UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

EXEMPLARISM IN CHRISTOPHER TIN'S *TO SHIVER THE SKY:*

A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF VIRTUE MORAL THEORY IN MUSIC

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

By

JOSHUA STEPHEN SMITH
Norman, Oklahoma
2025

Downloaded from SHAREOK. Persistent Handle URL: https://hdl.handle.net/11244/341205

EXEMPLARISM IN CHRISTOPHER TIN'S *TO SHIVER THE SKY:*
A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF VIRTUE MORAL THEORY IN MUSIC

A DOCUMENT APPROVED FOR THE
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

Dr. David Howard, Chair

Dr. Jacob Johnson

Dr. Vivian Luong

Dr. Randall Hewes

© Copyright by Joshua Stephen Smith 2025
All Rights Reserved.

Dedicated to my children, Dakoda and Dealan,
Your cheerleading was a constant reminder of the importance of exemplars in our lives.
I can only hope to one day be half the exemplar you believe me to be.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The first exemplars in my life were my parents, Darrell and Kelley. Words fail to provide enough gravitas to the depth of gratitude I feel for your love, presence, guidance and sacrifices. You remain my heroes, saints, and sages for every part of the journey, and I am better for it.

I wish to thank all those whom I have called teacher. I am humbled to share the same title and hope to leave a legacy that honors each of you. I am especially grateful for those who instilled a passion of music: Mrs. Kathy Bonds, Dr. Stephen Weber, Mrs. Yoon Soo Lim, and Dr. Rachel Cornacchio.

Thank you to those at The University of Oklahoma who have guided this journey. Dr. Vivan Luong, Dr. Jacob Johnson, Dr. Shanti Simon, and Dr. Randall Hewes; you inspire me. To my friend, Dr. Giovanni Corrodus, I thank God for bringing you into my life; your love and brotherhood along this journey have meant the world to me. To my mentor and professor, Dr. David Howard, it is a pleasure to be your student, and I am grateful to always have your example of faith, fatherhood, and passion for making music with others.

A heartfelt thanks goes to Dr. Jan Hanson for the indelible impact you have had on my life. You are an exemplary teacher who believed in me far before I believed in myself. Your encouragement and guidance have shaped me to be the educator I am today.

To my wife, Katie, you forever have my heart. I am amazed at the profoundly beautiful way you carry self-sacrifice, of which I have undeservingly called upon so often.

Soli deo gloria

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements……..v
List of Tables and Examples……..vii
Abstract……viii

Prologue……...1

Chapter 1: Introduction……4
Music and Philosophy……..7
Christopher Tin & *To Shiver the Sky*……...9
Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski & *Exemplarist Moral Theory*……..13
Scope & Limitations……..16

Chapter 2: A Primer in Philosophy and Exemplarist Moral Theory……19
Why Philosophy and What is Epistemology……19
Epistemic Conditioning: A Warning & Therapeutic Approach……21
Virtue & Music……..25
Exemplarism as a Framework……26
Direct Reference……27
Exemplars & Narrative……..28
Admiration & Emulation……...30
Conclusion……33

Chapter 3: Exemplarism in *To Shiver the Sky*……...35
Oratorio & Narrative……..35
The Exemplars……...39
The Hero……41
The Saint……42
The Sage……44
The Words of Exemplars……...45
Musical Emulation……46
A Survey of Exemplarism in *To Shiver The Sky*……47

Chapter 4: Towards an Exemplarist Musical Practice……...55
Emulation of Composers in “We Choose to Go to the Moon”……..56
Exemplarism in Coaching “Courage”……61
Constellation Admiration in “Astronomy”……63
Conclusion……72

Chapter 5: Conclusion……73

Bibliography……..76

Appendices……80

LIST OF TABLES AND EXAMPLES*

Table 3.1 Exemplars in Tin's *To Shiver the Sky*……39

Table 4.1 Text Analysis of Tin's "Astronomy"……64

Table 4.2 Formal Analysis of Tin's "Astronomy"……..65

Example 4.1 Mm. 162–169 of "We Choose to Go to the Moon" excerpt from full score…….58

Example 4.2 Comparison excerpts from Tin and Williams……59

Example 4.3 First thematic motives of Tin's "Astronomy"……...67

Example 4.4 Second thematic motive of Tin's "Astronomy," the *Astronomio* motive……..67

Example 4.5 Last three measures of reduced orchestra of Tin's "Astronomy"……..71

*Permission to reproduce above excerpts and other materials given by publisher:
© Tin Works Publishing LLC (BMI)
administered by Concord Music Publishing OBO The Musical Company
Reproduced by permission of Boosey & Hawkes
Solely for the use by Joshua Smith

ABSTRACT

Christopher Tin's *To Shiver the Sky* is an oratorio that explores the history of human flight, spanning from medieval conceptions of heaven to the achievement of landing a person on the moon. Through a multi-lingual choral-orchestral composition, Tin sets the words of pioneering figures in aviation to music, presenting their narratives as exemplars of human achievement. This paper argues that *To Shiver the Sky* embodies key elements of Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski's Exemplarist Moral Theory, which emphasizes the admiration of exemplars. I analyze the oratorio through the lens of Exemplarist Moral Theory by categorizing the figures featured in Tin's work into three types of exemplars: the hero, the saint, and the sage. Each movement of the oratorio is then examined to reveal how these exemplars' virtues are admired and emulated in the music. Finally, using specific movements of *To Shiver the Sky*, I propose three formative ideas for developing an exemplarist musical practice.

PROLOGUE

Have you ever come across something that you know is special but cannot quite put your finger on what it is? You sense that something is meaningful; however, the word or description is not known to you. I came to Christopher Tin's music this way. As a young teenager I was introduced to the video game Sid Mier's *Civilization IV* and consequently my first encounter of a Christopher Tin piece. The opening credits of the video game included visual vignettes of humanity's progress from primitive times to modern day, heralded by a symphonic choral work that I later found out was called "Baba Yetu." This music by Tin set a Swahili translation of The Lord's Prayer to an infusion of African percussion and vocalism with western art symphonic music. I was entranced. Quite literally, the effect of this music inspired me to devote the time in learning the necessary strategies and build the greatest civilization through gameplay.

I spent copious hours as a teenager conquering barbarians, settling cities, and attempting my own civilization's space race, cultural, or political victory in *Civ IV.* However, as a budding musician myself, I also found myself following Tin's career closely. A few years later, in 2009 when he released his debut album of his major vocal-orchestral works titled *Calling All Dawns*, I immediately purchased and upon listening was once again entranced through a soundscape that gave chills and captured my musician's heart, mind, and soul. The combination of world music sounds, world languages, and modern western art music performed by a large orchestra with vocal soloists and choir was fascinating beyond understanding to me. I listened to the album, which Tin has written as a song cycle, incessantly. I sought to discern the musical themes, musical gestures, and deeper connections that reoccurred throughout the work. Inherent from the first listen though was a sense of meaning that I could not quite place in words. Sure, I could speak to all the amazing aspects of the music that I enjoyed; however, to describe the sense of

meaning in a precise way always escaped me. To me, the genius of Tin's compositions was the juxtaposition of a western art form like choral-symphonic ensembles playing in western styles alongside instruments, languages, vocal and instrumental styles hearkening non-western cultures. The composition was more than the exoticism often invoked by composers, rather I sensed a real infusion that deeply respected the elements of each and created something new, something more.

Christopher Tin has since offered up two other major musical works exploring the planet's diverse cultures, languages, and musical stylings. He has released *A Drop That Contained The Sea* (2014) and *To Shiver The Sky* (2020). Each of these works uses cultural texts, musical stylings, languages, and even performers from all corners of the globe. As I have listened to, performed, and studied each one, I have continuously sensed that the compositions were on to something new, possibly something seminal in the evolution of Western art music. What became the fascination of my mind was the question, how does this work so well? How can it possibly all fit together seemingly without effort? How do these literal "foreign" elements to one another synthesize into musical gestures dialogue under Tin's pen so well that what is created is both familiar and innovative? The intrigue of these questions became the reason why I bought the study scores available in self-published form through Christopher Tin's website and felt compelled to study his works intently.

However, it wasn't through typical musical analyses that I discovered an answer to these questions. It was in philosophy. In January of 2020, I arrived in Norman, Oklahoma to begin doctoral studies at The University of Oklahoma and through the advice of many, I searched for a faculty member from outside the School of Music that would serve on a committee to guide my coursework and research. Christopher Tin's works were an early possibility. The interest was certainly there. Yet, without a clear direction for research into his works I began to seriously

explore other viable options. My interest in epistemology, the study of how humans come to know the things the know, had recently been peaked and I thought a possibility was to do research on an intersection of epistemology and musical knowing. So, I ventured to the Department of Philosophy on the university's website faculty pages and sought out an expert in epistemology. I discovered Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski's faculty page outlining her accomplishments in the field of epistemology and her published works on the subject. The curiosity in me determined that if I were to ask her to serve on my committee, I likely needed to know some of her work. I stumbled first upon, as if providentially, her work *Exemplarist Moral Theory* and instantly discovered an answer to my questions above.

The humor behind the last sentence is that as I came to understand Zagzebski's theory it continually called to mind my least favorite of Tin's published works at the time: *To Shiver the Sky*. I also look back and chuckle, because upon reaching out I learned she had just retired was unable to serve on my committee. However, I am indebted to her theory of exemplarism. I believe exemplarism is evident in all of Tin's compositional work and when applied explains why his music works it became the very key to unlock a door of personal appreciation for the true and mature artistry in *To Shiver the Sky*. Moreover, the marriage of this theory and Tin's *To Shiver the Sky* has served as a literal exemplar in my own life, each exemplifying the very virtue I draw upon to write this paper and offer my own ideas to the world: courage.

It is my sincerest hope that you too may find courage (or another virtue) through examining the exemplarism in Christopher Tin's *To Shiver the Sky* and begin to look for the virtuous in other music that you study, perform, hear, and enjoy.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"I want to be like that."

- anonymous (or allofus)

We may be unable to identify exactly *what* it is that we observe and admire about a person; however, we point to them and say, "I want to be like that." This common everyday occurrence is simplified in the quote above but exists in a much more complex domain of knowing that we rarely tend to in the mundanity of life. The domain of knowing is the object of study in philosophy. Herein lies a problem, although we likely have said the words "I want to be like that," many persons claim ineptness to matters of philosophy. At one time, even I was one of them. Yet, philosophy is happening in the statement "I want to be like that." As a matter of fact, philosophy is always happening. It is like breathing and consequently becomes as subsidiary as the inhale and exhale of air to and from our lungs. And like breathing, we often take it for granted; rarely attending to any part of the deep philosophy going on around us each and every day. This is not necessarily an indictment, but certainly a call to awareness.

Philosophy is practical. Admittedly, like many other fields of study, there are many aspects of philosophy that easily live above even the most aspirational reach of my personal understanding. Yet, the conviction remains. Philosophy is as practical to the existence of humans as the finger we point with to give directions or the mouth we eat with to nourish our bodies. Philosophy is, however, an application of human study through theorizing on life's biggest

questions.[1] And theorizing seems anti-practical. If I told you the physics or mathematical theories behind riding a bike, you might roll your eyes with the thought that you learned to ride a bike by *doing it* not by theorizing about it (possibly painfully so). Yet, the very terms, like "balance" and "speed," often used when instructing bike riding are invoking the theories of physics and mathematics behind riding a bike. This is just one example of when theorizing about such life things can be useful. Just like a practical theory of physics or mathematics may make life easier for the rider, committing to being good philosophers may also make other human problems a bit more manageable.

The practicality of philosophy is what led to this paper. As a musician, I lacked a critical theory to explain something I intuited to be true and real when contemplating the music of my favorite contemporary composer, Christopher Tin. Tin's music was more than just enjoyable to listen to, it was a conundrum that I could not explain. I heard elements of musical worlds that often sat juxtaposed in my mind become fused under his pen. Elements a French lyrical art song performed by a symphonic chorus accompanied by an EDM (electronic dance music) drum machine in one movement, followed by a soprano solo accompanied by harp with the text of a Catholic Requiem mass sung in Latin, and a Bollywood-style setting of sacred texts of Hinduism sung in Sanskrit five movements later.[2] In his third multi-movement composition, *To Shiver the Sky,* Tin creates what I consider is the closest to conventional Western art classical music in his early multi-movement works; however, it still confounds due to his use of multiple world languages, fusion of historical and contemporary compositional aesthetics, and seeming

[1] I like how Esther Lightcap Meek summarizes what are considered the "big questions" of philosophy and connects them to the various fields of philosophy: "What is really real? (metaphysics or ontology). How do I know it? (epistemology). What is right and good? (metaethics and axiology). What does it mean to be human? (philosophical anthropology)." *A Little Manual for Kowing*, 1.

