme*. In Beal's brief description of *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, she points out that the music demonstrates the "heterophonic interweaving of independent voices" preferred by her teacher, Ruth Crawford.⁸⁸ This interweaving, which I refer to as "motivic replication" (with or without modified repetition), is often done with fragments of the melody (see example 3.3). Because this technique appears so frequently throughout the composition, it is not necessary to examine each example, but specific cases will be addressed in the section on text painting. For now, it is sufficient to say that Beyer's heterophonic interweaving utilizes different melodies at different times; one can see this in the new melody beginning the section marked *agitato molto* in m. 79. The writing is economical and many of the melodies Beyer uses are constantly brought back and developed through the duration of the work.

⁸⁶ Kennedy and Polansky, "Total Eclipse," 738.

⁸⁷ Section 1 is mm. 1–59, section 2 is mm. 60–137, and section 3 is mm. 138–93.

⁸⁸ Beal, *Johanna Beyer*, 49.

Motivic Development

In order to provide continuity in *Ballad*, the most prominent technique Beyer uses to develop the opening clarinet motive is extension. The first ten measures (see example 3.1) reveal a growing amalgamation of neumes, representing the primary compositional material used throughout the work. Beyer's initial phrase of a ternary (three-progression) neume <7123> is subsequently repeated and developed through extensions at the end of each phrase.⁸⁹ By looking ahead to mm. 7–10, we see that the first complete statement of the primary motive <71230628947251E0> can be broken down into fragments containing the initial neume (<7123>) with each additional extension. These miniature phrases are repeatedly brought back and transformed over the duration of the work. The phrase here is retold with the original motive plus three additional segments: <7123> + <06> + <28> + <94725(1E0)>. When mm. 1–10 are looked at as a whole, the only exact repetition of this section is found in mm. 26–35. Despite only one exact repetition of this fully extended phrase, the initial neume and its extensions are modified and used in various ways throughout the song. Each reiteration of the initial neume in example 3.1 is rhythmically altered yet contains the exact same thematic material as its preceding neume, with accumulating extensions attached to each phrase.

⁸⁹ Each additional extension is added to the previous extension to the initial neume, <7123>.

Example 3.1

Beyer, *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, mm. 1–11

The image shows a musical score for Clarinet in 4/4 time, measures 1 through 11. The score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 1-4) features an 'Initial Phrase, 3-progression neume' starting on measure 1 with a *pp* dynamic. This phrase is followed by 'Extension 1' in measure 4. The second system (measures 5-7) begins with 'Extension 2' in measure 5 (*p*), followed by 'Extension 3' in measure 7 (*mf*). The third system (measures 8-11) starts with 'Extension 3' in measure 8 (*f*), followed by a final 'Extension 3' in measure 11 (*p*). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Beyer uses similar techniques of extension in other moments throughout the piece, including between the clarinet and voice lines in mm. 128–36 and the clarinet part in mm. 158–61. The three extensions in example 3.2 are modified extensions of each other, with the first note of each repeated phrase progressing up a half step each time. This progression, though seemingly new in m. 128, eventually references the initial neume in m. 130. The first three-progression neume that begins this measure is similar to the <7123> at the beginning of the work. By m. 135, the third and final extension is identical to the final extension of the full motive in mm. 7–10.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ See mm. 9–10 in example 3.1.

Example 3.2

Beyer, *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, mm. 128–30 and 132–36

Clarinet

128

Extension 1

Extension 2

9

132

Extension 3

9

pp

ppp

Another variant of the initial neume is found in m. 158 (example 3.3). This neume also resembles the original motive: as in example 3.2, it is a modified repetition with various notes altered both at the beginning and at the center of the neume. In this case, however, extensions are used both before and after the modified neume is repeated.

Example 3.3

Beyer, *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, mm. 158–59 and 160–61

Clarinet

158

3

p

Extension 1

6

160

2

mp

3

Extension 2

Extension 3

Another way in which Beyer modifies the melodic material is through segmenting various parts of the neume and recombining them to form familiar, yet varied repetitions. The initial motive with its additional extensions are often divided and reattached at various points as seen in example 3.4. Here, mm. 12–15 exhibit a splicing of mm. 1–2 with mm. 9–10. Rhythmic diminution is used in m. 12 to modify the neume in mm. 1–2.

Example 3.4

Beyer, *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, mm. 1–2, 9–10, and 12–14

Clarinet

1

pp

9

f

12

In addition to simple pitch repetition, Beyer also uses rhythmic variation to develop her motives, making the work exceptionally economical. In a similar manner to her practice in the first and second movements of *Three Songs*, Beyer again uses the same pitch material to compose both lines, yet in different rhythms. The opening motivic material in the clarinet is so often repeated that the only compositional material used within the first thirty-five measures is taken solely from the fully extended clarinet phrase in mm. 7–10. Sections two (mm. 60–137) and three (mm. 138–193) begin with rhythmic variations of the theme from mm. 1–2 with its extensions. As new melodic material is presented in one voice, it is often used in the other voice. In example 3.5, the neume is transformed with rhythmic alterations, but pitch classes remain the same (the C and E \flat in mm. 54–55 are simply transposed down an octave).

Example 3.5

Beyer, *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, mm. 46 and 52–55

The image shows two staves of music. The top staff is for Clarinet (Cl.) in 4/4 time, measures 46-51. It contains a sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6. The bottom staff is for Soprano (S) in 4/4 time, measures 52-55. It contains notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6. The lyrics under the soprano staff are: Stars were twink - ling o - ver - head. An arrow points from the clarinet staff to the soprano staff with the text: Exact Pitch Repetition Rhythmically Modified.

In example 3.6, the soprano line is repeated note for note (with two C#s extracted through intension on the words “brave songs”) in the clarinet line.⁹¹ The

⁹¹ Note that the x markings above “My breath came short, the quick air strong” in example 3.6 are used to indicated *Sprechstimme*, not intension.

repetition of individual pitches in the vocal line is almost always due to words containing more than one syllable, such as the repeated E on “prick-le” in m. 176 (as see in example 3.21, p. 90). Yet here, the repeated pitches are on separate words. In Beyer’s interpretation of dissonant counterpoint, the repetition of notes is not something to be avoided, but an essential feature of her music.

Example 3.6

Beyer, *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, mm. 79–87 and 84–88

79

S

x x x x x x x x

My breath came short, the quick air strong, but I thought

brave songs as I climbed and

Exact Pitch Repetition
Rhythmically Modified
Extension

84

Cl.

In example 3.7, the change from the soprano to clarinet line actually begins in m. 128 (refer to example 3.2 for context) on the binary (two-progression) neume <541>. The first note of that neume is raised a half step each time it is repeated (including mm. 129 and 130) until it appears as the G# seen in m. 132. The intension is the absence from F6 in the clarinet line (though it would be found in the downward portamento to C#) and the extension is the B in m. 135.

Example 3.7

Beyer, *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, mm. 131–34 and 132–36

The image shows two staves of music. The top staff is for the Soprano (S) in 4/4 time, with lyrics: "shells slipped down in a me... tear band". The bottom staff is for the Clarinet (Cl.) in 4/4 time, with a nine-measure rest in the first measure. A legend between the staves lists: Tonally Modified, Rhythmically Modified, Extension, Intension. An arrow points from the legend to the clarinet staff.

Another interesting feature arises in the first section, namely, the extent to which Beyer alters the neumes. Her use of continuity in *Ballad* is much more extreme than that of *Three Songs*. Whereas in *Three Songs*, Beyer typically manipulates neumes and phrases to morph into slight variations of one another—with these still discernable as related to the fundamental neume or phrase—*Ballad* utilizes rhythmic and pitch modulations to transform one neume into an entirely different neume. The end result of this transformation is new motivic material to work with, at times barely recognizable from the initial neume or phrase from which it originated. Seeger’s example of the Schubert motive transforming into the Strauss motive, mentioned in chapter 1, is an exaggerated example of this kind of transformation, yet its premise that one neume can be changed into a completely new neume is perfectly applicable in this case. One example spans the first fifty-five measures of the work. After the last words “perhaps I prayed,” the primary motive and its extensions (mm. 7–10) disappear for a short time while unexpected and seemingly new material is presented in the voice and clarinet lines. Whereas the new melodic material after m. 44 looks different than preceding

motivic material, the gradual alterations can be traced back to the initial neume in the first measure (see example 3.8). Each neume or phrase in example 3.8 is compared to the neume or phrase directly preceding it. Extensions are shown with a circle and intensions are shown with an X.

Example 3.8

Beyer, *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, mm. 1-2, 3, 11, 20, 40-42, 42-45, 45-48, and 52-55

Clarinet in B \flat

1 Initial Neume

3 Rhythmic Modification
Extension

11 Octave Displacement
Rhythmic Modification

20 Rhythmic Modification
Extension
Intension

40 Rhythmic Modification
Pitch Transposition
Extension
Intension

42 Pitch Transposition
Extension

45 Rhythmic Modification
Pitch Transposition
Extension

Soprano

Rhythmic Augmentation of m. 46

52 Stars were twink - ling o - ver - head

Through minor pitch transpositions and rhythmic alterations, the primary motive is gradually changed over the development of the first section. Up until m. 40, rhythmic modification, extension, and intension remain the primary techniques used to alter the neume. The first extension of the initial three-progression neume in m. 1 is a quintuplet of quarter notes. In m. 11, Beyer uses the exact same pitch material, but creates a rhythmic pattern that remains familiar through m. 20 and m. 40. Each of these measures begins with a quarter rest and involves a similar group of sixteenth notes (sixteenths, sextuplet, or quintuplet), which tie into a half note. Between m. 40 and m. 48, the extensions and modulations become more prominent as the phrases grow larger. The sextuplet in mm. 45–48 is extended material, and is combined with the held E \flat to prepare for new motivic material in the soprano line. When the soprano sings “Stars were twinkling overhead,” the motive is a rhythmically augmented repetition of m. 46. Although the material here looks different, the slow changes occurring over the forty-eight measures after the introduction of the initial neume helped create a path for this new motive.