[2] These are descriptions of movements from Christopher Tin's first multi-movement work, titled *Calling All Dawns* (2005). The movements referred to are V. *Rassemblons-Nous*, VI. *Lux Aeterna*, and X. *Sukla-Krsne*.

juxtaposed literary ideas coming together to create beautiful art. All I could definitively say was, "it works." I bought the study score, could describe all the theoretical musical facts that I observed in my analyses of formal structure, harmony, melodic contour, etc. and yet the real reason "it works" eluded me.

The answer would not be found in music theory (here, I mean the harmony and structures of music) or in the historical studies of musicology. It would come through philosophy, specifically the virtue moral theory of exemplarism. Exemplarist Moral Theory, or exemplarism, describes the formation of our moral domain by placing the emotion of admiration at the center of the how we come to know we want to "be like that."[3] As indicated in its name, the premise of the theory is that we identify exemplars through the emotion of admiration and begin to investigate their virtues through the act of emulation. Virtues, or those attributes of the exemplar we find admirable, become the *that* of "I want to be like that," after a period of reflection where we have emulated their admirable life.

In this paper, I propose that the musical gestures found in Christopher Tin's oratorio *To Shiver the Sky* (2020), "work" because of exemplarism. Upon analysis, the unchanging denominator in every movement Tin features exemplars in literature, music, even culture and emulates the virtues we admire in them through composing music. In other words, performing, hearing, or even studying his music is both saying, "I want to be like that," and imitating them to actually "become like that." To illustrate, imagine a child putting on the clothes of an adult and stumbling around in them. Music can be a way of putting on the clothes of ideas, words, and even sounds of another human being. To "live a day in their shoes," as we often say. With enough time, the child grows to fit into the clothes of the adult, or more likely, buy clothes that

[3] Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019), 1.

resemble what the child admired about themselves wearing the adult clothes. Likewise, with enough musicking one may "fit" that which they find virtuous of the exemplar. Tin's masterful curation of exemplars and the skillful crafting of musical gesture to emulate the admirable is *why* the vast spectrum of musical elements bridged in his music are compliant and even synergistic. Therefore, we will metaphorically try on these musical clothes and imagine what we may become as we study *To Shiver the Sky*.

MUSIC AND PHILOSOPHY

This is a paper on the convergence of music and philosophy. Specifically, this convergence is in the realm of analysis and identifying meaning through prioritizing the philosophical considerations of exemplarism. The empirical emphasis to musical analysis has resulted in years of music studies on the useful theoretical framework of the sounds we hear: circle of fifths, harmonic progressions, German/Italian/French 6ths, secondary dominants, cadential patterns, etc. Meaning is then applied with the additional facts supplied by the history of the composer or the genesis of the piece; however, rarely is meaning in music analyzed through a specific lens of virtue moral building such as exemplarism. Therefore, this study is an attempt to make exemplarism *a priori* in the observation of musical analysis and consequently observing the structural analyses as supporting philosophical reasonings.

According to contemporary philosopher Esther Lightcap Meek, in our very existence as artists we are both creating and philosophizing.[4] Thus, a composer crafts not only with the elements of music but also the elements of philosophy. In the music of Christopher Tin, I believe

[4] Meek writes: "You are *already* philosophical—you only need to have been born. You are *already* artful: you already put things together creatively to produce new things. You are both of these things, even if you have never made a profession of either of them, even if you didn't already realize you are." *Doorway to Artistry,* 2.

philosophy, particularly exemplarism, is at the core of understanding each of his three early multi-movement works (2009–2020). However, this paper will introduce exemplarism in Christopher Tin's music through a focused analysis of his oratorio *To Shiver the Sky*, a work concerning humanity's pursuit of flight.

I have a threefold purpose in writing this paper.

First, I have the purpose of introducing exemplarism to the field of musical analysis. The intention is not to claim that exemplarism is a comprehensive analysis unwilling to benefit from other types of analyses. Rather, I intend to offer it as an additional tool in which to gain insight to musical meaning.

Second, I have the practical purpose of tracing the evidence of exemplarism in Christopher Tin's *To Shiver the Sky* as an application of how to analyze music for identifying compositional gestures of admiration and emulation. This survey is offered as an initial exemplar to any of the following possibilities of further study, which include but are not limited to: analyses of Tin's other compositions, analyses of historical or contemporary compositions, compositional techniques and methods, or providing an example of music in philosophical considerations.

Third, I want to demonstrate the implications of studying virtue moral theory in music through proposing an exemplarist musical practice. I engage three of the movements from *To Shiver the Sky* as models of exemplarist musical practice. This is an answer to the question does this kind of study make a difference in the life of a person.

For the conductor or performer of Tin's *To Shiver the Sky*, the survey offers systematic insights that can aid the preparation scores, program notes, and a performance of the piece. For the musicologist, exemplarism may prove to be helpful in analysis of other compositions

throughout all of history. For the philosopher, the introduction of music as an applied form of Exemplarist Moral Theory may stimulate more research in the area of performance and virtue theory.

CHRISTOPHER TIN & TO SHIVER THE SKY

Christopher Tin (b. 1976) is an Asian American composer with over 40 published works that span the genres of film and video game scoring to contemporary oratorio and opera. This broad plane of capability can be attributed to his early years of musical influence. Born in northern California to immigrants from Hong Kong, Tin's ear was not only inclined towards classical art music, but also contemporary popular genres like jazz, musical theater, and world music.[5] He started composing at the age of 17 when he wrote a musical for his local high school. Although the audience did not connect with his storyline, they were enthusiastic about his music and this began his serious consideration of becoming a composer.[6]

Undoubtedly, this interest grew as a university student where Tin studied both music and English literature at Stanford University, earning a Bachelor of Arts in each. In addition to classical studies, Tin honed his skills in contemporary styles like jazz, world music, musical theater, and a cappella by performing and directing student groups and theatrical productions.[7] He went on to earn a Master of Arts degree in Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities with an emphasis in film theory from Stanford. Upon receiving the first Fulbright Scholarship awarded for film music in 1999, he also took a Master of Music degree in Composition for Screen with

[5] Christopher Tin, "Full Length Biography," Christopher Tin – Composer, accessed March 17, 2025, https://christophertin.com/pages/biography.
[6] Christopher Tin, "Christopher Tin talks to Joshua Weilerstein," interview by Joshua Weilerstein, nkoda, June 18, 2020, 48:20, https://youtu.be/CIcgUVDLoFI?si=TOa5o_MmyFbdDFEz: .
[7] "The 'shakti' of sound," *The Hindu*, Mar 27, 2003, archived from the original on August 21, 2003, retrieved December 31, 2012, accessed March 29, 2025, https://web.archive.org/web/20030821140518/http:/www.thehindu.com/thehindu/mp/2003/03/27/stories/2003032700930100.htm.

Distinction from the Royal College of Music in London. The influence of studies in film and humanities are quite clear in his interest to compose grand-scale music with thematic motifs that highlight the world's great literature, cultures, extinct species, and languages.

Tin has always been fascinated by the voice, language, and the art of music through vocal works.[8] However, it was his film music work that helped launch his early career. Tin's early years after university were in Los Angeles and to find work, Tin leveraged an entrepreneurial spirit and "sent 'would-you-help-me' packets to a range of top film composers" to network and gain industry and artistic mentorship.[9] Through his disciplined networking, he secured work as an assistant to composers like Hans Zimmer (b. 1957) and Joel McNeely (b. 1959), ultimately building lasting relationships with five major film composers.

Upon finally earning screen credits and greater opportunities in the industry, Tin was approached by a former roommate to write music for a video game that would launch him into noteworthiness.[10] In 2005, after legal reasons kept developers of videogame *Civilization IV* from using their intended music, Tin's former Stanford roommate, Soren Johnson, commissioned Tin to write a theme song for the opening credits. Many people were and still are introduced to Tin's theme song for *Civilization IV*: "Baba Yetu," a vibrant setting of The Lord's Prayer in Swahili that features film worthy vocals by soloists and choir accompanied by orchestra with world percussion. The popularity of which inspired Tin to create his first multi-movement work as a career professional, *Calling All Dawns* (2009). "Baba Yetu" became the first movement in a 12-

[8] Christopher Tin, "Choral Music Playlist by Christopher Tin," quote from playlist description on Spotify, accessed March 29, 2025.
[9] Jesse Oxfeld (May 2004), "Getting in Synch," *Stanford Magazine*, Archived from the original on January 26, 2018, retrieved May 16, 2017, accessed March 29, 2025, https://web.archive.org/web/20180126223833/https:/alumni-esc.stanford.edu/get/page/magazine/article/?article_id=35936.
[10] "Looking Back... Civilization IV," CVG, July 6, 2006, archived from the original on August 8, 2014, retrieved December 31, 2012, accessed March 29, 2025, https://web.archive.org/web/20140808054803/http:/www.computerandvideogames.com/142558/interviews/looking-back-civilization-iv/?page=2.

movement, three-part song cycle that debuted as a self-released album. Tin was brought to greater attention by winning the 2011 Grammy Awards for Best Crossover Album for *Calling All Dawns* and Best Arrangement, Instrumental and Vocals for "Baba Yetu," the first Grammy awarded to music from a video game.[11]

This success laid groundwork for Tin to compose six more multi-movement works for choir available for performance. Following those mentioned previously, Tin wrote *The Lost Birds: An Extinction Elegy* (for extinct bird species released in 2022), *Song Offerings* (a setting of Rabindranath Tagore's *Gitanjali* released in 2024), and *Transfigurations* (a setting of poetry from Charles Anthony Silvestri released in 2020).[12] Each of these works feature choir with instrumental accompaniment of various kinds.

These large-scale works demonstrate a unique approach in Tin's compositional process of *concept* which is found in much of his music. Despite the incredibly varied output of style and genre his music evokes, Tin is always composing to achieve a single artistic concept. In one interview, he states, "I don't like to write music just for the sake of music, and I don't like to release albums that are just random compendiums of unrelated music. I think one should record concept albums, large-scale works based around unifying concepts."[13] Tin calls them concept albums, citing the influence of listening to bands like Pink Floyd and The Who while growing up as the inspiration.[14] Tin's compositional approach pairs well with the recording industry. Much

[11] "Artists – Christopher Tin," Grammy Awards, accessed March 15, 2025, https://www.grammy.com/artists/christopher-tin/14405.
[12] "Works – Multi-movement," Christopher Tin, accessed March 29, 2025, https://christophertin.com/blogs/works/tagged/multi-movement.
[13] Christopher Tin, "In Conversation with Christopher Tin," interview by Prudence Distasio, LinkedIn (October 20, 2025), https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/royal-college-music-alumni-network-prudence-distasio.
[14] Christopher Tin, "Whispers of the Plain – Christopher Tin," interview by Simon Smith, Higher Plain Music (September 30, 2009), https://higherplainmusic.com/2009/09/30/whispers-of-the-plains-christopher-tin/.

of Tin's music is commissioned, composed, and published as part of a larger project, typically his self-released albums.

His oeuvre also includes works outside of the choral-orchestral genre, too. For the film, television, and gaming industry Tin has credits such as *Crazy Rich Asians*, *X2: X-Men United*, *Hoodwinked Too: Hood vs. Evil*, *PGA Tour 2K21, Off World*, and more. He has two cross—genre collaborations; one with hip-hop artist TyDi that created an EDM album with orchestra and another with producer Kametron that created an EDM album setting music to renaissance poetry. His most recent collaboration was in 2024 with the Washington National Opera where he was commissioned to compose a new ending to Giacomo Puccini's *Turandot*.[15]

At the time of this writing, he is the recipient of two Grammy awards and continues to receive numerous prestigious commissions. He serves as the Honorary Artistic Director of the United Nations Chamber Music Society, Honorary President of the International Choral Festival Wales, and is a patron of El Sistema France.[16] He lives in Santa Monica, California with his wife and daughter.

In 2020, Tin signed an exclusive record deal with Universal's Decca Gold label and released his debut label album, *To Shiver the Sky*.[17] Employing a method already proven successful, Tin took his commissioned opening credits song for a subsequent release of the video game franchise, *Civilization VI,* and "use it as a theme for a much larger work, about the history of flight. A work that progresses through the eras of and tells the story of those who dreamed of

[15] Christopher Tin, "Let's Go There - "A Turandot for Today" with the Chinese American Museum - Washington National Opera," interview by Eric Hing Tao Hung, May 6, 2024, accessed March 18, 2025, https://youtu.be/EEXly6XThNg?si=EsTmZE18Rth1xNrN.
[16] Christopher Tin, "Full Length – Biography," Christopher Tin, accessed March 18, 2025, https://christophertin.com/pages/biography.
[17] Sharon Kelly, "Grammy Award-Winning Composer Christopher Tin Signs To Decca Gold," udiscovermusic, June 20, 2020, accessed March 14, 2025, https://www.udiscovermusic.com/classical-news/christopher-tin-to-shiver-the-sky/.

flying and those who actually achieved it."[18] Taking inspiration from texts by historical visionaries engraved in the chronicles of leaving gravity behind, Tin created an oratorio on the "history of flight, and mankind's quest to conquer the heavens."[19] This is his third multi-movement work and its original orchestration is for orchestra, soprano and tenor soloists, female vocal trio, optional children's chorus, and large chorus.

Tin engaged the fanbase of his music to produce this album through a Kickstarter crowdfunding campaign that broke records of previous classical crowdfunded recording projects. The Kickstarter campaign began in January of 2018 and was fully funded after completing 8 stretch goals by March of 2018 with $221,415 raised to complete the recording project.[20] The composition and recording project were finished prior to 2020; however, the COVID-19 pandemic postponed the premier performance of the piece until 2022 when the world premier live performance was held on May 15 at The Anthem in Washington, D.C. The performance was given by the US Air Force Band, Choral Arts Society of Washington, Modern Medieval, and conducted by Christopher Tin.

LINDA ZAGZEBSKI & EXEMPLARIST MORAL THEORY

Tin's compositional features in *To Shiver the Sky* can be analyzed through the philosophical framework created in what philosopher Linda Zagzebski calls exemplarism. In her book *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, Zagzebski constructs a theory on how we acquire virtue through admiring and emulating persons that have attributes of supreme excellence.[21] The theory

[18] Christopher Tin, "Behind-the-Scenes: *Sogno di Volare,"* YouTube video, July 12, 2020, 3:17 to 3:24, https://youtu.be/vU6TQB_Hpks?si=7dPo0mxrwa08ITuq.
[19] Tin, "Preface," in *To Shiver The Sky*, comp. Tin (Tin Works Publishing 2020), iii.
[20] Christopher Tin, "To Shiver the Sky: the Third Album by Christopher Tin," Kickstarter, accessed March 22, 2025, https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/christophertin/new-album-by-christopher-tin-baba-yetu-civilizatio.
[21] Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, 2.

and framework will be further defined and discussed in Chapter Two, but the central tenets of exemplars, admiration, and emulation in her theory provide critical insight to this study of Tin's oratorio and therefore worthy of biographical mention here.

Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski (b. 1946) shares two common biographical facts with Christopher Tin. A native of California, Zagzebski was born in southern part of the state and eventually earned a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy in 1968 from Stanford University.[22] She took a Master of Arts from the University of California, Berkley in 1969 and a Doctor of Philosophy from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1979. She held a faculty appointment at Loyola Marymount University, 1979–1999, before becoming the George Lynn Cross Research Professor Emerita and Kingfisher College Chair of the Philosophy of Religion and Ethics Emerita at The University of Oklahoma.[23]

In addition to her professorship, she is a widely respected writer and lecturer in the field of epistemology. Zagzebski was honored with the invitation to deliver the 2015 Gifford Lectures at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. She has also given the McCarthy Lectures at the Gregorian University in Rome (2006), the Wilde Lectures in Natural Religion at Oxford (2010), the Kaminski Lectures at the Catholic University of Lublin, Poland (2011), and the Olaus Petri Lectures at the University of Uppsala, Sweden (2011) just to name a few. Her books are published with Oxford University Press, Princton University Press, Cambridge University Press, Wadsworth Press, and University of Notre Dame Press with several books being translated into at least five other languages.[24]

---

[22] "Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski," John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, accessed March 20, 2025, https://www.gf.org/fellows/linda-trinkaus-zagzebski/.
[23] Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski, "Faculty Biography," The University of Oklahoma, accessed March 20, 2025, https://www.ou.edu/cas/philosophy/people/faculty/linda-zagzebski.
[24] Zagzebski, Curriclum Vitae, 2021.

She wrote *Exemplarist Moral Theory* (2017) following her invitation to lecture on the topic at her 2015 Gifford Lectures. In this work, Zagzebski adroitly explores the relationship between direct reference theory and the human ability to admire exemplars. She argues that recognizing and emulating the virtuous qualities of these exemplars is a path to mapping the moral domain within oneself. This innovative approach to virtue theory introduces the concept of admiration as a core means of virtue development. Although exemplarist moral theory (EMT) is broad enough to be out of the bounds of religious study, Zagzebski's first exploration of exemplarism can be found in her earlier work *Divine Motivation Theory* (2004) which introduces exemplarism from the explicitly religious perspective. Since 2017, EMT has been employed in the research considerations found in journals for theology, religious ethics, moral education, educational theories, military ethics, media ethics, and more.

Her books on exemplarist theories are among several considered by critics to be important, groundbreaking, and exciting work for the field of philosophy, especially in epistemology, virtue epistemology, and virtue ethics. Other important works in philosophy include, *Virtues of the Mind: An Inquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), *Epistemic Authority: A Theory of Trust, Authority, and Autonomy* (Oxford University Press, 2012), *The Two Greatest Ideas: How Our Grasp of the Universe and Our Minds Changed Everything* (Princeton University Press, 2021).

Zagzebski remains a celebrated philosopher. In 2022, I had the great privilege of attending a conference held to highlight her contributions and work in the field of philosophy at The University of Oklahoma. Philosophers from all over the nation came to deliver papers that highlighted her extensive pioneering in the field, critiqued her works with fullest respect, and attributed their own successes in philosophical endeavors to her influence. I distinctly remember

one conference paper presentation where the author held up her well-used and well-loved copy of *Virtues of the Mind*, annotated with numerable highlights, marked by tabs, and leafing pages prone to falling with autumnal descent. A testament to the very theory of exemplarism illustrated with her own life.

SCOPE & LIMITATIONS

In writing a paper on exemplarism and Christopher Tin's *To Shiver The Sky*, three things have been evident: 1) there is a lack of scholarly writing on Christopher Tin or his works, 2) while scholarly writing on exemplarism or EMT in other fields has already germinated, the field of music or music analysis has not intersected with Zagzebski's theory yet, and 3) analyzing *To Shiver the Sky* through the lens of EMT has produced a novel approach to personal musical practice.

Therefore, this paper takes the form of a primer on creating an exemplarist musical practice. It will consider first the foundational question of why philosophy in music analysis through epistemic means is valuable, then progress by sharing the framework of Linda Zagzebski's Exemplarist Moral Theory, followed by a survey of exemplarism in Tin's *To Shiver the Sky*, and finally conclude with three ideas toward a proposed exemplarist musical practice through the analysis of select movements.

As of this writing, scholarly discourse surrounding Christopher Tin and his music is limited, with a single entry in *Grove Music Online* serving as beginning and end to the available literature at the time of this writing.[25] Any additional insights regarding Tin, his music, or his broader artistic contributions will be derived from existing interviews and articles that discuss

[25] Westover, *Grove Music Online*.

recent performances of his compositions. These sources are numerous and found on the platforms of YouTube and specific organization's websites.

In Chapter Two, I deal with the conditioning of one's epistemology and introduce Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski's *Exemplarist Moral Theory* as the primary text applied to *To Shiver the Sky*. Given that there is no current literature on EMT in music, the strengths of Zagzebski's theory is its ability to interest a broad scope of disciplines and researchers through its distinctive non-conceptual approach. This non-conceptual approach keeps theory focused on actual exemplars as "individuals, not concepts" [26] and therefore the "good person" is the object of admiration *not* the "concept of a good person."[27] For these reasons, there is a great deal of literature on exemplarism in other fields. These will be considered throughout the paper as is helpful to the application of her theory to specific concepts.

The works of Esther Lightcap Meek (b. 1953) and Michael Polanyi (1891–1976) provide another voice from the parent philosophical branch of virtue theory: epistemology. In *Loving to Know: Introduction to Covenant Epistemology*, Meek presents Michael Polanyi's concept of subsidiary-focal integration as a central mechanism in the process of knowing. In *Doorway to Artistry: Attuning Your Philosophy to Enhance Your Creativity*, she argues that it is engagement and invitation that cultivate creativity for the artist. For Meek, this engagement and invitation is akin to the disclosure of two entities within a relationship. These concepts complement Zagzebski's use of direct reference theory, admiration, and emulation in her exemplarist moral framework, enriching the understanding of how knowledge and virtue development are interconnected.

[26] Birondo, Review.
[27] Watson, review, 4.

Chapter Three builds out the application of exemplarism to the analysis of Tin's oratorio, *To Shiver The Sky*. Examining Tin's choices in genre, text authorship, text sources, linguistic and compositional styles of the entire work are the backdrop of how exemplarism provides insights to the work. Each movement's chosen exemplar in aviation will be considered within the framework Zagzebski's categories and general compositional features of each movement identified as emulation.

In the final chapter, I propose a new musical practice on the premise of exemplarism and a corresponding charge of ethical musicality. *Ethical Musicality,* recently authored by music therapist Gro Trondalen, offers one of the few interdisciplinary scholarly works addressing philosophical considerations of applied ethics and music. Trondalen does not deal with exemplarism directly. Yet, she writes relevant chapters on ethics as a discipline presented in historical discourse, the practice of ethics within real-life musical experiences, and introduces a reflexive concept of how "ethical musicality comprehends a philosophical-theoretical level to real-life experiences and vice versa."[28] This scholarship supports the claim in this paper that philosophical considerations are necessary in a musician's analysis. I provide an analysis of three movements of *To Shiver The Sky* to demonstrate possibilities toward an exemplarist musical practice.

[28] Gro Trondalen, *Ethical Musicality*, 1st ed., United Kingdom: Routledge, 2023.

CHAPTER II:

A PRIMER IN PHILOSOPHY AND EXEMPLARIST MORAL THEORY

Music studies have always asked the questions of how, why, and to what end. These have been my urgent questions ever since I came across Christopher Tin's music. His music is full of things that "do not go together," yet they all seemingly fit together. It works. And because it is working, it draws me to it. It garners my affections and tugs at my thoughts. So, I ask the questions: *How* does it work? *Why* does it work? And because it works, does it have a purpose? *To what end* does this music behold me? Likely, you have asked these questions of music too. Maybe you recall music that has a similar effect on you. Music that makes you wonder a bit more. Music that you listen to on repeat or that you might play on your instrument often. Possibly, music that you take time to study even. The material considered, observed, and dissected through these questions may be music; however, the questions themselves are philosophy.

WHY PHILOSOPHY AND WHAT IS EPISTEMOLOGY?

Indulge me for a moment to lay the groundwork for why philosophy matters in the analysis of music, then an introduction to Exemplarist Moral Theory will prove more valuable. Discovering exemplarism in Christopher Tin's music was the result of asking different questions than usual for a musician. Throughout any formal training, most musicians are taught what music is through literacy. Phrases like "Every Good Boy Does Fine" and "Good Boys Do Fine Always" serve as mantras for the student who wants to know music because most training begins with the "what" of music. Consequently, musicians enter greater levels of musical knowing by obtaining

memorized fundamentals with the same approach of data mining that we equate to current artificial intelligence capabilities. Similarly, only answering the question of "what" is in the music leaves the philosophical questions unanswered. For Tin's *To Shiver the Sky*, the *what* is a multi-movement large choral-orchestral work featuring a libretto compiled with words from historical figures on the topic of human flight. The question of "what" is often answered by knowing all the aspects of music literacy, like formal structures, harmonies, cadential figures, etc., to talk about a piece of music; however, it is in the questions of *how*, *why*, and *to what end* that we satisfy that sense of knowing it *really*.

If philosophy, as Esther Lightcap Meek claims, "concerns the profoundest wonders of our lives as humans," then understanding the basics of philosophy allows us to greater attend to our knowing.[29] Specifically, epistemology, or the philosophical study of how we come to know things can aid us in answering these questions. As mentioned in Chapter One, this epistemic work is happening already, and we take for granted that we do this work without fully understanding it. Meek goes so far to claim that "we are epistemological beings: we live out an orientation to knowing, whether we 'know' it or not."[30] Her life's work is dedicated to bringing the epistemological conditioning we experience into practical life so that our understanding of knowing can inform what she calls our "knowing venture." In other words, knowing the basics of epistemology makes us better knowers at knowing.

To further illustrate, you are reading these words as fully known in their contextual meaning. As a child, "one fish, two fish" was formative to your understanding that individual words paired together convey greater meaning. What was once focused on, the individual meaning of words, has since become secondary, so the concept presented by all the words

[29] Meek, *A Little Manual for Knowing*, 1.
[30] Ibid, 4.

together becomes primary to your consciousness. Michael Polanyi, a 20th century scientist-turned-philosopher, describes it this way:

> Even while listening to a speech or reading a text, our focal attention is directed towards the meaning of the words, and not towards the words as sounds or as marks on a paper. Indeed, to say that we read or listen to a text, and do not merely see it or hear it, is precisely to imply that we are attending focally to what is indicated by the words seen or heard and not to these words themselves.[31]

Therefore, it can be said, that knowing the basic words and their meanings makes us better readers and consequently better knowers of ideas. Being readers rather than just observers is what Meek calls our "epistemic act."[32] Epistemology is the attempt to pinpoint our epistemic acts and give us insight to the acquirement of knowledge.