An important structural device that influences Beyer’s construction of *Ballad* is aggregate completion—the last of twelve pitches in a chromatic collection which completes a section, phrase, or movement of a piece. This technique is found in the clarinet introduction: As the melodic material unfolds, there is a noticeable lack of the pitch B \flat . Eleven of the twelve chromatic pitches are arranged carefully here, yet Beyer specifically leaves out this pitch. Beal notes this as a structural device, which Boland refers to as “chromatic completion” or “accumulation.”⁹² Although the pitch B \flat occurs

⁹² Beal, *Johanna Beyer*, 49.

in the throat tone (B \flat 4), clarion (B \flat 5), and altissimo registers (B \flat 6), not once throughout the entirety of the work is it found in the chalumeau register. When the initial aggregate between mm. 1–35 is arranged in chromatic order, the absence of B \flat is more noticeable.⁹³ The first appearance of B \flat 4 and B \flat 5 happen in mm. 48–49 and are not important at any cadential point. In example 3.8, I have placed B \flat 3 (chalumeau B \flat) in parentheses at the bottom of the chromatic ordering to show it as the foundation of this particular aggregate. I have chosen B \flat 3 as the foundation, because whereas the other B \flat s in their respective octaves are used throughout the work, B \flat 3 is intentionally avoided throughout the entire piece.

Example 3.9

Beyer, *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, aggregate from mm. 1–10 rearranged chromatically

Clarinet

Beyer’s use of this technique in *Ballad* is quite similar to her avoidance of a chalumeau B3 throughout the entirety of her *Suite for Clarinet 1*, though the note appears in two higher octaves at various times.⁹⁴ Although Boland does state that the aggregate

⁹³ Mm. 1–35 are used as the basis for the aggregate because the entire compositional material here is based on mm. 1–10 and no B \flat in any octave is found throughout this section.

⁹⁴ Boland, “Experimentation and Process.”

completion can act as an indication for the end of a section or movement, this is not always the case. B \flat never returns at any cadential points, much less signals the end of a section. However, a shift in placement and range of the aggregate ordering beginning in m. 36 has an effect on the formal structure, as seen in example 3.9.

At the opening of the song, G4 was a prominent repeated note in both voices. In mm. 36–58, the note disappears entirely in the soprano line. The sequential chromatic rearrangement of the collection below, <45236980ET1>, reveals the note of absence, G4.⁹⁵

Example 3.10

Beyer, *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, aggregate from mm. 36–59 rearranged chromatically

Clarinet

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is a treble clef with a melodic line of notes. The bottom staff is a treble clef with a chromatic reordering of notes, with some notes in parentheses. An arrow points from the circled G note in the top staff to the circled G note in the bottom staff.

Because the aggregate collection has shifted up in range and into the soprano line, we look for it to potentially conclude on a G. Based on the collection seen in example 3.9, the chromatic completion could end on a G4 or G5.⁹⁶ In m. 59, at the end of the last

⁹⁵ The circled G at the end represents the completion of the aggregate. In m. 59, this G concludes the first section.

⁹⁶ The pitches from mm. 36–59 eventually conclude on the circled G at the end of the section. This pitch is placed in parentheses in the chromatic reordering to let the reader know it is the missing note from the aggregate collection. The pitches D, E \flat , E \natural , F, and F \sharp in parentheses are included because they are sung pitches from mm. 36–43 set an octave below the sung pitches in mm. 44–59.

phrase in the last section, the resolution is found on a G4. At this point, the “star-eater” observes the starry feast overhead, and utters the final words before his or her ascent: “Stars were twinkling overhead, on these I knew that I might be fed.” The word “fed” falls on a concert G4, thus signaling the aggregate completion and end of the first section. Thus, whereas the overarching structure of the work omits a Bb3 entirely from both the vocal and clarinet parts, a more localized aggregate completion is formed in the second half of the first section.

Example 3.11

Beyer, *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, mm. 56–59

Resolution to G completes
the aggregate laid out in
mm. 36-59

Soprano

56

on these I knew that I might be fed.

Text Painting

The compositional format of *Ballad* reflects the text and features three distinct sections. Each section is summarized below to give the reader an understanding of the work as a whole. After this overview of the *Ballad*'s structure, the text painting that appears in it is examined.

The first section of *Ballad of the Star-Eater* (mm. 1–59) centers on the star-eater's hunger and the narrator's eventual realization that he or she can be fed with the stars. The bulk of melodic material in this section is found within the primary motive combined with all its extensions. The end of the first part is signaled with an aggregate completion on G and a fermata pause.

The second and longest section (mm. 60–137) presents new and old themes, which are continually developed throughout the rest of the work. The primary theme is dissonated through modified repetition (see examples 3.2 and 3.3) and modified extensions. New themes are presented in the clarinet and voice line. Mm. 60–78 introduce a contramotive in the clarinet line that not only represents the action of rising quickly, but also introduces compositional material used primarily when stars are mentioned.⁹⁷ *Sprechstimme* is used in this section to suggest shortness of breath, as when the climber is higher up in the atmosphere. Both the pitches and rhythms to new and old motivic material are altered throughout this section.

The final major section (mm. 138–93) focuses on the star-eater's return to the ground and the ensuing, carefree satisfaction brought from the experience. Here, the

⁹⁷ In this context, a contramotive is a motive played simultaneously or in close proximity to the primary motive to create rhythmic, stylistic, and melodic contrast.

primary motive is used much more pervasively than in the second section. Similar to the ending of “Total Eclipse,” *Ballad* ends by hinting at where it began: “I fear no hunger with sharp, cold pain / if it dare assail me I shall climb again.” The primary melody is altered toward the end in both the voice and clarinet. The ending notes C, B, and C# in the clarinet line provide an interesting switch from the original C#, B, and C. An open-ended portamento on the final C# reflects the text “I shall climb again.”⁹⁸

Although the compositional material in *Ballad* is heavily based on extension and intension, Beyer also weaves in text painting throughout. The clarinet remains relatively subdued in the first forty-four measures until the singer exclaims “I only know that suddenly—a splendid knowledge came to me.” With this sudden epiphany, the clarinet begins excitedly climbing in range, now entering the upper clarion and altissimo registers. Immediately after this, during the line “Stars were twinkling overhead; on these I knew that I might be fed,” the clarinet begins rapidly trilling a G6–G#6 on the word “twinkling” (example 3.12).

Example 3.12
Beyer, *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, mm. 51–55

Clarinet

51

pp

⁹⁸ Compare mm. 9–10 in example 3.1 with mm. 190–93 in example 3.16.

At this point, Beyer utilizes extended techniques in the clarinet and vocal line to portray the action occurring in the text. As the next line reads “so as I rose with quick, glad cry—and began to scale the wall of the sky,” Beyer uses three ascending portamenti on the words “cry,” “scale,” and “sky.”⁹⁹ She leaves to the performer’s discretion how high to slide for the “scale” portamento, possibly due to the difficulty of creating glissandos in the altissimo register (example 3.13).

Example 3.13

Beyer, *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, mm. 63–67

The image shows a musical score for two staves: Soprano (S) and Clarinet (Cl.). The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The score starts at measure 63. The vocal line (S) has lyrics: "cry _____ and be - gan to scale the wall of the sky _____". The clarinet line (Cl.) has wavy lines under "cry", a wavy line with an eye symbol under "and", and a wavy line with an arrow pointing up under "scale". A dynamic marking "mf" is above the vocal staff.

Other glissandi are found throughout the piece, specifically whenever Beyer indicates motion, or a change of direction, in the text. For example, in mm. 91–100, the singer exclaims “Below, the horizon stretched and grew—’til the earth spun free in a tide of blue.” Nearing the end of the phrase, the clarinet swings down and back up with two adjacent glissandi. Several measures after, the same phrase is repeated, yet to the words “Weary and stiff but fiercely proud, I swung at last to a ledge of cloud.” Here, the pivoting chromatic line is referencing the “swing” of the climber. Again, the last glissando ends the phrase over the sustained text. This serves not only to reinforce the

⁹⁹ In her biography *Johanna Beyer*, Beal explains that Beyer would notate sliding tones by using wavy lines or arrows. In this case, the lines indicate portamenti (or glissandi).

spinning or swinging motion by leaving it exposed, but also to allow for clarity in the diction, so the chromatic motion does not make the text indistinct.

Example 3.14

Beyer, *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, mm. 98–100 and 110–11

The image shows two systems of musical notation. The first system covers measures 98-100, and the second system covers measures 110-111. Each system has a vocal line (S) and a clarinet line (Cl.). In the vocal line, the lyrics are "tide of blue" and "cloud Then". The clarinet line features a chromatic glissando in both sections, with a box highlighting the upward motion in the second system.

Also telling is the upward glissando at the end of the piece, in which the singer declares that if hunger assails her again, she will climb again [to eat the stars]. The rising glissando (m. 193), softly dying away, hints at the possible return to the beginning.

Example 3.15

Beyer, *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, mm. 188–93

The image shows a single system of musical notation for measures 188-193. It includes a vocal line (S) and a clarinet line (Cl.). The vocal line has the lyrics "if it dare as - sail me I shall climb a - gain." The clarinet line features a chromatic glissando and dynamic markings: *mp*, *p*, *mf*, and *pp*. A box highlights the *pp* section with an upward-pointing arrow.

As with her other songs, *Sprechstimme* is present. In the score, the section beginning at m. 79 is indicated as *agitato molto*, with the notes marked “x” to be spoken. The text reads “my breath came short, the quick air strong.” Each of these notes is spoken, which is then mimicked note for note in the clarinet, but with rhythmic

modifications. The clarinet line, in which staccato has been used economically, now has a staccato marking over each eighth note or eighth-note triplet in mm. 84–87. As the text indicates a person climbing a “wall of the sky,” the musical imagery evokes the quick, high-chested breaths one would take as the altitude increases and the atmosphere thins.