Epistemic Conditioning: A Warning & Therapeutic Approach

In the West, however, our historical epistemic conditioning has not relied heavily on this notion of embodied epistemology. Until very recently, our conditioning has been a result of the scientific revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries and the ensuing skepticism of the Enlightenment. Knowledge and knowing became established in what can be proven or disproven by facts through a framework of constant empirical questioning and reasoning brought on by Cartesian logic. This conditioning is hard to disavow as is evidenced by the increased literature on the decline of critical inquiry attempting to move the pendulum towards the ineffable.

The term Cartesian refers to the ideas and philosophical influence of 17th century French philosopher and mathematician, Renè Descartes. You know the philosophy well, "I think, therefore I am." As Descartes' thoughts were studied and considered by younger generations, persons such as Locke, Berkeley, and Hume expanded upon this philosophy to create empiricism

[31] Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 92.
[32] Meek, *Longing to Know*, 39.

or rationalism which serves as the genesis of the modern scientific method we all have to come to know: create a thesis, create an experiment to test your thesis, observe, and prove or disprove.[33] This has served to create a common notion that what is "real" is only what can be scientifically proven or disproven through critiquing. Meek calls this knowledge-as-information:

> We tend to think knowledge is information, facts, bits of data, "content," true statements—true statements justified by other true statements. And while this isn't exactly false, we tend to have a vision of knowledge as being *only* this. We conclude that gaining knowledge is collecting information—and we're done—educated, trained, expert, certain.[34]

At an admittedly simplified and brutish level, there is no room for "real" knowledge to be outside of the binary logic of a proven existence made up of 1's and 0's like that which makes up the fabric of our lives in a device small enough to fit in our hands.

Musically, this inheritance of Cartesian logic and the many subsequent epistemological implications tends to place the musician and analysis in the critical position. Only recently, is it encouraged to present answers that are not concretely tied to raw data of theoretical knowledge, the compositional features broken down to their most finite parts, functionality in harmony, and circumstances of its formal structure. How else can one be suspicious or critique the validity of such claims? This is the necessary end to ensure that one has indeed found truth. Truth only seems to stand under the harshest of scrutiny and conforms to what can be verified objectively. As such, historical exercises in music studies have been relegated to the critical analytics often seen in natural sciences: observe the empirical and deduce the truth.

Meek claims this orientation is "defective and damaging."[35] She points to Polanyi's emphasis on tacit knowledge as a therapy for our epistemic condition. In his book, *Personal*

---

[33] Douglas Odegard, "Locke as an Empiricist," *Philosophy* 40, no. 153 (1965): 185–96, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3748874.
[34] Meek, *A Little Manual for Knowing*, 2. (Emphasis original).
[35] Ibid, 2.

Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy, Polanyi argues there are aspects of knowing, that are not able to be fully critiqued, or pulled apart, and that personal knowing is a required aspect of learning. He illustrates with bike riding and picking out his coat:

> I may ride a bicycle and say nothing, or pick out my macintosh among twenty others and say nothing. Though I cannot say clearly how I ride a bicycle nor how I recognize my macintosh (for I don't know it clearly), yet this will not prevent me from saying that I know how to ride a bicycle and how to recognize my macintosh. For I know perfectly well how to do such things, though I know the particulars of what I know only in an instrumental manner and am focally quite ignorant of them; so that I may say that I know these matters even though I cannot tell clearly, or hardly at all, what it is that I know.[36]

Polanyi speaks to the ineffable characteristic of our many daily epistemic acts. Further, he proposes that it is the very ineffable characteristic that leads to really knowing that which is desired to be known. This removes objectivity, an arbitrary collection of facts, from the center of knowing and replaces it with personal knowing through participation, commitment, and judgment.

For the musician, this sounds very close to the knowing we do every time we learn to perform a piece with our instrument. However, when we come to analyze the piece with our mind, we mostly tend to the objective or theoretical facts. In approaching Christopher Tin's *To Shiver the Sky*, I found that although the theoretical analyses worthwhile to consider, there was no discovery of insight to those original urgent questions. Michael Gallope, in his *Deep Refrains,* also contends that a more "naïve and intuitive" method of analysis can benefit the study of music in a practical way. Gallope retains that the study of musical nomenclature is not at fault, but the ineffable characteristic of music. Music has a certain slipperiness to it. He says, "music is accorded a significance that might appear to speak, but without any sense of semantic

[36] Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 88.

meaning."[37] Therefore, the study of music through only nomenclature and signs is incomplete, an intuitive means of analysis can add significance:

> Ineffability need not be taken as a limit of pious refusal or austere silence; it can be an intelligent response to the specificity of musical intensity…As a music scholar, one can skirt the problem of the ineffable by adhering to a strict formalism when discussing musical details, or by pinning down music with signs. But this may come at the cost of shearing away some kind of significance. By the word "significance," I mean to indicate not a referential property but a certain weight of import, one that has a diffuse meaning with a distinct philosophical resonance. Such metaphors (import, resonance, significance) aim at something full, complex, and real in all its befuddling instability that is neither formalist nor semiotic, but which nonetheless matters a great deal.[38]

This significance mined by the philosophical or a more intuitive epistemic analysis rather than the Cartesian logic of objectivity and formalism invites us into a philosophical therapy-of-sorts to analyze music from a position of embodiment and the ineffable.

Polanyi speaks of this in the terms of tacit knowledge and describes it as an artful dance between two planes of knowing: the subsidiary and focal. Subsidiary meaning the indirect tools or background knowledge working to know that which is focal, or the object of our direct attention.[39] Meek expands on Polanyi's subsidiary-focal integration and personifies the act of knowing and that which is to be known in an epistemology of disclosure.[40] Both account for the ineffable and when engaged, these epistemic tools provide an orientation to knowing that inspires broader applications to musical analysis than post-enlightenment critical inquiry.

Virtue & Music

The ineffable aspect in *To Shiver the Sky* is what drew my attention over and over. It may very well continue to elude me, never being truly able to dig deep enough to explain all its

[37] Gallope, *Deep Refrains*, 256.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 88.
[40] Meek, *A Little Manual for Knowing*, 32.

musical luster. But through learning these epistemic applications, I find I am closer than before. This learning brought me to virtue epistemology and the "aha" moment happened. Music's natural phenomenon is vibrations. However, the human enterprise of music goes well beyond what can be quantified empirically. The relationship of virtue and music was among the earliest considerations of western philosophical thought with Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.[41] Whether it was rhythm or modes, these ancient thinkers judged good music on its ability to promote appropriate virtues in humans.

In more recent years, music and virtue has not seen a renaissance of thought. Music indubitably affects the virtues of a person, but with a modernist enlightened approach, how could one possibly argue that a composition satisfies virtue making in our lives without empirical studies of objectivity? How can the music be analyzed through its present and future realities? The study of music in only a position of critique puts the emphasis on the proverbial "ones and zeros," only to leave it in pieces on the floor, its value only as far as it can be dissected. Rarely will one find a study of music from the perspective of the present or future virtue or moral potential in the composer, performer, or listener. Philosophical analyses from a perspective of virtue can offer an innovative approach to understanding both *To Shiver the Sky* and Christopher Tin's greater oeuvre.

EXEMPLARISM AS A FRAMEWORK

One such philosophical analysis is Linda Zagzebski's Exemplarist Moral Theory (EMT), or exemplarism, which describes the development of morality through the act of emulating the

[41] Harold, *On the Ancient Idea that Music Shapes Character*, 343.The ancient Greek were not the only ones that were preoccupied with how music shapes the character of a person, ancient Chinese philosophers had similar discourse in music and virtue.

virtues which we admire in exemplars. Zagzebski attempts to answer the question of how we construct our moral compass of virtue through proposing a new theory within virtue epistemology. She argues, in her book of the same title, that virtues are developed through identifying exemplars and embodying the virtues we deem qualifies them as such through the acts of admiration and emulation.

Exemplars for the purposes of her theory are categorized in three ways: hero, saint, and sage. They are admirable because heroes are those who overcome great challenges often at personal risk, saints sacrificially give of themselves with a sense of duty and calling, and sages embody transcendent wisdom seemingly divined. When observed, the admiration we have for them produces a sense of motivating feeling towards imitating these exemplars and "a good life."[42] Consequently, we identify we want to "be like *that*" and point to the exemplar even though we may later qualify the admirable virtue only upon reflection as possibly courageous, wise, fair, etc.

In the following paragraphs, I will outline EMT and discuss the major tenets of 1) the foundational direct-reference theory, 2) exemplars and the narratives we use, 3) and the motivating emotion of admiration and our role of emulation.

Direct-Reference

With this theoretical framework, the path or mode of coming to know is through a referential theory of meaning or direct-reference theory. It draws upon our ability to employ linguistics to literally point with our bodies to indicate meaning. The act of identifying the moral exemplar is one of direct-reference and is not thoroughly described at first. Moral exemplars are

[42] Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, 14.

"*like that*."[43] The investigator who is identifying the moral exemplar likely is unable to identify the characteristics that are considered virtuous; however, the investigator is able to create a common classification through the direct reference.

This common classification is proven through linguistics in community and Zagzebski utilizes the analogy of water to illustrate this point. She states that humans do not come to know what water is through someone sharing its physical elements of two hydrogen and one oxygen molecules, but rather through the direct reference process of someone identifying "water is *like that*" and pointing to water. This begins a classification system that the investigator can subsequently identify water and only through reflection and further observation may discover that the molecular structure is two hydrogen and one oxygen molecules. The direct reference provides the overall foundation for an investigator to then identify characteristics. For the moral exemplar, if the virtuous person is *like that*, then the investigator's work begins to reflect and develop the description of desired exemplarist virtues by asking, "what is *that*?"[44]

Exemplars & Narrative

In EMT, exemplars of both the non-fictional and fictional kind are accepted into the categories of hero, saint, and sage. We see them as such through observing their lives and actions by personal experience, through narrative, or in controlled empirical studies. The most likely way for you or me to encounter exemplars is through the former two. It is quite a privilege to have the exemplars around us that we can observe personally; however, whether real or created, most exemplars are observed through their narratives.

[43] Ibid, 15.
[44] Ibid, 17.

Zagzebski asserts that, "narratives capture the imagination and elicit emotions that motivate action."[45] Narratives tell detailed accounts and reveal features of the exemplar that become crucial to virtuous living. Even narratives that are not explicitly attempting to reveal the morals or virtues of a person may still reveal features of that person that induce the emotion of admiration. The importance of the narrative is not that it states the morals or virtues but that it allows the investigator to observe the exemplar's moral or virtuous acts or living. Zagzebski further illustrates this, "narratives of exemplars reveal what they hope for, what they dread, what (if anything) they worry about, what they aim for, how they organize their lives around other persons and projects, how much they care about non-moral goods such as aesthetic values and physical health, how much they enjoy life, and what, in particular, they enjoy."[46]

In fact, she emphasizes throughout her book that narratives are far greater at demonstrating virtues to a moral learner because they are "more penetrating than a conceptual definition ever could be."[47] Zagzebski credits narratives to being a manual in which an investigator may not only discover the virtue but also observe how the exemplar applies the virtue in life.[48] This is particularly helpful as we attempt to discern the steps to obtaining a given virtue. Narratives expose the patterns of exemplars lives that may lead to virtues of courage, generosity, sacrifice, etc. As exemplarism inherently assumes, we do not one day wake up with these virtues. Rather, over time, the daily, weekly, monthly, etc. goals we use to pattern our own lives is the very profound insight a narrative examines.

Zagzebski also believes that the telling and retelling of narratives is additional evidence that an exemplar has been rightfully identified. Whether fictional or non-fictional narratives, the

[45] Ibid, 8.
[46] Ibid, 101.
[47] Ibid, 119.
[48] Ibid, 128.

sharing of what is admirable with others and thereby receiving affirmation is a communally based practice not dissimilar to how experts in a lab help us to identify instances of the same species through a microscope. She states, "We identify admirable persons by the emotion of admiration, and that emotion is subject to education through reflection on further experience and the emotional reactions of other persons."[49] An example she gives is of Abraham Lincoln.[50] Although only few knew him personally compared to the general population of his lifetime or now, yet the numerous accounts and biographical narratives testify to the collective affirmation that Lincoln is admired as an exemplar.[51]

This is not to say that Zagzebski is not critical of the narratives to which we employ in our observations. She articulates the biases of narrators and acknowledges the inherent nature of projecting the exemplar with values that promote to that end. However, Zagzebski offers, "our own personal responses are tests of the narrator's point of view. In addition, there is often much more in a narrative than the narrator can consciously or unconsciously distort, and that serves as a partial test of the elements highlighted in the narrative. People can even read the same story at different times and different features of it strike their attention. The story is partly interpreted as it is constructed, but it is also partly interpreted as it is read or seen on the screen."[52]

We know our exemplars through their stories. Hero, saint, or sage, is only such because the admirable of their lives has been set center-stage for others to observe. These narratives become the play-by-play of their actions, their thoughts, their hopes, their joys and how they experienced them. Exemplarism makes narrative a canvas of both the admiration and emulation.