Example 3.16

Beyer, *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, mm. 79–82 and 84–87

Soprano
agitato molto

79 X X X X X X X X

My breath came short, the quick air strong,

Clarinet

84

Even the absence of notes is used at times to reflect the text. Similar to mm. 36–40 in regard to range and the repetition of notes, mm. 70–73 bear one crucial difference: the space between the phrases. Up until this point, each vocal phrase has been completely unbroken, with the voice consistently sustaining throughout. However, after the words “crevice” and “cleft,” Beyer adds in quarter note rests, musically portraying fissures in the wall.

Example 3.17

Beyer, *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, mm. 70–73

Soprano

70 *p*

Here was a cre - vice, there a cleft

Other moments of text painting are brief, yet apropos. Beyer’s use of staccati and rapid, high-ranged quintuplets (second one lower) at the beginning of the second section are the first time Beyer employs staccato.¹⁰⁰ There is no need for this kind of marking in the beginning as the opening text is a lament of hunger with an idea to climb the sky and eat the stars; a more smooth and connected approach is appropriate in those phrases. As mentioned in the introduction and accounted by her friend Bertha Reynolds, Beyer’s own difficulties with finances and providing food for herself resulted in her being on Home Relief. Beyer’s desperation over this situation (particularly during the Great Depression) may have influenced her choice of text for this song, though the text itself was written by Bonaro Overstreet. The staccati in the second section parallel the text at “so up I rose with quick, glad cry.” The “quick rising” is seen in the fast, punctuated clarinet line, with the high register being used possibly to emulate the height of the climb as well as the distant stars.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Other staccati are used previously, but under slur markings or in trills, thus altering the function.

¹⁰¹ In her biography, *Johanna Beyer*, Beal says that the high registers were perhaps utilized to indicate the height and climbing indicated in the poem.

Example 3.18

Beyer, *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, mm. 60–63

Further indication that the range and staccatos used in the clarinet line are meant to emulate the stars comes from mm. 111–16. The moment “stars” is mentioned, the clarinet line changes from its typically smooth texture and begins a detached series of pitches with several set in the high altissimo.

Example 3.19

Beyer, *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, mm. 111–15

Another example in which staccati are used for text painting can be found in mm. 174–78 (example 3.20), at the line “For stars still prickle my fingertips.” The only two notes with staccatos in this part of the vocal line fall are the two syllables of the word “prickle.” The clarinet, the musical manifestation of the stars, bristles underneath with punctuated notes, mimicking the prickle of stars.

Example 3.20

Beyer, *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, mm. 174–77

Soprano
174

p

bare. For stars still prick - le my fin - ger - tips,

When the climber has arrived at the starry buffet, the soprano exclaims, “I crushed and cracked them and crunched the meat. Oh, they were rich and spicy sweet! I crushed and cracked them, and from my hand the shells slipped down in a meteor band.” Each time the word “cracked” appears, Beyer writes a mordent over the note, indicating a singular, rapid alternation to replicate a cracking sound in the voice part (example 3.21).

Example 3.21

Beyer, *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, mm. 126–30

Soprano
126

p

sweet! - I crushed and cracked them, and from my hand the

As the “shells slip down,” both the clarinet and vocal parts fall in stymied, pseudo-chromatic fashion, with intermittent held notes between (mm. 131–36).

Example 3.22

Beyer, *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, mm. 188–93

The image shows a musical score for Soprano (S) and Clarinet (Cl.) in 4/4 time, measures 188-93. The Soprano part has the lyrics: "if it dare as - sail me I shall climb a - gain." The Clarinet part features dynamic markings: *mp* (mezzo-piano), *p* (piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *pp* (pianissimo). A sixteenth-note figure is marked with a '6' and a slur. A crescendo hairpin leads to the *pp* marking, which is accompanied by an upward-pointing arrow.

Performance Implications

Considering the significant amount of extension used throughout the *Ballad of the Star-Eater* (as seen in examples 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3, pp. 71–73), the performers should take care to bring out the new material added on to the repeated material.¹⁰² For example, the three extensions in example 3.1 may be stressed at the end of each phrase to emphasize the new material for the listener. After the initial neume in example 3.1 is fully extended by m. 10, the subsequent exact or modified repetitions should be phrased differently to avoid monotony. The exact repetition of the first ten measures in mm. 26–35 may be phrased with differently accented notes. In mm. 1–2, the clarinetist may try phrasing (with a slight crescendo) to the E \flat , whereas in mm. 26–27, he or she may phrase to the C \sharp . This phrasing may be applied in some places and not in others, but some exact repetition in the phrasing may be used to provide thematic continuity on a larger scale. In example 3.2, the chromatically modified beginning to each repeated phrase (F, F \sharp , G, and G \sharp) can be played as if a tenuto appears over each note so the listener is aware of the chromatic stepwise motion. Because of the pervasiveness of each of the motives, it is necessary to create variation in the style, phrasing, and mood of each.

Because continuity (neumatic alterations) is much more extensive in *Ballad* than in *Three Songs*, the clarinetist and soprano should find ways to bring out the slight changes as they appear. Example 3.8 (p. 77) reveals a transfiguration of the initial neume in mm. 1–2 into a completely different neume in mm. 52–55 (soprano line).

¹⁰² The clarinetist plays the majority of extended thematic material, whereas the soprano sings a full or segmented part of the completely extended motive (mm. 7–10).

Altered or extended notes such as the G3 in m. 11, or the A3 and E3 in m. 20, may be stressed to emphasize the change. Due to the broad use of continuity throughout the work—as indicated in examples 3.6 (p. 75), 3.7 (p. 76), and those listed in the previous paragraph—the performers should seek to bring out these phrases from the texture, which will help to better connect them with each other from an aural standpoint.

As to Beyer's use of aggregate completion, the cadential point in example 3.11 (p. 82) is a prime area for the soprano to accentuate the final G on the word "fed." Because this last note is the final piece in the twelve-tone aggregate, the preceding line should provide a clear phrase leading up to the end—the performer should crescendo and then slightly retard on the last three notes.

The vocalist and clarinetist can underscore the lyrics through the music due to Beyer's use of extended techniques including glissandi (as seen in examples 3.13, 3.14, and 3.15, pp. 85–86) and *Sprechstimme* (as seen in example 3.16, p. 87). Regular techniques used to musically represent the text include staccati and mordents. The staccati used to imitate the stars may be played quite pointedly and crisply, especially considering the high range typically required in these passages (as seen in examples 3.18 and 3.19, p. 89). Mordents used to describe the cracking sound (example 3.21) also may be played more aggressively. When the text is portraying "swinging" or "climbing," the performer should consider specific areas (as found in example 3.14) to bring out in order to musically support the text. In example 3.14, mm. 99–100, the text states that the "earth spun free." The textual implications for the act of spinning free and the downward descend of the musical line in m. 102 would be further amplified by placing a crescendo into the tied F4 and a decrescendo away from it. However, in the

next section (with an identical statement in the clarinet line in mm. 110–11), because the star-eater swings toward a ledge, and the music ascends upward toward a G5, the clarinetist may consider a decrescendo into the tied F and a crescendo into the G5.

While some areas of text painting are obvious in the composition, others are more subtle. M. 143, for example, contains the highest note (G#5) the vocalist sings, which appears on the word “crown,” referring to the star-eater’s head—not something in the stars above—in the poetry.

Overall, the development of new motives in the second and third sections presents the performers with the opportunity to find new tonal colors. Similar to *Three Songs*, different motives may require different moods, especially considering the emotional variations present in the poetic text. Because the subject matter perpetually influences the construction of the musical lines, performers should take care to dramatically emphasize each occurrence of text painting.

Chapter Four

Have Faith! (1936–1937)

Introduction

Have Faith! was the last of Beyer's songs for woodwind and voice.¹⁰³ Her first manuscript (version 1) was written in December 1936, but revised twice to create version 2 (December 1936–January 1937), and version 3 (January 1937). Version 2 is an exact copy of version 1, but it contains an additional introductory vocalise in the first forty measures and a closing vocalise in the last thirteen measures. As will be discussed later, these supplementary vocalises intersect with the poetic material in important ways. The third version of *Have Faith!* is completely different from the first two versions. In this version, Beyer completely restructures key aspects of the work, including the meter (from 2/4 and 3/4 to 5/8), the compositional material (the melodies are entirely different), and the mood. Compared to the first two versions, the third version is much more energized, with animated writing for both the flute and soprano taking place within rapid glissandos, trills, pointed staccati, and quick-paced antiphonal writing. Beyer makes extreme changes most likely due to the poetic content, and will be discussed further.

As with “Total Eclipse,” “To Be,” and “Universal-Local,” *Have Faith!* is one of the few examples of Beyer's compositions set to her own text. Here, however, the

¹⁰³ All the excerpts from *Have Faith!* have been selected from scores provided by Frog Peak Music. These versions were copied and edited by William Matthews as part of the Johanna Beyer Project.

poetry seems to take on a much more personal matter than that in *Three Songs*. Considering the close proximity of her composition of this piece and its poetry to the arrest of her good friend, Henry Cowell, a connection is likely. On May 21, 1936, Cowell was arrested for suspected illegal sexual action with underage boys. After being found guilty of a “morals” charge, he was sent to San Quentin Federal Penitentiary on July 8 and stayed there until 1940.¹⁰⁴ Beyer began to diligently manage Cowell’s professional matters during this time, and she wrote this poem several months after he was imprisoned:

Here is a song for you,
oh, nightingale!
a song of what?
of hope, of future, present, past?
it does not matter.
But essential is,
that you and I and all the others
have faith in things to come,
in things that passed, and are
and we must try to understand
and love and help each other,
have faith in things to come,
have faith!