[49] Ibid, 15.
[50] Zagzebski uses Abraham Lincoln throughout her book to demonstrate a leader commonly admired and hailed as an exemplar who had known imperfections such as being an inattentive parent, 46.
[51] Ibid, 128.
[52] Ibid, 67.

Admiration & Emulation

Zagzebski's theory is predicated on admiration as motivation towards virtue and emulation as producing virtue. Let us deal first with admiration.

Zagzebski argues that we can know a person is an exemplar through the emotion of admiration. In EMT, admiration is the experience of "feeling a distinctive way toward a person seen as admirable."[53] Given that admiration is an emotion, she is careful to point out that our emotion for the person is because they are witnessed doing an admirable thing. Our admiration for a hero is because they have done an action considered to put their own life at great risk of peril to save the life of another. We admire those in the field of medicine (nurses, doctors, paramedics, etc.) because they daily put their own health at risk by taking care of us who are ill and unhealthy. Therefore, admiration stems from what is considered by Zagzebski as "supremely excellent."[54]

Admiration for the purpose of exemplarism, however, is only that which produces a sense of what Zagzebski calls imitable attraction. Admiration as an emotion for exemplarism must motivate. Zagzebski separates what we admire in human excellence that is inborn talent and that which is acquired excellence. Zagzebski proposes, "the two kinds of admiration feel different to the person experiencing them, they have different contrary emotions, and they differ also in the way in which we respond to them. We can imitate acquired excellence but not natural talent."[55] She is quick to posit that admiration of the natural abilities of those who exhibit human excellence is not a disqualification: "it is significant that the people who excel in intellectual or artistic excellence or physical strength would rarely be noticed if they did not improve their

[53] Ibid, 43.
[54] Ibid, 2.
[55] Ibid, 39.

talent with hard work, perseverance, determination, and courage, often making sacrifices to develop and express their gift."[56] These imitable qualities are what give rise to the emotion of admiration. Zagzebski goes on to say that the "admired person is imitably attractive…and gives rise to the motive to emulate the admired person in the way in which she is admired."[57]

Here, the emotion of admiration is given a path in which to exercise its motivation. Through our attempts of emulation, we discover the necessary components of the virtue that can be learned. Zagzebski grants the key that unlocks the deep desires, "emulation is a form of imitation in which the emulated person is perceived as a model in some respect—a model of cooking, dancing, playing basketball, doing philosophy."[58] Therefore, when the model is imitated by the investigator it may allow for the investigator to become a great cook, dancer, basketball player, or philosopher, too.

It is important that in obtaining virtue, the imitation not simply be seen as a mimetic act, rather one that is motivated by the same motivation of the exemplar you emulate. Zagzebski helps us with this by pointing out that, "the desire to emulate cannot be the motive for the act if the act is virtuous. The act must be motivated as it is in the virtuous person. So the desire to be like that person must be a higher order motive: the motive to (a) acquire the motive of the exemplar, and (b) to act like her. The motive for the moral learner's act is the same as the motive of the admired person."[59] However, if the admiration motivates you to simulate a future ideal self that has obtained the virtue you admire, Zagzebski says you may be successful in your moral learning:

> The model I am proposing starts with admiration of an exemplar, which leads to an imaginative ideal of oneself, which in turn does the virtuous act from a virtuous motive

[56] Ibid, 37.
[57] Ibid, 43.
[58] Ibid., 131.
[59] Ibid., 139.

> because the learning is emulating someone who does that act from that motive. With practice, the agent becomes disposed to doing acts of that kind from motives of that kind. I am not suggesting that this is the only model of moral learning, but I think it is a common one, one that can be easily combined with varieties of Aristotelian psychology…and has the advantage of explaining how emulation can lead both to virtuous behavior and to motives that move beyond pleasure to the noble.[60]

Returning to the topic of narrative, this is expressly explored through narrative. Zagzebski argues that it is through our own narrative that we may "try on," if you will, how we may respond to the similar circumstances of the exemplar's life.[61] Emulation is a sort of personal testing of that which we admire.

CONCLUSION

Exemplarism as a moral theory builds a schema for persons to investigate moral development. Through the direct reference identification of an exemplar we admire, we have an ability to emulate that which we believe makes them virtuous. The emulation or imitation of the exemplar is not, however, the giving up of the investigator's own morality or autonomy as Zagzebski describes, "To become like another person is not only to be different from what one previously was, but to let the consciousness of another person replace one s own consciousness in the relevant respect. I assume that there is no objection to wanting to be as good as one can be, but we still want to be ourselves."[62] Rather, she argues that, "emulation in such a case is a dictate of self-direction. I am autonomous because I am acting on my own reasons for my own ends."[63] Therefore, emulation is a way of embodiment. Embodying that which is deemed by reason as virtuous or admirable.

---

[60] Ibid, 138.
[61] Ibid, 170.
[62] Ibid, 150.
[63] Ibid, 151.

Here we can begin to approach the heuristic aspect of exemplarism and scaffold its uses for musical analysis. Returning to Zagzebski's water analogy, analyses often start at attempting to describe the molecular level rather than the direct reference level. Musical analyses are no exception and rarely give credence to that which does not focus on common practice Western harmony and structural forms. Certainly, the inherent understanding of the word *analysis* is one of such deconstructed detail. Through exemplarism, musical analysis can finally offer those who study music a tool to discuss virtue, morality, and music's transformative power in humanity. Exemplarism seeks to answer the call by identifying these virtuous aspects of music and qualify the value of those virtues as essential to musical understanding. Therefore, in the study of music, exemplarism can be used to balance the analysis of compositional features, thus providing a wholistic framework that is generative and attends to the present and even future emulation of a virtuous life. Once identified, these exemplary aspects of music can be investigated to determine what is admirable about them or the way in which a composer used them to emulate their own admiration.

Through the admiration of these various technical aspects of music, study and analysis become tools to form the musician, deepening the relationship of the musician to any performance or subsequent study of the composition. These performances and studies become a form of emulation of these exemplars. This is akin to Nietzsche's insistence on "history belongs above all to the active and powerful man, to him who fights a great fight, who requires models, teachers and comforters and cannot find them among his associates and contemporaries."[64] It is not enough for Nietzsche to have facts and data; it must be accompanied with how it will lead to a greater benefit or purpose to existence. In a coalescence of Nietzsche and Zagzebski, music

[64] Nietzsche, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage to the History of Life,* 14.

belongs to the person who understands its potential to affect morality, who enables the study of music to form them for the generative act of creative expression rather than its posterity on the shelf.

CHAPTER III:

EXEMPLARISM IN *TO SHIVER THE SKY*

Written between the years 2016–2020, Tin produced a large choral-orchestral oratorio that chronicles the story of human flight. The eleven-movement oratorio musically represents key persons and narratives in the human venture to overcome gravity and reach the seemingly most unreachable places.

In this chapter, I survey the oratorio and connect the key tenets of exemplarism conveyed through Tin's compositional choices of genre, libretto development through writings by historical exemplars, and stylistic features to emulate these exemplars. I present the series of choices from a large picture to smaller, eventually giving examples from each movement, but always remaining at a 30,000 foot overview throughout.

ORATORIO & NARRATIVE

Aviation and its technological advances are rather recent in the grand epoch of human history; however, the aspiration to fly still covers more than 2,000 years.[65] If the timeline alone is daunting, the task of writing a piece of music on the subject even more so. How does a composer capture the historical narrative of aviation, represent key human figures in its progress, and convey the aspirational spirit of humanity over such a vast span of time? Tin's answer is to employ a genre developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: the oratorio.

[65] Adrian van Muffing, "Human Flight throughout the Ages," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 131, no. 1 (1927): 1.

An intriguing aspect of choosing to write an oratorio is its historical connections to morality and virtue. The genre began as an "extended musical setting of a sacred text made up of dramatic, narrative and contemplative elements."[66] For nearly 200 years, composers set sacred texts, either scripture or sacred poetry, to music embedding moral lessons through the development of characters and scenes. Characters in oratorios are portrayed both by individuals, represented by soloists, as well as groups of people through the use of the chorus. Scenes created by the careful crafting of a libretto and compositional features dramatized the narrative. The creative combination of these two elements afforded composers a more subtle teaching of moral lessons than in other genres.

An example of this is *Elijah*, an oratorio by Felix Mendelssohn, which follows the biblical narrative of the prophet Elijah set by Mendelssohn for bass soloist, playing the character of Elijah, large chorus and large orchestra. Many moments in the oratorio, Mendelssohn uses the chorus to represent the people of Israel or sing general scriptural commentary to add to the dramatization of the scene. Within this three-act and lengthy oratorio (a performance time of nearly three hours), Mendelssohn composes what Steven Baur describes as, "…the *Elijah* story [which] demands that the individual faithfully endure harsh circumstances for extended periods in the hope of receiving promised future rewards."[67] Elijah's faith, perseverance, and obedience lead to his eventual ascent into heaven to live with God. The moral lesson that faith requires trust and perseverance, even in difficult circumstances. The musical drama of an oratorio realizes this moral lesson for its listeners. Despite the genre's similarities to opera, oratorio is theater-adjacent and does not include staging, props, effects, scenery, or acting to engage senses beyond hearing

[66] Smither, *Oratorio*.
[67] Steven Braur, "Music, Morals, and Social Management: Mendelssohn in Post-Civil War America." *American Music* 19, no. 1 (2001): 105.

to tell the story as in other theatrical genres. It is performed in the concert setting and therefore heightens the moral lesson through the music and libretto rather than visual action or imagery.

Until the twentieth century, the genre remained primarily a sacred one; however, the interest in secularization of the times expanded the genre and more oratorios were written with the express purpose of portraying secular librettos, narratives, and characters. Early examples of this can be found Stravinsky's oratorios *Oedipus Rex* (1926–1927), setting the story of the King of Thebes murdering his father and marrying his mother, and Hans Werner Henze's *Das Floß der Medusa (The Raft of the Medusa),* a 1967 secular oratorio about the political shame of a hastily built French ship running aground and the poor rescue efforts leading to the survivors' choice of cannibalism.[68] In recent years, secular narratives and characters have continued to be the source material and inspiration for composers who write oratorios. In 2016, Craig Hella Johnson (b. 1962) wrote *Considering Matthew Shephard,* an oratorio with musical theater influences recounting the life and murder of a young man named Matthew Shephard because of his sexual orientation.[69] In 2019, Wadada Leo Smith (b. 1941) composed an avant-garde jazz oratorio *Rosa Parks: Pure Love. An Oratorio of Seven Songs* and steeps the listener in the beloved story and ensuing ramifications of Parks' defiance on an Alabama bus in 1955.[70]

I believe the oratorio's popularity and eventual broadening to include secular texts is because the genre itself became an exemplar of morality and virtue as central to its musical purpose. This secularization of the oratorio secures is place as valid genre of composition among the auspices of a post-Christian era. Further, I believe the oratorio remains because it provides a

[68] Smither, *Oratorio*.
[69] Daniel Cocknye, "Considering Matthew Shepard: Normative and Anti-Normative Queer Spatial Narratives and the Politics of Performance in Choral Music," *Cultural Geographies* 26, no. 4 (2019): 471.
[70] Ben Cardew, "Wadada Leo Smith: Rosa Parks: Pure Love. an Oratorio of Seven Songs," Pitchfork, February 15, 2019, https://pitchfork.com/reviews/albums/wadada-leo-smith-rosa-parks-pure-love-an-oratorio-of-seven-songs/.

canvas that composers use to put forth exemplars for consideration of their hearers to emulate. In the case of Christopher Tin and *To Shiver the Sky*, he writes in the preface of his work:

> This is the story of flight: of humanity s quest to break the bonds of earth, challenge the heavens, and take our rightful place among the stars…this is the story of flight told through music, and through the words of 11 of history s pioneers: pilots and engineers, scientists and storytellers, stargazers and mystics; men and women who freed us from the shackles of gravity, and stretched the limits of our imagination. It s the greatest adventure on which man has ever embarked.[71]

The full preface can be found in Appendix A. Notice the use of virtues to describe the resulting narrative of the work: courage, resilient, imagination, etc. When exploring the idea of taking flight and the moral exemplars who help us get there, one cannot help but admire the virtues of these persons. As a musician and composer, you can emulate those virtuous persons to discover the musical representation of the courage, wisdom, knowledge, and imagination to get there. Appropriately, Tin's choice to compose an oratorio signposts exemplarism through its inherent narrative features and provides the framework for admiration and emulation of his curated exemplars.

This choice is seen as an important feature of Zagzebski's exemplarism, the narrative. As mentioned in Chapter Two, narratives of exemplars allow us to witness virtues of their lives and how they applied the virtue. They become a figurative laboratory for us to examine their life circumstances, thoughts, decisions, hopes, etc. For Tin's *To Shiver The Sky*, the narratives of eleven exemplars are woven to create a single oratorio. In this case, the oratorio becomes a narrative of exemplar's narratives.

[71] Tin, *To Shiver the Sky,* iii.

THE EXEMPLARS

Throughout the work, Tin creates music that embodies the moral ideals of progress, humanity, adventure, history, and more using human exemplars. These exemplars range across the timeline of civilization in the West and were all considered for their contribution of thoughts philosophically or scientifically (sometimes both) to the field of aviation. Each of these exemplars is accompanied with the exemplary literature they produced. Tin deftly develops their words and accomplishments into a libretto that turns dreams of flight into realized space flight. To create a comprehensive libretto, he chose exemplars from each of the categories Zagzebski proposes in exemplarism: the hero, the saint, and the sage. Table 3.1 presents the respective exemplar Tin chose to explore in each movement.

Table 3.1 Exemplars in Tin's *To Shiver the Sky*

	Movement Title	Exemplar/ Text Author	Author Dates	Text Source	Exemplar Category	Language
1	Songo Di Volare ("The Dream of Flight")	Leonardo da Vinci	1452–1519	Writings on flight	Hero	Italian
2	The Heavenly Kingdom	Hildegard von Bingen	1098–1179	Scivias	Saint	Latin
3	Daedalus and Icarus	Ovid	43 BC~AD 17	*Metamorphoses*	Sage	Latin
4	The Fall	Dante Alighieri	1265–1321	Divine Comedy	Saint	Italian
5	Astronomy	Nicolaus Copernicus	1473–1543	*De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium*	Hero	Polish
6	To the Stars	Jules Verne	1828–1905	De la Terre à la Lune	Hero	French
7	Oh, the Humanity	Ferdinand von Zeppelin	1838–1979	Speeches	Sage	German

8	Courage	Amelia Earhart	1897– (1973)	'Courage' poem	Hero	English
9	Become Death	J. Robert Oppenheimer	1904–1967	Quoted from Bhagavad Gita	Sage	Sanskrit
10	The Power of the Spirit	Yuri Gagarin	1934–1968	Quotes	Hero	Russian
11	We Choose to Go to the Moon	John F. Kennedy	1817–1963	Address at Rice University on the Nation's Space Effort	Hero	English

In the following paragraphs, I will give arguments as to which category each of these exemplars belong and how Tin uses the category and their primary virtue to progress the narrative of the oratorio. I shall start with the most straightforward.

The Hero

Persons that are observed with acts of deep courage, often at great personal risk, are considered by Zagzebski to be heroes.[72] The hero may very well exhibit other virtues such as self-control, compassion, justice, etc. These are not virtues that are unique to the persons we typically admire as heroes; therefore, the dominating virtue that distinguishes is that of courage. This is when exemplars are observed to have "dramatic moral accomplishments in character or actions."[73]

To Shiver the Sky is full of heroes. Leonardo da Vinci, Nicolaus Copernicus, Jules Verne, Amelia Earhart, Yuri Gagarin, and John F. Kennedy are those chosen by Tin to represent the courageous in his oratorio. These exemplars are considered such for their dramatic contributions to the narrative of human flight:

[72] Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, 92.
[73] Ibid, 1.

- Leonardo da Vinci for his many designs and inventions of flying machines and scientific writings on aerodynamics
- Nicolaus Copernicus for the unprecedented discovery of the heliocentric solar system
- Jules Verne for imagining space aviation and being the father of science fiction
- Amelia Earhart for her historic flight as the first female to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean and her later attempt to circumnavigate the globe
- Yuri Gagarin for being the first to go beyond our terrestrial existence and journey into outer space
- John F. Kennedy for leading a nation to place humans on the moon

Earhart and Gagarin were courageous through life-risking acts that overcame fear of the unknown. Jules Verne and Leonardo da Vinci were courageous for viewing the world with visions of a future beyond their time. Kennedy and Copernicus were courageous to share ideas despite great criticism of their ideas.

Tin uses heroes Leonardo da Vinci and John F. Kennedy to serve as bookends for his oratorio with visionary thoughts, Kennedy sounding the answer, "we choose to go to the moon," of Leonardo da Vinci's invocation, "once you have taken flight, you'll decide." Jules Verne and Nicolaus Copernicus are set as the centerpieces of the oratorio to orient our aspirations to the stars. Finally, Tin places Amelia Earhart and Yuri Gagarin at crucial moments in the narrative to remind us of the necessary risk involved in being courageous.

The Saint

A saint, according to Zagzebski, is one who distinctly is dominated by the virtue of charity.[74] Charity being the supremely excellent observable act of love. The saint is seen as someone who promotes the flourishing of others through their love of both God and fellow mankind.

The saints represented in *To Shiver the Sky* are Hildegard von Bingen and Dante Alighieri. Hildegard is a canonized saint of the Catholic church and Doctor of the Church for her significant contributions to theology and doctrine.[75] Dante, while holding neither honorary position in the church, is quoted from his work *Divine Comedy* and therefore is positioned by Tin as a saint for his religious context. Both works quoted by Tin direct us heavenward. Each speak to a longing to be with God that was a deep fascination of their Medieval times.

This is the charity Tin seeks to display in these exemplars, a love towards God, the things of God, and the dwelling place of God. Their love directed them to reach towards heavenly things. And in the case of these passages, heaven is acquired through flight. Tin appropriately positions these saints in his work as exemplars of the interdisciplinary context of theology and flight. Theology became the impetus for innovation as Carolyn Muessig and Ad Putter state:

> The strength of human optimism is evident from the theological discussions regarding the beatific vision and apocatastasis. Such hopefulness combined with genuine curiosity about the nature of heaven. The pulleys and ropes of the medieval stage, the liturgical imitation of heavenly music in the monastery, and the verbal wizardry of medieval poets and mystics brought individuals to a closer realization of heaven, though the effort and artifice expended in the attempt also reminded them they were not in heaven yet.[76]

Hildegard and Dante's passages both speak to the human optimism described above and Tin purposes their devotion to herald the later drama within his oratorio.

---

[74] Ibid, 96.
[75] Pope Benedict XVI, *Apostolic Letter*.
[76] Muessig and Putter, *Envisaging Heaven*, 3.

The Sage

Ovid, Ferdinand von Zeppelin, and J. Robert Oppenheimer quoting the Bhagavad Gita, are the exemplars that Tin offers, and I qualify under the category of the sage. Zagzebski describes the identification of sages as the most elusive of the three types of exemplars. This is due to the difficulty in sages performing observable acts. She says, "unlike saints and heroes, we typically do not identify sages primarily by admirably overt acts, and we generally do not speak of 'wise acts,' although we might refer to 'words of wisdom,' and in retrospect, we may speak of 'wise decisions.'[77] In this case, it seems that Tin has taken the approach of those who represent what we might determine as "sage advice."

Unfortunately, this reading of Zagzebski's sage is a bit precarious because Ovid, Zeppelin, and Oppenheimer do not follow the parameters she sets forth as characteristics of a sage. Among some of her qualifications are self-discipline, religious sensibilities or divine calling, strong moral convictions, intellectually humble, master of conventional wisdom, and reflective to name a few.[78] Her given example is Confucious who exhibits an innate sensibility of wisdom, tranquility, and possibly holiness that is observed by his deep connection between "moral wisdom and his practical skills and intellectual virtues."[79]

Although Tin's chosen exemplars are not sages in the sense of Confucious, they represent words of importance that are connected to personal experience. If the sage is expected to offer

[77] Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, 85.
[78] Ibid, 95.
[79] Ibid, 89.

wise words of advice that are "true in retrospect," I believe Tin considers these exemplars as sages because of their position in the narrative. Each of their movements provide wise words of warning and therefore offer sage-like advice to their hearers. This can be observed in the lyrics and translations offered by movement in Appendix B. Their explicit or implied advice carries the weight of the circumstances of their prominence in history, each ending in death: Ovid writes mythology that warns of death when one is prideful and does not heed instructions, Zeppelin warns of tragic accidents even when intent is good, and Oppenheimer warns of the implications of mass destruction caused by his atomic bomb.

The Words of Exemplars

Before leaving the exemplars that Tin has curated for our admiration in his work, a brief word on his libretto development. Tin chooses to have entire movements represent the exemplars by setting their own words as the lyrics for his libretto. Even more exemplary, the sources are often considered exemplars of literature themselves. In other words, Tin uses the exemplary words of the exemplar's exemplary works.

These representative works capture the essence of thought in both their authors and the times in which they lived. Interestingly, with the exception of the Bhagavad Gita in movement nine, each movement's lyrics are sung in the vernacular language of the exemplar to whom they belong. For Copernicus' *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium,* this results in a translation of his words from the scholarly accepted language of his time, Latin, to Polish, his mother tongue. I postulate Tin's choice to have each movement sung in the vernacular of the chosen exemplar is an effort to emulate the exemplar by embodying the very sounds that an exemplar would make with his or her own voice.

MUSICAL EMULATION

Tin works to emulate these characters in a narrative, displaying their virtues like many of the composers who formulated the oratorios of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Whether quotes from their own speeches, poetry, or scientific writings, these literary works and their authors supply the narrative for the oratorio and thus the work to be emulated. Additionally, many aspects of the musical language and gesture Tin composes draw inspiration from the musical times of these exemplars to further embody the person themselves. Turning to an illustration from Chapter One, Tin "tries on" the musical clothes of his exemplars. Sounds and styles they were familiar with are present in each of their movements and musically emulates the exemplar's world.

Zagzebski deals with several issues present in the discourse of imitation which has plagued virtue ethics and virtue epistemology since Aristotle. *Mimesis* has been the primary theory and explanation in how one comes to acquire a virtue; however, Zagzebski's novel theory that places admiration at the center proposes that emulation is how one acquires the primary components of a virtue.[80] In the previous chapter, I shared her description of how imagining an ideal of oneself in the emulated person is how we emulate the exemplar's motives and acts. For Zagzebski, the process of emulation is distinguishable from the object of emulation. Although the object of emulation, the exemplar, is important, it is the process of emulation that bears on

[80] Ibid, 138.

our moral domain and truly allows us to attribute the virtue to our own lives.[81] I am proposing that Tin uses music and composition as the process of emulation of his chosen exemplars.

Emulation is not a prominent topic in music studies (even though the process of composition easily lends itself to emulation, more on this in Chapter Four). However, in an article by Joshua Duchan on collegiate unaccompanied music, he proposes the emulative performance of a vocalist for an unaccompanied arrangement requiring a singer to play the part of an instrument is indeed the act of emulation and allows the singer "to act like the rock star playing his or her instrument. Moreover, through direct emulation, syllables and gestures enable the singer to be the rock star's instrument."[82] In the field of psychology, this premise is supported by theories studied by Steven Brown that promote a connectivity between elements of the past that creatives emulate in their works to innovate and evolve the art. He concludes,

> Creators are inheritors of lineages of creative products in their domain, and they contribute new variants to these evolving lineages. Most creativity is based on an associative process of analytic thinking and emulation that achieves a modification of existing products or a blending of products from two domains. As a result, most creative products are incremental changes compared to what came before, sitting comfortably within the stylistic boundaries of a domain, often conforming with a creator's previous work in that domain. [83]

Tin emulates in this way, taking the form of what has been given to him from the past and synthesizing a new voice, his own experiment of the virtuous becoming a product of exemplarism demonstrated through music.

A Survey of Musical Emulation in *To Shiver the Sky*

In this section, I will give an overview of Tin's compositional features and gestures that signal exemplarism. Except for the movements that are considered in Chapter Four (mvts. 5, 8,

[81] Ibid, 139.
[82] Duchan, *Collegiate a Cappella: Emulation and Originality*, 497.
[83] Brown, *Creativity as emulation: the cultural basis of creative cognition,* 4.

and 11), I consider each movement under the components outlined earlier in this chapter on the imaginative ideal and endeavor to draw attention to the methods and techniques that Tin uses to emulate his exemplars. While not intended to serve as comprehensive integrated score study of each movement, the survey will speak briefly, in the style of in-depth program notes, to the elements of musical analysis (rhythmic, metric, melodic, harmonic, tonal and formal structures) that elucidate the thread of exemplarism.

I. *Sogno di Volare* ("The Dream of Flight")

Leonardo da Vinci's flying machines receive an immediate nod in the opening thematic material of *To Shiver the Sky*. Tin writes in a 12/8 meter with an energetic melodic ostinato that twists and turns around the tonic and dominant scale degrees like cogs in a machine. As the machine is whirring and tinkering around establishing the tonality of Bb major, the momentous vision of flight is birthed through a choral entrance in a slow disclosure through a vi – IV – V – I progression.

The work ahead is full of toil as represented by Tin modulating through the relative keys of Bb minor and Db major in the B section persevering to return to the opening choral theme. As the dream is fully realized, the human potential is heralded by the cessation of the machine-like ostinato leaving only the operatic fanfare of the chorus and brass in Bb major singing "Once you have taken flight, you'll decide." The open texture and brilliant timbre of the brass allows Tin to portray the open sky above the clouds and the imagined ecstasy of freedom in flying.