Beal writes about a connection between Cowell’s arrest and the poem, saying, “The text, not coincidentally, expressed optimism about the future and revealed deep affection, if not love.”¹⁰⁵ The poem seems to reveal a kind of epiphany for Beyer, one that is solely concerned with trying to understand, love, and help each other through all things. Through the text, Beyer expresses self-encouragement during Cowell’s incarceration, her willingness and desire to help him, and optimism that he would be

¹⁰⁴ Beal, *Johanna Beyer*, 21.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

released soon. Beyer dedicated *Have Faith!* (all three versions) to her friend Ethel Luening. Although Luening was a soprano and her husband a composer and flutist, it is not clear whether the piece was performed in Beyer's lifetime.¹⁰⁶

As in the previous chapters, this chapter begins with a discussion of how continuity affects the motivic development in the composition. All three versions of *Have Faith!* are discussed. Because versions 1 and 2 are nearly identical (aside from the introductory vocalises in version 2), I begin with an examination of motivic development in version 1. I explore Beyer's use of intension to fragment the motive, her use of pitch centrality, and the ways in which intervallic leading helps construct the phrases. For version 2, I briefly discuss the minor alterations and the vocalises. As to the motivic development in version 3, I discuss Beyer's use of continuity in developing the primary neumes, antiphonal structured phrasing (dialogue between voice and flute), and the specific intervallic structure of the individual lines, which—as in the first two versions—plays a significant role in the construction of the motivic material.

In the section on text painting, I examine the introductory and closing vocalises in version 2 and discuss possible suggestions this may have for the dialogue between the soprano and flute. I then explore Beyer's use of *Sprechstimme*. For version 3, I examine the antiphonal dialogue prevalent between the flute and soprano and how it helps structure the movement. I also discuss how Beyer uses *Sprechstimme* in this movement. Lastly, I consider performance implications.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 50.

Motivic Development

Version 1

The introduction to *Have Faith!* version 1 is an exceptional example of Beyer's transformation of the neume by fragmenting the motive. According to Seeger, the neume can be modified to an enormous extent, both through the use of rhythms and pitches.¹⁰⁷ This is seen in the initial five-progression motive <453672>, which is comprised of two neumes. The second half of the motive is immediately rhythmically augmented; then the pitches are augmented (as seen in example 4.1, mm. 2–3 and 4–5). The excerpt in example 4.1 reveals the initial motive in mm. 1–2 and its subsequent transformations.

¹⁰⁷ Seeger and Pescatello, *Studies in Musicology II*, 144–45.

Example 4.1

Beyer, *Have Faith!*, version 1, mm. 1–20

The musical score for Example 4.1 is presented in three systems. The first system shows the Flute and Soprano staves. The Flute part begins with a piano (*pp*) dynamic and a 5-measure neume. A box labeled "Initial Neume" highlights measures 1-2, and a bracket labeled "Transformation of the Initial Neume" spans measures 3-5. The Soprano part is mostly silent, with a note in measure 1. The second system shows measures 6-12. The Flute part continues with a 5-measure neume and a trill. The Soprano part is silent. The third system shows measures 13-20. The Flute part begins with a trill and a 3-measure neume. The Soprano part has the lyrics "Here is a song" and a 3-measure neume. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Beyer's detail in the minute handling and alteration of the initial neume is shown in example 4.2. Whereas *Three Songs* and *Ballad* typically use extension to create various neumes and motives, Beyer's primary technique here is intension. Pitches are subtracted from the larger neumes found in mm. 1–2 and m. 6 and set as singular motives (or neumes) in the surrounding measures. Notice the division of the initial motive (mm. 1–2) into two smaller neumes (mm. 2–3 and mm. 4–5), both being twist neumes of two progressions each. In mm. 2–3 the neume is an exact repetition of the second half of the initial neume, but it is intervallically augmented in mm. 4–5.

Example 4.2

Beyer, *Have Faith!*, version 1, mm. 1–2, 2–3, 4–5, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10–13

The musical score for Example 4.2 consists of several staves of music. The first staff shows measures 1-2 with a neume motif (F, G, A, B) and a fingering of 5. The second staff shows measures 2-3 and 4-5, with a fingering of 2. The third staff shows measure 5 with a fingering of 3. The fourth staff shows measures 6, 7, and 8, with a fingering of 5. The fifth staff shows measure 9. The sixth staff shows measures 10-13 with trill extensions and a fingering of 3. Arrows indicate the flow of the motif from measure 1 to measure 5, and then from measure 5 to measures 7-8, and finally to measures 10-13.

Beyer then takes the <453> of the first motive in m. 1 and uses it as material to augment the pitches, adding an F \sharp to the two-progression neume in m. 5. She then fragments this variant neume (m. 5) into a repeated two-note motive as seen in mm. 7–8. The pitch augmentation returns to its initial form in m. 9, but now the <453> is rhythmically augmented from m. 1. Beyer uses trill extensions in mm. 10–13 to further augment the neume, providing an oscillating extension of F as the upper trilled note.

Beginning in m. 6 of examples 4.1 and 4.2, one note in particular—E \flat —begins to dominate the motivic material. This reflects a pitch centricity that plays a significant role in the construction of the flute line in *Have Faith!* version 1. Nearly seventy percent of the flute line is comprised of a sustained E \flat , and this percentage is further

expanded when the shorter phrase endings are included (such as those in the examples above). Most neumes or micro-phrases in the flute line result in either a sustained E \flat (see example 4.3) or an abruptly ended E \flat , such as the three micro-phrases in mm. 5–7. In regard to the latter point, it should also be noted that among her songs for woodwind and voice, this is the most noticeable disregard for the avoidance of repetitious tones, an important guideline used by the composers of dissonant counterpoint in order to keep the line thoroughly dissonated.¹⁰⁸ Although the lines retain a high degree of chromaticism and the phrase endings are dissonated, the multiple occurrences of repeated tones arriving one or two tone-beats after the initial note are common. The pervasiveness of E \flat in the flute line may be Beyer’s re-creation of the nightingale’s song mentioned in the text, complete with elaborate flourishes, trills, and a constant return to repeated pitches. It is worth noting that the flute has often been associated with birdsong, with composers such as Haydn, Beethoven, and Prokofiev making use of its high-pitched timbre to represent the avian kind. It is not surprising that Beyer would use the instrument here to do the same. A good example of the frequency with which E \flat is used can be seen in mm. 27–54.

¹⁰⁸ Lumsden, “Beyond Modernism’s Edge,” 58.

Example 4.3
 Beyer, *Have Faith!*, version 1, mm. 27–58

27 *(tr)*

Fl. *oh, night - in - gale* *very broad* *night - in - gale!*

34 *9*

S *X.....X*
a song of what? of hope, of fu - ture, pre - sent,

40 *2*

S *X.....X*
past? It does not mat - ter it does not mat - ter. But

46 *6*

S *es - sen - tial is, that you and I and all the oth -*

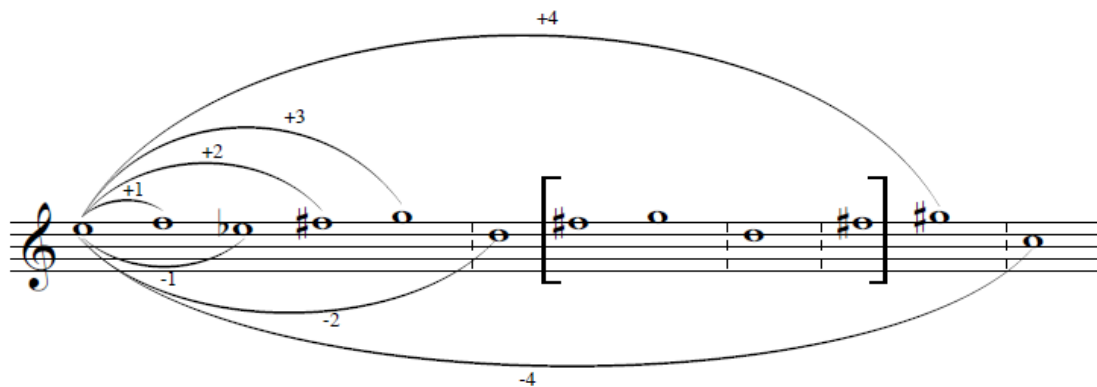
53 *5 5 4 2*

S *thers have faith, have faith in things to come,*

One of the overlapping connections between each version of *Have Faith!* is the intervallic construction of key phrases. In Lumsden’s dissertation on Beyer’s String Quartet No. 2, she discusses Beyer’s use of intervallic symmetry. Whereas Beyer does not write with exact symmetry in *Have Faith!*, her intervallic construction is still important in the formation of her motives and follows a consistent pattern. In the following section, I construct my examples in a manner similar to those Lumsden provides in order to show the intervallic motion in the ascending (and, at times, descending) lines.¹⁰⁹ Observe the intervallic motion in the first five measures of version 1.¹¹⁰ The ascending motion is chromatic, whereas the descending motion follows a varying stepwise pattern. Four of the notes are bracketed because they are repeated tones, and thus are not included in the intervallic pattern.

Example 4.4

Beyer, *Have Faith!*, version 1, mm. 1–5



¹⁰⁹ Lumsden, “Beyond Modernism’s Edge,” 60–65. This example is styled after Lumsden’s figures on intervallic construction.

¹¹⁰ Observe example 4.1 to see mm. 1–5 in context.

The opening line in the flute sets the precedent for many of the phrases to come, whether ascending or descending. The closely knit phrases tend to move only slightly one way or another, avoiding an excess of jagged leaps. In fact, the largest leap found in version 1 is the augmented fifth leading from m. 4 to m. 5 (see end of example 4.4). As can be seen in example 4.4, these large leaps are approached with slowly expanding intervals. In this version, Beyer typically treats the phrases in such a manner; the lines move up and down in a compact, stepwise manner, yet simultaneously, so as to increase the intervallic space over time. A similar approach is seen in some areas of “Total Eclipse,” such as in example 2.17, but the technique is not prominent enough in that movement to warrant it strongly influential. In *Have Faith!*, the technique helps to shape lines in both the soprano and flute parts.