II. "The Heavenly Kingdom"

Tin transports us immediately to a medieval convent with a Bb-phrygian "chant-like" (marked by Tin in the score) melody against a drone in the strings for Hildegard's words from *Scivias*. Inspired by a chant melody from Hildegard's own *Beata nobis gaudia,* Tin composes an original melody with a similar contour to be sung by a trio of female vocalists in unison.[84] These choices further endearing the atmosphere in which Hildegard lived as an abbess.

Written with intermittent syncopated entrances and triplets, the fluid melody mimics chant while the orchestral accompaniment retains its vibrant momentum through sporadic textural outbursts as text painting to her words, "fly like clouds, and like doves to their homes." The movement creates dialogue through Tin's usage of antiphonal phrases interspersed with the trio from the soprano and alto sections of the choir and later the tenor and bass sections. Each entrance with Tin's heavenward reminder that it is to be sung as "medieval plain-chant." This spirited movement ends with two soli cellists playing open fifths with instructions to play close to the bridge, "like a viol," to produce the metallic, earthy timbre of the organum played on early instruments of the Medieval period.

III. "Daedalus and Icarus"

After these triumphant and hope-filled opening movements, drama ensues and Tin positions the mythical account of Daedalus and Icarus in the oratorio as the first conflict in his narrative. Tin creates another 12/8 ostinato, this time with a rhythmic difference of long-short-long on low unison Bb pitches that build intensity by an ascending walking bass line towards a haunting D minor. A tenor soloist sings the part of Daedalus in Vulgar Latin, while the chorus sings in ecclesiastical Latin. Employing a play from the both the establishment of the Greek

[84] Christopher Tin, "Behind-the-Scenes: The Heavenly Kingdom," YouTube video, 7:40, Christopher Tin, March 20, 2025, https://youtu.be/-8uzp8CzLAQ?si=bcQKd2EAep4Cy9LH&t=216, 3:36.

chorus and the oratorio handbook, Tin juxtaposes these two and creates a dialogue between the character, Daedalus, and the chorus serving as narrator. This sets a scene for which he can explore the moral lesson of Icarus' pride and disobedience to his father's instruction.

Tin orchestrates thick textures of complex scalar runs and turns throughout the constant driving of the harmony. Modulating and continually rising through the key centers, conjuring contemporary opera to accompany this ancient mythology. Several moments Tin uses instruments to pierce through the texture with a prophetic descending slide to indicate Icarus' fall. Tin cites these falling riffs and orchestrated chaotic drama as "touching on a lot of themes that recur throughout *To Shiver the Sky,* including the reach for knowledge and falling short and actually perishing."[85] However, the most chilling effect is found in the final measures after the chorus narrates the circumstances of Icarus' arrogant mistake and his consequential fall with a Faug(maj9) chord that eerily suspends Daedalus' question, "Icarus, where are you?"

IV. "The Fall"

Painting text by Dante, Tin supplements the scene of Daedalus and Icarus with the religious overtones of Satan and his angels falling from grace for reaching for what they cannot attain. This movement returns to a subdued mode where Tin composes a melody that arpeggiates a descending octave that briefly reaches above the tonic by a minor second to then turn and descend fully. This falling motif is sung alternately between the trio of female vocalists while the orchestra accompanies with glissandi throughout the strings staggered for the ethereal effect of entire chords falling. Additionally, in every phrase the motif is repeated a whole step lower than before creating a gradual descent. Starting with F5 and a Bb minor harmony, Tin descends

[85] Christopher Tin, "Behind-the-Scenes: Daedalus and Icarus," YouTube video, 4:44, Christopher Tin, March 20, 2025, https://youtu.be/-8uzp8CzLAQ?si=bcQKd2EAep4Cy9LH&t=216, 1:06.

slowly through each new key and eventually lands on his last iteration in Eb major. The slow descent of these in the music mimics the slow and subtle falling of a feather undulating back and forth before finally come to rest.

Dante mapped the domains of heaven, hell, and purgatory in his Divine Comedy and Tin chooses to use that spectrum to transition the narrative back towards "uplifting and powerful." [86] Tin ends this movement by modulating through a rising chromatic melody to E minor. This signals a new section of text and mood in the narrative with the chorus extolling to "overcome anguish" and the return of the tenor, metaphorically mirroring Daedalus, accepting the charge to look heavenward. As the tenor lifts his head, Tin emulates the emotion of hope, determination, and perseverance by building tension in a 4-3 suspension over four measures and quotes a more subdued setting of the anthemic opening theme from *Sogno di Volare*.

V. Astronomy

This movement will be discussed in Chapter Four.

VI. To The Stars

This movement provides a large leap forward to the end of the 19th century as marked by Tin at the beginning of the movement. The light and grandiose triple meter is felt as fast "one" that translates to a macro pattern of 8 bar phrasing throughout. On this metrical tapestry, Tin composes a staccato open fifth ostinato that evokes a probing feeling similar to what one may imagine with a rhythmic "beep beep beep" or "doot doot doot" of a spaceship signal. To further embody the playful, childlike imagination of Jules Verne's science fiction world, Tin sets the

[86] Christopher Tin, "Behind-the-Scenes: The Fall," YouTube video, 6:09, Christopher Tin, March 20, 2025, https://youtu.be/9YlLOTVi0qQ?si=yb64T0JlJpjE1Pt2, 4:26.

piece for children's chorus and later a brief adult chamber chorus. This maturation of physical sounds mirrors the narrative Tin is creating surrounding the maturity, or evolution if you will, of humanity's pursuit of flight and eventual space flight.

The clever thematic motif of this movement has a melodic contour that begins with the uplifting and familiar "sol-do" ascending interval that crests at the octave "sol" above. It descends by a major six to "ti-ti-teh" before cadencing at "la," all to return to the launch of an ascending "sol-do" on the next phrase. Additionally, hints of 19th century nationalism are present through emulating Debussy and Ravel in the subtleties of dynamic contrast and attention to orchestral color throughout this piece. Rather than using the orchestra to create chaos or ethereal accompaniment, Tin emulates the exemplars of French impressionistic music through scoring for the orchestra's sections and employing their timbres with an intentional hint towards chromatic planing. The children's chorus finishes the movement by octave leaps on the French word for "to the stars," *aux é etoiles*.

VII. "Oh, the Humanity"

Immediately, drama is brought back to the foreground through Tin's third use of the opening thematic material in a D minor tonality of brass fanfare. He evokes the spirit of late 18th century Germanic music by giving the tempo marking "*Sturm und Drang*." The motivic recall to the opening theme is quickly replaced by Tin's emulation of Zeppelin's military background with a military march. Much of the movement is composed with nod towards Zeppelin's aspirational speech in 1900 for his airships to be used for the good of all. Played by the tenor soloist, the music given to the part of Zeppelin on the text "air travel will be used for peaceful interaction," is an indomitable ascending melody on the F major scale from F4 to C5 portraying the highest of aspirations.

This is quickly followed the same phrase with an F diminished five-note scale from F#4 to C5, capturing the dissonance of peaceful aspirations and the eventual use of his airships by Germany to bomb enemies during World War I. Tin explores this historical vignette by returning to the military march with sparse texture, driving military percussion, and the use of an air raid siren in the orchestration. Highly dramatic Wagnerian-style writing brings the movement to a close on the text translated, "Oh, the humanity," a phrase used by a reporter broadcasting at the Hindenburg explosion in 1937. However, Tin chooses to end the movement the same way he began, with the opening theme motif. This time setting it in a solemn chorale-style setting with *a capella* chorus. This chorale-style ending also begins in D minor; however, Tin resolves the final chord to Db major to lift our eyes to hope and prepare for an attacca transition to the next movement.

VIII. "Courage"

This movement will be discussed in Chapter Four.

IX. "Become Death"

In the progression of aviation, the scientific innovation by Oppenheimer on the atomic bomb receives Tin's attention next. Marked "lento; apocalyptic," Tin uses octaves and dissonance at both the high and low extremes of the orchestra to introduce a desolate landscape as an introduction to a chant-like melody on minor seconds evoking a more Eastern chant than Medieval European chant. This quickly digresses into Tin emulating 20th century post-tonal compositional techniques with a brief orchestral interlude that alludes to atonal serialism, imbalanced phrases, and the use of tone clusters in the chorus with descending glissandos. The final six measures include unconventional scoring for chorus, Tin calls for five measures of "low

muttering, whispering, lots of consonant sounds" over unison low growling orchestra tremolos that end with small glissandos to the minor second below before a final hit on a low F# octave and long-held fermata.

X. "The Power of the Spirit"

Tin uses the low F# of the previous movement to segue a D#3/F#3 dyad over a D#1/D#2 octave dotted whole notes tied to another measure of dotted whole notes in 12/8 time. The opening chorus for this movement in measure five is tenor and basses only, singing a melody that elicits the reverent and disciplined Russian Orthodox chant Gagarin likely heard. Tin adds soprano and alto while bringing the unchanged melody higher with every repetition until D major becomes our final tonality. He adds more vocal texture and orchestral texture through divisi until the brief movement ends with driving eighth notes subdividing the 12/8 beats articulated with accents and a crescendo on open pitches of D, A, and D in octaves and fifths that function as the dominant to G major which starts the final movement of the oratorio.

XI. "We Choose to Go to the Moon"

This movement will be discussed in Chapter Four.

CONCLUSION

In eleven movements, Christopher Tin proves his adept compositional prowess to communicate incredibly complex and deeply meaningful ideas through his music. He emulates through his use of the oratorio genre to create a narrative of the human willpower to succeed, masterfully creating a libretto which weaves the unique personhood and musical period into

practical music gestures. Through studying, performing, and emulating these musical gestures the work of exemplarism begins.

CHAPTER IV

TOWARDS AN EXEMPLARIST MUSICAL PRACTICE

Does an understanding of exemplarism reach beyond analysis of one piece? To answer this practical question, in this chapter I propose three cases of what I am calling exemplarist musical practice. These are seminal ideas in how to directly apply Zagzebski's Exemplarist Moral Theory (EMT) to one's musical practice. Here, I am using the word practice in a vocational sense (i.e., medical practice, legal practice, teaching practice) not necessarily in a technical or performative sense. Although, it is hard to escape the integration of both in our vocation as musicians. These ideas have begun to shape all the aspects of being a musician for me: learning, studying, researching, improvising, teaching, rehearsing, and performing.

What I am suggesting as a musical practice is conceiving a framework that would accomplish the charge given by Gro Trondalen, a Norwegian music therapist and researcher, in her book *Ethical Musicality*:

> Ethical musicality is a shaping of thoughts and ideas merged into a *conceptual framework*—with existential implications. The chapter illustrates an ethical musicality coming with a calling *to* humanity in a broad sense, which does not leave us untouched. Such a calling comprehends a call to surrender, share, act, involve, do good, and care—to become musical humans recognizing that music changes people's *real* lives. Hence, an ethical musicality is an invitation and a welcome to commit to such an art form of becoming—offering hope of a 'good life.'[87]

What Trondalen suggests is a framework where Exemplarist Moral Theory thrives to accomplish musical meaning. And equally, if not more importantly, music may accomplish virtuous meaning in those who experience it.

[87] Trondalen, *Ethical Musicality*, 83. (Epmhasis original).

I have chosen three movements of Tin's *To Shiver the Sky* to illustrate the ideas on creating an exemplarist musical practice. Each assumes a level of exemplarist analysis, but I intend to make clear three distinct applications: 1) emulation of composers in musical composition, 2) exemplarism in musical coaching for performance, 3) engaging non-human exemplars in the "art of becoming." These applications may seem obvious to some, but through EMT, they were revelatory to me. As I said in Chapter One, philosophy is practical and discovering exemplarism through virtue epistemology has aided me in my ventures in each of these cases. I expect there will be more discovery of what exactly exemplarist musical practice is as I continue to reflect upon possible implementations within my own practice.

EMULATING COMPOSERS IN "WE CHOOSE TO GO TO THE MOON"

Tin's *To Shiver the Sky* does more than just quote the pioneers of aviation and emulate their eras within music history through compositional style. He also quotes exemplars in the world of composition. The final movement, "We Choose to Go to the Moon," exhibits musical gestures akin to Aaron Copland, John Williams, and Beethoven. These quotations may have been conscious choices by Tin or unconscious through his attempts to emulate themes of Americana, space-travel, and human aspirations. Nonetheless, Tin's ability to elicit these themes like other composers is exemplary in and of itself.