This incremental structure rises to the fore during the central phrase of the work: “But essential is, that you and I and all the others have faith, have faith in things to come.” Like the opening phrase in the flute line, the chromaticism here in the soprano line is interrupted with an increasing fluctuation of slowly expanding intervals. After this concludes in the seventh measure, the line continues its predominantly chromatic motion, wavering between an E and F in mm. 51–55.

Example 4.5

Beyer, *Have Faith!*, version 1, mm. 45–59

The image shows a musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The staff contains a sequence of notes: F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, G5, A5, B5, C6. The notes are grouped into two measures by a bracket. Above the staff, curved lines connect the first note of the first measure to the notes of the second measure, labeled with interval numbers: +1 (to G4), +2 (to A4), +3 (to B4), +4 (to C5), +5 (to D5), +6 (to E5), +7 (to F#5), and +8 (to G5). Below the staff, curved lines connect the first note of the first measure to notes in the first measure, labeled with interval numbers: -1 (to E4), -2 (to D4), -3 (to C4), -4 (to B3), and -6 (to G3).

The descending motion is negligible here, as it does not adhere to any consistent pattern. However, the general direction of the ascending motion goes up with a predominantly chromatic motion.¹¹¹ Based on the typical ascending chromatic line, we would expect to see an E \flat (+2) in example 4.5, yet this note is absent from the soprano line here. This particular pitch may have been left out because it is sustained between mm. 47–54, the area in which the E \flat would have occurred in the soprano line.

¹¹¹ Observe example 4.3 to see mm. 45–58 in context. M. 59 is not shown but begins on a quarter note A5.

Version 2

Version 2 is a revision of version 1, with mm. 41–125 of version 2 containing material that is virtually identical to version 1. The principal change is the addition of new opening and ending vocalises.¹¹²

The vocalises are primarily discussed in the section on text painting, but it should be noted that the structure of the first vocalise utilizes copious amounts of modified repetition. This repetition is augmented and diminished rhythmically and with the pitches, which can be seen in the two-progression neumes—in this case, triplets—throughout the first forty measures.¹¹³

¹¹² See examples 4.14 and 4.15 for each vocalise. Minor alterations have been made in the copied and edited edition by William Matthews, primarily with regard to slur markings and courtesy accidentals. In the copied and edited editions, the flute part also contains a tied note with added trill in version 1, but a break in the tie in version 2. It appears in the original scores that these measures should both have rearticulated Eb's in the flute, but this is somewhat ambiguous as mentioned in the editor's notes.¹¹² For a more detailed account of the alterations between the versions and editor's marks, see the notes at the end of the score in the Frog Peak edition.

¹¹³ See example 4.14.

Version 3

Version 3 of *Have Faith!* differs strikingly from the previous two versions in both melodic and rhythmic content; it also immediately reveals an expert handling of the shortest of the neumes, or the two-progression neumes. As seen in example 4.6, the immediate and subtle transformation of the neume is at first brought about by slight pitch modifications in mm. 1–3. The first neume presented is *porrectus*, or a down-up twist neume. The pitches <9E0> are altered in the next twist-neume, <T78>, which then immediately changes to the line-neume <453>. This example of continuity is basic, not evolving to the extent of several of the examples in *Ballad of the Star-Eater*. In this case, the neume is transformed purely by transposition, and the rhythm remains the same for each of the three opening gestures.

Example 4.6

Beyer, *Have Faith!*, version 3, mm. 1–3 and 10

Modification of the Neume

Flute

1

pp *sempre*

10

Flute

Tonal Augmentation and Extension of the Neume

Other elements that help to dissonate the neume in this version involve the use of extension and intension. In m. 10 (example 4.6), the neume can be broken into two

smaller neumes, the first being porrectus, and the second being climacus (down-down). This particular neume is an extension of the original neume, transforming the two eighth notes in the initial neume into four sixteenth notes. Instances of intension are found in the first nine measures of the soprano line (example 4.7), directly beneath the neume alterations above. In this case, the phrase <272825> is cut down in size by the use of intension to bring about a smoother, more melodic phrase <2785> in mm. 8–9.

Example 4.7
 Beyer, *Have Faith!*, version 3, mm. 1–13

The image shows a musical score for Example 4.7, featuring Flute and Soprano parts. The Flute part is marked *flexible* and *pp sempre with hardly any dynamical shading for either flute or voice*. The Soprano part is marked *use any vowel suitable*. The score includes a box around the Soprano line in measures 8-9 and a box around the Flute line in measures 8-9, with arrows indicating the relationship between the two phrases.

Continuity is prominent in the construction of the melodic phrases in the soprano line, as well. At first, the singer is directed to sing on any vowel suitable. Then, the actual poetic text begins in m. 32. The melodic material in this section (mm. 32–41) has been taken from two previous phrases found in the flute and voice parts in mm. 8–9

and m. 11. The evolution of the first phrases from which mm. 32–38 are derived can be traced in example 4.8.

Example 4.8

Beyer, *Have Faith!*, version 3, mm. 3–6, 8–9, and 11–12. For musical context, see example 4.7

Soprano

3



8



11



When mm. 8–9 are combined with mm. 11–12, the result in mm. 32–38 is shown below. In this example, both F and D are repeated on the first recurrence of the words “a song.” In this case, these notes are merely continuations of the two notes surrounding them. The rhythms are altered here, but the pitch material is the same.

Example 4.9

Beyer, *Have Faith!*, version 3, mm. 32–38

Soprano

32

Here is a song, a song, a song

In mm. 39–42, the beginning of the phrase starts with a rhythmically identical format to m. 32. However, not only does the rhythmic material change, but the motion of the line is now more reminiscent of mm. 23–25. This stepwise motion is key in the construction of the motivic material found in the climactic section toward the end of the movement.¹¹⁴

Example 4.10

Beyer, *Have Faith!*, version 3, mm. 23–27 and 39–42

Soprano

23

11

39

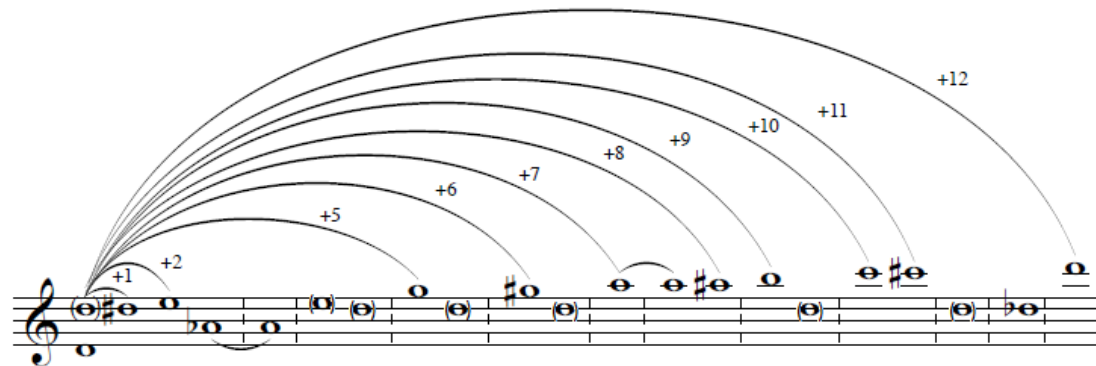
Here is a song for you, oh night - in - gale

¹¹⁴ This will be shown later when discussing intervallic leading.

From a purely pitch and metric standpoint, version 3 looks very different from the first two versions. However, the scalar motion in version 3 is nearly identical to that in versions 1 and 2, especially the upward chromatic pull in particular areas.¹¹⁵ The area of overlap between the versions occurs when the text states, “But essential is that you and I and all the others have faith, have faith in things to come.” The ascent provides not only a sense of climactic buildup, but a sense of urgency due to the high range and tight chromatic layout. In example 4.11 below, the chromatic ascent is shown. The chromatic ascent skips two notes, but spans an entire octave. The first note in parentheses is D4 transposed up an octave and the following notes in parentheses are repeated notes.¹¹⁶

Example 4.11

Beyer, *Have Faith!*, version 3, mm. 61–72



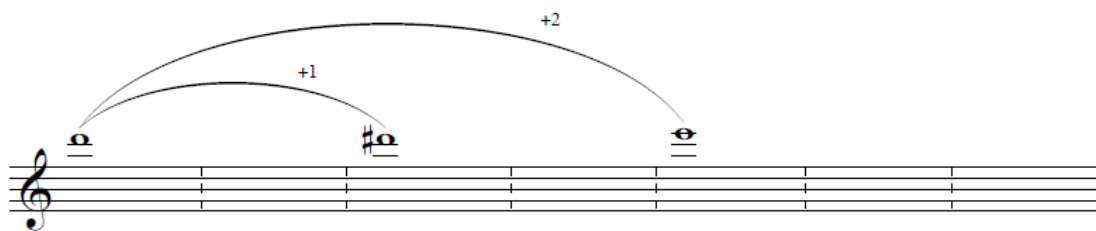
¹¹⁵ Several areas of similarity are found in version 1: mm. 1–4 (flute), mm. 18–22, 45–59, and 76–82 (soprano). In version 2, the areas are the same, but contain different measure numbers due to the opening vocalise: mm. 41–44 (flute), mm. 58–62, 85–99, and 116–22 (soprano).

¹¹⁶ The first note, D4, was transposed to D5 to better see the chromatic line between m. 61 and m. 72.

In versions 1 and 2, the ascending chromatic lines were occasionally incomplete with the chromatic pitches not always adjacent or sequential (see example 4.5, with missing E \flat). Here, the same is true. In this case, the absence of F and F \sharp in the chromatic line appears to have no structural significance. In m. 61, the D is shifted up an octave to better see the chromatic motion over the complete twelve bars. As evident in example 4.12, the first three notes of m. 61 originate from mm. 14–20, in which the flute foreshadows further motivic material to come.

Example 4.12

Beyer, *Have Faith!*, version 3, mm. 14–20



The two-progression line neume in example 4.12 is used in both voices, though it is primarily found in the flute line. This three-note motive is rhythmically diminished, yet unaltered in its pitches in mm. 59, 61–62, 65–71, 81–82, 83, 85, and 95–96.

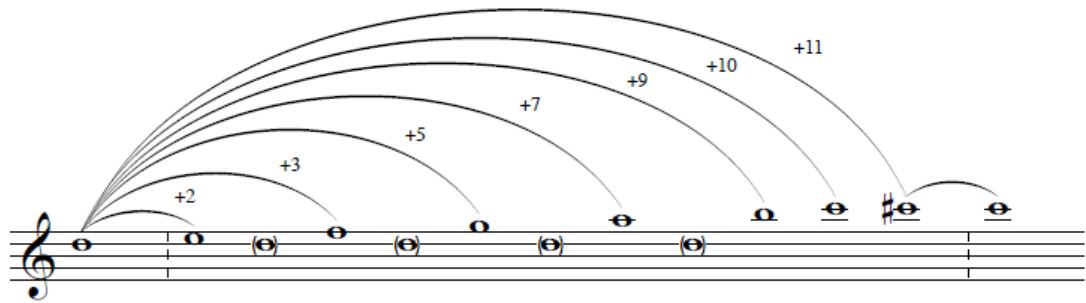
The closest relatable thematic segment found to the upward chromatic phrase in example 4.11 is in mm. 23–25. In this passage, the soprano sings a series of eleven fluctuating pitches in which a vacillating pattern beginning on a D5 creates an upward stepwise ascent before landing on a C \sharp 6. In mm. 63–69 (see example 4.11), the ascent

becomes rhythmically augmented and highly chromatic when compared to mm. 23–25.

Observe the stepwise motion in mm. 23–25:

Example 4.13

Beyer, *Have Faith!*, version 3, mm. 23–25



Notice how both examples 4.11 and 4.13 contain one repeated note (D) that serves as a base—though not necessarily the lowest pitch—from which the other notes stem.

Similar to the use of E \flat in versions 1 and 2, D is an often-repeated pitch in version 3.

Text Painting

Version 1

Due to the similarities between versions 1 and 2, the majority of text painting is discussed as it occurs in version 2. The only issue of note concerning version 1 is how to interpret the roles of the flute and of the voice, which is discussed in the following section. The addition of the introductory vocalise in version 2 seems to suggest an alternate interpretation of the roles for both soprano and flute.

Version 2

Beyer's text painting in version 2 guides the overall form of the piece. Primarily, and perhaps most obviously parallel to the opening text, the vocalise sung in the first forty measures is part of a larger dialogue between the singer and the nightingale.¹¹⁷ In this section, the voice is unaccompanied.

Example 4.14

Beyer, *Have Faith!*, version 2, mm. 1–40

The musical score for Example 4.14 consists of two staves: Flute and Soprano. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The Flute part is mostly silent, with a few notes in the first few measures. The Soprano part begins with a vocalise. The score includes the following annotations:

- pp* sempre with hardly any dynamical shading for either flute or voice
- use any vowel suitable

The Soprano part is divided into five systems of measures:

- Measures 1-9: Includes a triplet of eighth notes.
- Measures 10-19: Includes two triplets of eighth notes.
- Measures 20-27: Includes three triplets of eighth notes.
- Measures 28-33: Includes four triplets of eighth notes.
- Measures 34-40: Includes three triplets of eighth notes.

¹¹⁷ The opening text reads, “Here is a song, a song for you, oh, nightingale.”

The unaccompanied vocal line in example 4.14 retains a closely connected melodic structure that slowly expands its intervallic content over the first forty measures. The triplet rhythms in m. 6 become dominant starting in m. 23.

Since Beyer's first two versions were completed within a month of each other, it is possible that she specifically added the introductory vocalise (example 4.14) in the second version to highlight the meaning of the text and the dialogue between the two voices. For example, the first version's opening flute solo may be the song for (or presented to) the nightingale, but not the voice of the nightingale itself.¹¹⁸ This explanation creates an atmosphere not so much of conversation, but of narration in the voice as to the meaning of the song in the flute line. However, it would seem that in version 2, Beyer has chosen the flute to actually serve as the nightingale. With this alteration, the singer's opening statement "Here is a song—for you, oh, nightingale" then depicts the opening vocalise as a melody sung to the nightingale, leaving room for interpretation of a two-way dialogue. Thus, in version 2, the flute becomes the nightingale and the soprano becomes the narrator. As mentioned earlier, the flute is often associated with birds and birdsongs. This connotation makes the interpretation of the flute as the nightingale plausible. Considering the similar ranges applied to both the soprano and the flute in version 2, Beyer may have intended for the flute (nightingale) to be imitating the soprano as she sings her lines; the flute occasionally pauses on a sustained pitch before beginning afresh to mimic the singer.

The ending vocalise is much shorter than that in the introduction, but returns to reiterate a thematic summation of the introductory vocalise. The ending (last five

¹¹⁸ To see the introduction to version 1, revisit example 4.1 and observe mm. 1–13.

measures) is reminiscent of the last four measures of “Universal-Local,” in which Beyer ascends a tritone from a B to a repeated F. This tritone is significant given that it is arguably the strongest of dissonances, and one that Beyer uses quite often at cadential points in her music.

Example 4.15

Beyer, *Have Faith!*, version 2, mm. 124–38

Soprano

Compare example 4.15 with example 4.16:

Example 4.16

Beyer, *Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano*, “Universal-Local,” mm. 32–35

Soprano

All three of Beyer’s versions utilize *Sprechstimme*. In versions 1 and 2, *Sprechstimme* is present when the soprano asks, “A song of what?” Also, *Sprechstimme* is used on the first statement of “It does not matter.” In context, with *Sprechstimme* provided in italic type, the text reads:

Here is a song for you,
oh, nightingale!
a song of what?
of hope, of future, present, past?
it does not matter.
But essential is,
that you and I and all the others
have faith in things to come,
in things that passed, and are
and we must try to understand
and love and help each other,
have faith in things to come,
have faith!

The text is sometimes repeated in the music, and in this case, “it does not matter” is repeated twice. The second repetition does not utilize *Sprechstimme*. The *Sprechstimme* applied on the first repetition of “it does not matter” provides a more poignant touch to the text. This somewhat lethargic sound is then contrasted in the following lyrics, “But essential is, that you and I . . . have faith . . . and . . . try to understand and love and help each other.” As with Beyer’s other pieces, here *Sprechstimme* is employed to amplify the mood of the scenario. In “Total Eclipse” it was applied to create a more fearful and subdued atmosphere as the creatures on Earth trembled at the wondrous cosmic phenomenon. In *Ballad* it was utilized to express the shortness of breath from high altitude. Here, in *Have Faith!*, *Sprechstimme* is used to convey Beyer’s outlook on life. The text states that it does not matter if the song is about hope, past, present, or future. The essential matter is that we maintain a faith in these things, and that through that faith, people would try to understand, love, and help each other.

Version 3

Beyer creates an entirely new character for the flute line in version 3 that is even more birdlike than in the previous versions. Trills and rapid descending flourishes occur much more frequently in the flute in this version. A more intimate scenario is set by the initial dialogue between the alternating flute and vocal motives. The lack of overlapping voices and an increase in the frequency of hocket-like imitation found in mm. 14–18 indicate that the voices are in close proximity to each another and are engaged in conversation.

Example 4.17

Beyer, *Have Faith!*, version 3, mm. 14–17

The musical score for Example 4.17 consists of two staves: Flute (top) and Soprano (bottom). Both staves are in 3/8 time. The Flute staff begins at measure 14 with a trill on G4, followed by a rapid descending flourish. The Soprano staff has rests in measures 14 and 15, then enters in measure 16 with a vocal line. The Flute staff has rests in measures 16 and 17, then enters in measure 18 with another trill and flourish. The Soprano staff has rests in measures 17 and 18, then enters in measure 19 with a vocal line. The score illustrates an antiphonal dialogue between the flute and voice.

The antiphonal dialogue between the flute and voice comprises less than thirty percent of the work. Fifty percent of that overlapping portion consists of sustained trills. But for more than two-thirds of the work, the voice and flute carry on a back-and-forth exchange. In many cases, when one voice finishes, the next voice immediately enters. Such a case is shown in example 4.18; the voices do not overlap there, yet each voice carries on from where the other left off. This kind of writing contrasts with the previous versions of the piece, because whereas version 3 contains a predominantly antiphonal

dialogue, Beyer uses sustained notes to accompany the soprano throughout the majority of version 1 and version 2.

Example 4.18

Beyer, *Have Faith!*, version 3, mm. 42–58

The musical score consists of three systems, each with a Flute (Fl.) staff and a Soprano (S) staff. The lyrics are written below the Soprano staff.

- System 1 (Measures 42-48):** The Flute staff has rests from measure 42 to 48. The Soprano staff begins with the lyrics "gale night - in - gale a song of what?". Performance markings include *tr* (trill) above measure 43, *rallentando* above measures 44-48, and *a tempo* above measure 49. A triplet of notes is marked with a '3' above it.
- System 2 (Measures 49-53):** The Flute staff has rests from measure 49 to 53. The Soprano staff has the lyrics "of hope, of fu - ture, pre-sent, past?". A *stringendo* marking is placed above measure 50.
- System 3 (Measures 54-58):** The Flute staff has rests from measure 54 to 58. The Soprano staff has the lyrics "of hope? it does not mat - ter,". Performance markings include *tr* (trill) above measures 54, 56, and 58. A *a tempo* marking is placed above measure 55, with 'X' marks at the beginning and end of the phrase.

Immediately before the flute entrance in m. 49, the question is asked, “A song of what?” The question is expanded with two following questions, “Of hope, of future, present, past?” and “Of hope?” As indicated by the boxed rests, the flute (nightingale) waits

before answering each question and gives terse answers between each of the three questions.¹¹⁹

Sprechstimme is found again in version 3, but in this instance, it is used twice on the same repeated text “it does not matter.”¹²⁰ The focal point of the text culminates with “but essential is that you and I and all the others have faith, have faith in things to come, have faith, faith.” On the final reiteration of “faith” (m. 72–73) in example 4.19, the piece reaches its climax on a high D in the voice, completing the chromatic ascent from mm. 61–72.

¹¹⁹ The questions are asked in mm. 47–48, 50–52, and 54–55 as seen in example 4.18.

¹²⁰ The first instance of *Sprechstimme* is seen in example 4.18 in m. 57; it is used again in m. 59.

Example 4.19
 Beyer, *Have Faith!*, version 3, mm. 59–84

The musical score consists of three systems, each with a Flute (Fl.) and Soprano (S) part. The lyrics are written below the vocal line.

System 1 (mm. 59-64):

- Fl. (m. 59): Treble clef, key signature of one flat. Melody starts with a quarter note G4, followed by eighth notes A4, Bb4, C5, and a half note D5. A slur covers the first four notes.
- S (m. 59): Treble clef. Melody starts with a quarter note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, Bb4, C5, and a half note D5. A slur covers the first four notes. There are two 'X' marks above the first two notes.
- Lyrics: it does not mat-ter. But es-sen-tial is — that you and I and

System 2 (mm. 65-71):

- Fl. (m. 65): Treble clef. Melody starts with a quarter note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, Bb4, C5, and a half note D5. A slur covers the first four notes. The rest of the staff is filled with a wavy line.
- S (m. 65): Treble clef. Melody starts with a quarter note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, Bb4, C5, and a half note D5. A slur covers the first four notes. The rest of the staff continues with a similar melodic line.
- Lyrics: all the oth-ers have faith, have faith in things to come have faith,

System 3 (mm. 72-84):

- Fl. (m. 72): Treble clef. The staff is mostly empty with a few notes and rests.
- S (m. 72): Treble clef. Melody starts with a quarter note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, Bb4, C5, and a half note D5. A slur covers the first four notes. The rest of the staff continues with a similar melodic line. A box highlights the first four notes.
- Lyrics: faith — in things that passed, and are and we must try to un-der-stand and love and

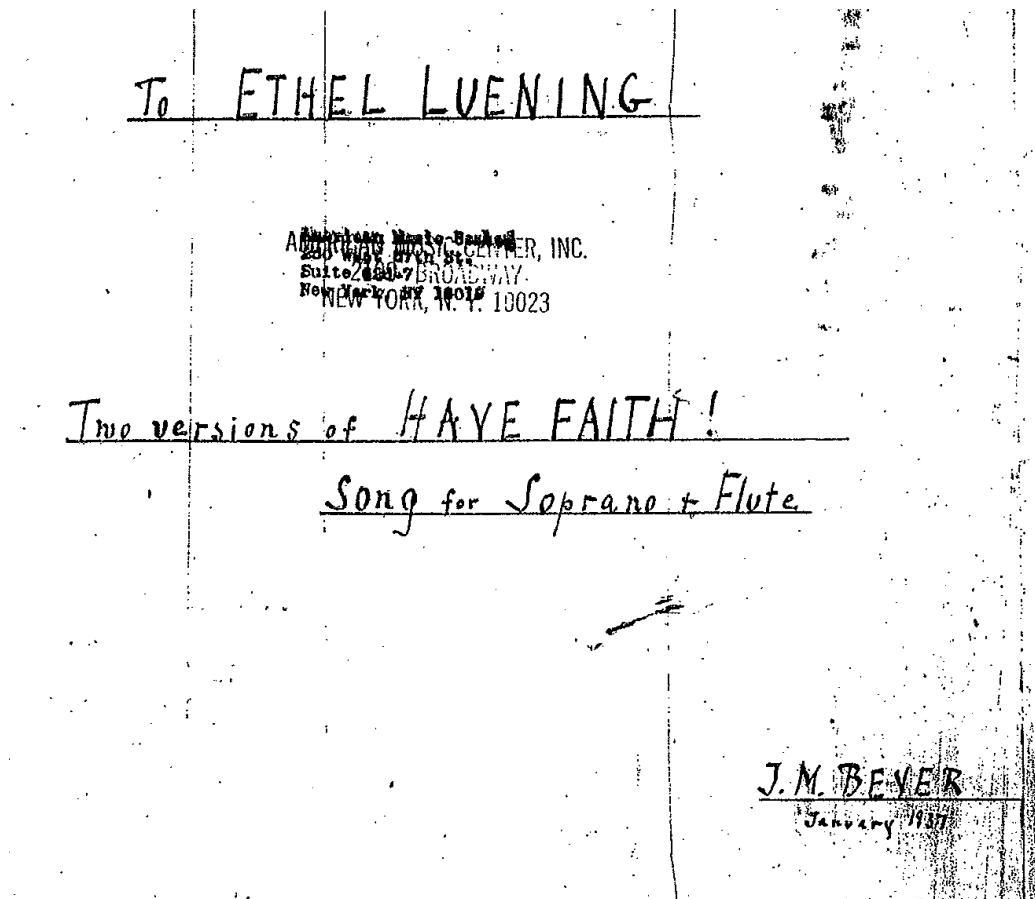
System 4 (mm. 79-84):

- Fl. (m. 79): Treble clef. Melody starts with a quarter note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, Bb4, C5, and a half note D5. A slur covers the first four notes. The rest of the staff continues with a similar melodic line.
- S (m. 79): Treble clef. Melody starts with a quarter note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, Bb4, C5, and a half note D5. A slur covers the first four notes. The rest of the staff is mostly empty.
- Lyrics: help each oth-er,

Performance Implications

The multiple versions available of this song present performers with the question of which version to perform. The first two versions are nearly identical, with the primary alteration being the addition of an introductory and closing vocalise; this may be why Beyer writes that there are only two versions in the cover page to *Have Faith!*¹²¹

Figure 4.1. Cover page to *Have Faith!*, 1937



¹²¹ The cover page to *Have Faith!* is found in the New York Public Library manuscript collection: Johanna Magdalena Beyer scores, JPB 82-77, Music Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. The figure above can be found in the scores to the Frog Peak Edition (ed. William Matthews).

Because version 2 appeared so quickly after version 1, it is likely that Beyer intended for version 2 to be performed. She most likely lumped the first two versions together in her reference to the versions on the cover page. As mentioned earlier, the passage that the soprano sings at the beginning and end of versions 1 and 2 adds to the text painting and overall meaning/structure of the work. Therefore, it would make sense to perform this version if one were to pick between the first two. However, version 3 has an entirely different feel, with the odd meter of 5/8, wide range, and vivacious rhythmic activity. Therefore, this version may also be performed; it is not necessarily a better or worse choice than selecting to perform version 2. It is up to the performers to choose which version, whether 2 or 3, they think would be more fitting for the venue in which they are to perform. Or they may perform both and let the audience decide which they prefer.

Another aspect to consider for performance practice is continuity. Beyer's use of continuity in versions 1 and 2 rely heavily on fragmenting the neumes and motives through intension (as seen in example 4.2, p. 100). This technique produces a prominent return to E \flat as a repeated tone. Whereas the flute introduction (in version 1) provides short motives, the E \flat is eventually repeatedly held, usually several measures at a time (as seen in example 4.3, p. 102). In the introduction, the flutist should consider bringing out the E \flat s at the end of each neume or motive to help bring distinction to that pitch. Because the pitch is held so often, it does not need to be overbearing. Throughout the remainder of the movement, the longer E \flat s should be played lightly in order to not overpower or distract from the text in the voice. Each of the flourishes between the held E \flat s (mm. 32, 35, 46, and 54 as seen in example 4.3) may be brought out louder than the

previous held note since the singer is usually holding a syllable at this time (so as to clarify the text). This use of some dynamics may help the performer to portray the song of a nightingale more convincingly.

Similar to the second version, version 3 begins with brief neumes and provides minor alterations to each of them. The rapid glissandos, 5/8 meter, and high range within each of these neumes in the flute line should help produce a more birdlike character than possible in the first two versions. Concerning the staccato notes at the end of each neume, the flutist should end each one rather abruptly, keeping an excited feel throughout the line. One can see the contrast between the vigorous flute line and the more relaxed soprano line in example 4.7 (p. 108).

In version 2, the intervallic motion shown in examples 4.4 and 4.5 (pp. 103 and 105) provides an important chromatic ascent that should be emphasized by the flutist and soprano. Here, the melodic material may be phrased in such a way to bring attention to the ascending motion that is so prominent. One way in which both performers can do this is by providing a slight crescendo over the ascending line while keeping the descending line (if there is one) at a softer or unchanging dynamic. The same can be said of version 3, with a very similar ascending motion being found examples 4.11 and 4.12 (pp. 111–112).¹²² Particularly in example 4.11, the singer should slowly intensify (dynamically) the phrase as the range progresses further upward. Example 4.13 (p. 113, in the voice) is too fast to provide any nuance of dynamics between the ascending and stagnant Ds, but intrinsically emphasizes a stepwise ascent.

¹²² See example 4.10 (p. 110) for an excerpt of mm. 23–25 also seen in 4.13.

Beyer's overall structure of versions 1, 2, and 3 is centered on a dialogue between the flute and soprano. As discussed earlier, the flute may represent the actual nightingale in both versions 2 and 3, with the singer presenting the song to the nightingale. This interpretation warrants several implications for performance. The first is in version 2, in which the soprano sings an introductory vocalise for the first forty measures (as seen in example 4.14, p. 114). This may be sung toward the flutist, creating a more intimate communication between both musicians in order to bolster the feeling of a dialogue. The antiphonal structure of version 3 is unlike the first two versions in that there is less overlap between the voices. As seen in examples 4.17 and 4.18 (pp. 118-119), the dialogue proceeds with one voice at a time, occasionally overlapping in areas such as shown in example 4.19 (p. 121). The musical contour of version 3 differs from version 2 in that it contains many more leaps, staccati, and a much wider range for both the soprano and the flutist. Along with these, the distinguishing feature in style between the versions is that version 3 is much more vivacious and spontaneous sounding. Accordingly, the performers may be more aggressive in their dialogue, singing or playing more animatedly and expressively than they might in version 2. Several ways in which the performers could do this would be to play/sing all trills and glissandos rapidly, to use crisp articulation on all the staccati, and to make sure to keep the "*pp sempre*" dynamic energized by using ample air support.

In all three versions, Beyer uses *Sprechstimme* on the first repetition of the phrase “it does not matter.”¹²³ At this point, the singer may convey an air of weariness to provide contrast between the more hopeful phrase that follows: “But essential is, that you and I and all the others have faith, have faith in things to come, in things that passed, and are.”

¹²³ In versions 1 and 2, Beyer uses *Sprechstimme* on the words “a song of what?” In version 3, she replaces the *Sprechstimme* with four G3s (one for each word). Version 3 also uses *Sprechstimme* in both instances when the phrase “it does not matter” occurs.

Conclusion

It is fascinating—and unfortunate—that such a stunning and thoughtful composer as Johanna Beyer should all but disappear from history. However, the same fate befell other composers at various times, including even Johann Sebastian Bach, whose works were largely forgotten for nearly a century after his death until Felix Mendelssohn redirected interest toward the composer through a revival of his St. Matthew Passion in the mid-nineteenth century. In a similar manner, it was not until 1988 that Beyer’s music began to be rediscovered.

The name Johanna Beyer had never come up in any form during my nine years of academic musical study, and though I had studied works by both Cowell and Crawford, her name had never been mentioned alongside theirs despite her importance in both their lives as a friend, advocate, fellow composer, and organizer. Yet even having studied the works of these composers, the ultramodern style that progressed under Cowell’s New Music enterprises in the late 1920s was unexplored territory for me.

When I first picked up the scores to Beyer’s music, I had no idea how much I would grow to appreciate her life and works. Now, after a full year of researching the composer and her songs for woodwind and voice, I am amazed at how emotionally gripping and expressive her works are. Beyer’s works for woodwind and voice—*Three Songs for Clarinet and Voice*, *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, and *Have Faith!*—provide the listener with an engaging and dramatic musical representation of profound poetry.

Below, I have provided a brief description of what the listener can expect to hear as he or she listens to the songs.

Three Songs for Clarinet and Soprano begins the first movement (“Total Eclipse”) with a mysterious clarinet introduction, followed with sparsely notated melodic lines as creatures of the earth begin to “bow in fear” upon seeing the eclipse. As light bursts over the surface of the moon, the music rises to a zenith of excitement before descending back into a low, heartbeat-like drum, as the astronomical phenomenon passes. The second movement, “To Be,” is lighter, almost dance-like in 6/8 meter. The music here is wistful, almost as if a daydream, with the clarinet rapidly mimicking the melodic line of the voice in an antiphonal dialogue. The final movement (“Universal-Local”) sounds otherworldly, with the eerily quiet clarinet ostinato underpinning the smooth and lyrical soprano line. The mood darkens and the rhythms become slightly more agitated as the poetry turns toward the “poor, forgotten creatures” of earth, dragging on.

Ballad of the Star-Eater is the longest of the songs, containing a lugubrious introduction as the primary motive droops down a tritone before creeping up two half notes. As the singer laments her hunger, she realizes she can feast upon the stars overhead. At this, the “climber” (soprano) begins to sing with higher range and greater intensity as the clarinet also climbs in excitement, increasing both range and speed. In the end, as the singer proclaims victory over her hunger, familiar melodic material returns, yet with a more defiant sounds on the words “I fear no hunger with sharp, cold pain...if it dare assail me I shall climb again.”

Have Faith!, despite the brevity of all three versions, provides the listener with an engaging dialogue between the flutist and the soprano. In versions 1 and 2, the flute line is reposed, with sporadic bursts of energy. The soprano sings in a reposed manner as well, reaching the zenith on the words “Have faith in things to come.” Version 3 is tantamount to an exploding ball of energy, with rapid flourishes and virtuosic passages found in both parts, utilizing a 5/8 signature and rapid hocket-like imitation between the voices.

Beyer’s approach to motivic development and text painting in these pieces for woodwind and voice reveal a captivating and unique method of composition. The music is aggressively atonal: enhanced with evocative text as seen above, dramatic musical lines in both voices, and a highly distinctive interpretation of dissonant counterpoint rules. By her application of dissonant counterpoint techniques, she pioneered her own voice through her liberal treatment of consonance (with the use of perfect intervals, including the P5, in “Total Eclipse”), use of repeated notes (typically influenced by the text), and profound treatment of intervallic motion (particularly the chromatic motion of the melodic lines in *Have Faith!*, found in all three versions). In fact, the predominance of dissonance used in her music served to dissonate the consonance, as discussed earlier in regard to Seeger’s treatise; when Beyer resolves using perfect intervals, the consonance sounds strange to the listener’s ear, which over the duration of the work grows more and more used to the dissonance. However, though she relied on the fundamental concepts surrounding dissonant counterpoint, Beyer did not allow the rules and guidelines from Seeger’s treatise to constrain her, but instead employed her own ingenuity to create riveting music.

Let us now review some of the ways in which Beyer's style of composition was unique. In *Three Songs*, Beyer's distinctive compositional style showed through her use of a two-note motive to construct both rhythmic- and pitch-centered commonality in "Total Eclipse," her antiphonal, yet shared motivic features in "To Be," and her polyphonic interweaving of both parts in "Universal-Local." The longest of her works for voice and instrument, *Ballad of the Star-Eater*, contains her most prolonged use of continuity—the evolution of one neume into another neume—and reveals her treatment of aggregate completion. In *Have Faith!*, Beyer's deliberate application of repeated notes and her common intervallic motion—upward chromatic lines—are written brazenly and help to create a unique sound, fitting for the avian-centric text.

Through many techniques including continuity, repetition, extension, and intension, Beyer constructs the foundations of all three of her songs for woodwind and voice, balancing these seamlessly with the poetry. The economic way in which she uses these techniques enables her to take a handful of neumes or melodic lines and construct entire movements surrounding them. Beyer's ability to interweave small-scale and large-scale text painting through these techniques, while still maintaining a rigorously dissonated fabric, is accomplished skillfully and effectively, as seen in the independent lines of "Universal-Local" and the hoquet-like interplay between lines in *Have Faith!*, version 3. By manipulating articulations, ornaments, extended techniques, range, and rhythm, she was able to construct lines and phrases with clear connections to the text. Even on a formal structural level, her use of text painting strongly influenced the overall organization and development of her works.

For the performer, the works are as interesting to play as they are to analyze. The songs are written virtuosically, with advanced writing in the soprano, clarinet, and flute parts. In all three works, the soprano is devoid of any pitch reference in the clarinet or flute lines. In this case, and considering the fact that the majority of singers do not have perfect pitch, the precision of the melodic lines is difficult to grasp. For the clarinet, difficulties abound in regard to both range and speed. *Three Songs* is demanding for both range and dynamic control (especially in the last movement, “Universal-Local”), and the second movement, “To Be,” requires lengthy, rapid passagework in both the upper clarion and altissimo. “Total Eclipse” requires agility and range, yet is not as quick-paced as the second movement. *Ballad*, what I consider to be the most difficult of the works, begins with a slower, more somber, pace, yet as the singer begins to describe climbing the “wall of the sky” to feast on the stars, the motion in the clarinet part becomes exceedingly “prickly,” utilizing a high range with fast, articulated, disjunct intervals.. As for the flute and soprano parts in *Have Faith!*, versions 1 and 2 are somewhat easier to manage than version 3, considering their more reposed mood. Considering their predominance of dissonance, the range (for all instruments) needed to play them, and their rhythmic complexity, these pieces will pose a challenge to the performers; yet the challenge is one worth taking. These songs are meant to be lived with for a time, so that one may become immersed in dissonant counterpoint and begin to hear dissonance as the “new” consonance, eventually becoming as at home with the dissonant as the consonant.

In order to better grasp the emotional weight of these works, I would encourage the reader to look more into the life of Johanna Beyer. The intense conflict and beauty

in both the poetry and music of her songs is suggestive of the many ways in which she struggled, yet always sought to keep faith in a better future. Perhaps *Have Faith!* reveals this best when she writes, “you and I and all the others have faith in things to come, in things that passed, and are, and we must try to understand and love and help each other . . . have faith!” Her fight to gain recognition for her oeuvre was difficult, especially as a German, female composer living in America from the 1920s through the 1940s. The nonchalant and even hostile attitudes she faced toward her music by critics and audiences alike was a frustration for her, but served to fuel her drive to strive harder and overcome obstacles. Alongside her fight for recognition, she battled poverty, surviving during the Great Depression from 1929 to 1939. She struggled financially and eventually was put on Home Relief, yet this—in combination with her socialist views—may have been a strong influence on her choice of poetry, particularly one poem about overcoming hunger, and another about having faith to help all peoples to understand each other. A further strain for Beyer included her deteriorating relationship with and unrequited love for Henry Cowell. And finally, in 1944, ALS would deal the last blow, ending her life. Calling Beyer’s life a struggle is perhaps an understatement, yet she persevered through it all. And now, many years after her death, she is beginning to gain a measure of the recognition that she sought and that she deserves.

My hope is that this document will prompt further analytical research into Beyer’s unexamined repertoire. As stated at the beginning of this document, two songs by Beyer based on Carl Sandburg poems are in need of research: *Three Songs* (1933) for soprano, piano, and percussion, and *Sky Pieces* (1933) for soprano and piano. Her choral works are also in need of analytical exploration: *The Robin in the Rain* (1935),

The Federal Music Project (1936), *The Composers Forum-Laboratory* (1937), *The People, Yes* (1937), and *The Main-Deep* (1937). In Beal's *Johanna Beyer*, she provides a chronological list of Beyer's known compositions dating from approximately 1931 to 1943. Many of these pieces remain to be analyzed and performed; with more time, however, I hope other researchers and performers will pick up the mantle to unveil additional aspects of Johanna Beyer's thoughtful compositional style in her other works.

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