Musical quotation and emulation of composers as a form of homage or teaching is not uncommon in the history of music. Composers from the Renaissance period would often emulate older compositions for pedagogical, homage, or even competitive use.[88] However, exemplarism

[88]Howard Mayer Brown, "Emulation, Competition, and Homage: Imitation and Theories of Imitation in the Renaissance," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 35, no. 1 (1982): 8.

extends emulation as a form to acquire virtues we admire in another through the imagining ourselves as virtuous. If a composer admires another composer's music, emulation can serve as a form to acquire the compositional prowess of that composer. Steven Brown, a psychologist, gives an example of this: "A composer can emulate Tchaikovsky's music by creating music in his style without replicating the specific process that Tchaikovsky went through in composing his music. Emulation only considers the product, not the process, of creativity."[89] This also is how Zagzebski sees the act of emulation and the retention of autonomy:

> If I admire a person and reflectively endorse my admiration, I will rationally judge the person to be admirable in the relevant respect, and if I am right that emotions can be both epistemic and practical reasons, then my judgment that the person is admirable is a *reason* to emulate the admirable person, arising from my own critical self-reflection. Emulation in such a case is a dictate of self-direction. I am autonomous because I am acting on my own reasons for my own ends.[90]

I argue that the subsequent compositional features of Christopher Tin discussed now are the latter form of emulation and therefore his attempt to model the exemplars of his own compositional admiration.

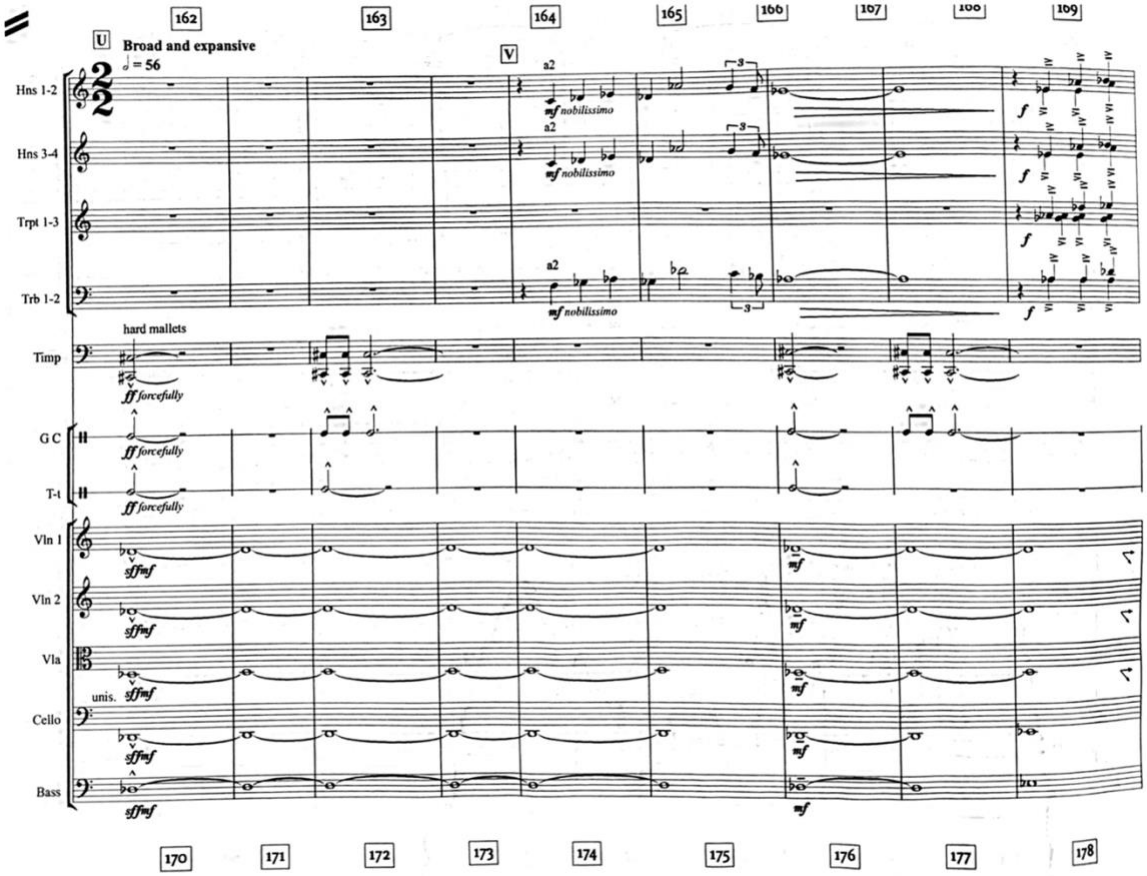
"We Choose to Go to the Moon" is a partial setting of John F. Kennedy's *Address to Rice University on the Nation's Space Effort* and Tin composes a cumulative mosaic of the oratorio's leitmotifs to portray the significant pinnacle achievement of space flight. He creates musical gestures that are analogous to composers who have also composed around themes of Americana, space-travel, and human aspirations. In mm. 162 through 169, Tin composes a timpani feature that entreats Aaron Copland's "Fanfare for the Common Man." Emulating Copland is almost a direct reference to Americana music or music composed by someone who is a master of folk tunes in art music, musically saying "I want to be like that." It also has a secondary association

[89]Steven Brown, "Creativity as emulation: the cultural basis of creative cognition," *Frontiers in Psychology,* 15:1364596 (2024), 2.
[90] Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*, 151. (Emphasis original).

of music for space due to its inclusion on the soundtrack of the popular feature film, *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

Here, Tin replicates the august opening of Copland's fanfare by emulating the timpani hits (long, rests, short-short, long) and brass upward fanfare thematic material (Example 4.1).

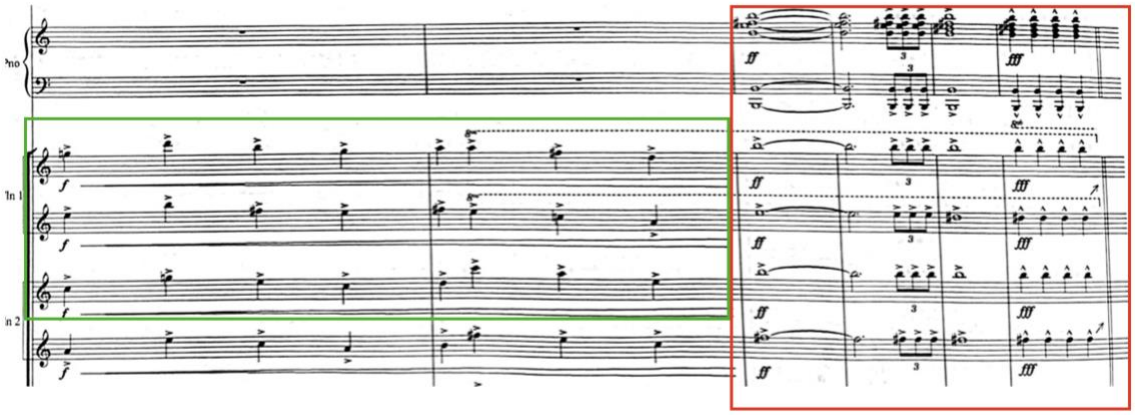
Example 4.1. Mm. 162 - 169 of "We Choose to Go to the Moon" excerpt of full score



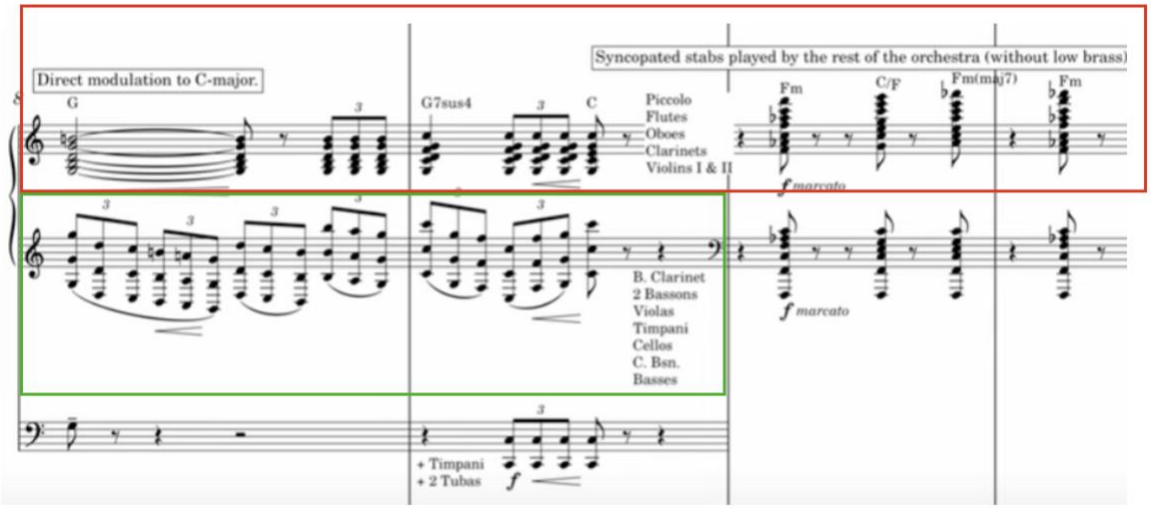
Another emulation of a major American music composer is found in mm. 186 through 191, where Tin moves to a new section through similar compositional technique as John Williams in his score for "The Throne Room and End Title" of *Star Wars: A New Hope*. Here Tin emulates Williams' approach to a new section rhythmically with the triplet anacrusis followed by a long chord. He emulates Williams' melodic treatment by using the strings to

descend and then jump high to start their descent again. These are both marked in comparison on the scores (Example 4.2, colored boxes mine).

Example 4.2. Comparison excerpts from Tin and Williams



Mm. 186–191 of Tin's "We Choose to Go to the Moon" excerpt of full score



Mm. 8–11 of Williams' "The Throne Room" excerpt of full score reduction with annotated analysis by Oskar Hrankowsky (2022).

The final example of how Tin emulates an exemplary composer is of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*. This time, Tin emulates compositional technique and the general aesthetic of a full symphony chorus racing to the end of the human endeavor of brotherhood. For this example,

refer to the excerpted pages of the full score of both the Tin and Beethoven in Appendix C. There are several points of emulation: 1) the agitation that Tin emulates in the strings through triplet driving rhythms that are found in Beethoven's strings, 2) the accented off-beat anticipated half note in Tin's m. 311 on page 196 in the score is similar to Beethoven's use of the same in the fifth measure of page 273 in the score, just before the *Maestoso,* 3) the final ascending melodic motifs and emphatic quarter note finale of Tin's last 17 measures on pages 196 and 197 in the score is similar to the ascending melodic motifs and emphatic quartet note finale of Beethoven's last 5 measures on page 276 in the score.

In all three examples, Tin is exploring his own admiration of one of the great composers of Western art music. I believe this is distinguished from the musical intent to quote another composer because each of example diverts enough from the original to be considered something new, confirming what Brown describes as "creativity in which creators…strategically select inspirational role models and to emulate their products as much as possible as a means of discovering their own uniqueness as creators."[91] An exemplarist musical practice is one that includes emulating those products of the exemplars we admire. For the composer, this means emulating their music in your own compositions.

EXEMPLARISM IN COACHING "COURAGE"

The eighth movement of Tin's *To Shiver the Sky* is a poem titled "Courage" by Amelia Earhart, the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean and later disappeared in her attempt to be the first woman to circumnavigate the world in flight.

[91] Brown, "Creativity as emulation: the cultural basis of creative cognition," 2.

COURAGE
(1927)
by Amelia Earhart[92]

Courage is the price that life exacts for granting peace
The soul that knows it not, knows no release
From little things:
Knows not the livid loneliness of fear,
Nor mountain heights where bitter joy can hear
The sound of wings.

How can life grant us boon of living, compensate
For dull gray ugliness and pregnant hate
Unless we dare
The soul's dominion? Each time we make a choice, we pay
With courage to behold resistless day
And count it fair.

Tin draws upon Earhart's poetry to create a soaring melodic contour and moments of anticipation within the building of harmonic tension and eventual release that harkens falling over the tip of an edge or making it above the clouds in an airplane. These musical aspects give aural imagery and demonstrate Tin's emulation of the virtue Earhart exhibited: courage.

Emulating an exemplary aviator or poet is not under examination here. Rather, I propose that an exemplarist musical practice is when teacher and student engage in the emotion of admiration together for the purpose of preparing a musical performance. This was just my experience recently when preparing a performance of this movement with one of my students. We found that engaging in exemplarism brought musical insight we desired to emulate during our performance and resulted in developing greater courage in ourselves.

This work of discovering the musicality we wished to perform with suggests that there is more than informed techniques and pedagogy at play. Trondalen writes on this topic and shares,

[92] In an unrelated but profound note, Earhart desired to be a published poet before her work in aviation. This poem is in the public domain. Christopher Tin, "Behind-the-Scenes: Courage," 0:00-1:01.

"We suggest that musicality is an existential dimension of seizing, absorbing, and participating in various modes of embodied musical experiences. Hence, musicality is not an intellectual constitution but a *lived experience*."[93] It was not enough for us to create a perfect performance, we hoped for connection to a lived experience.

The work began with each of us preparing the work separately and then rehearsing for the purpose of coaching prior to the performance date. As I coached with the student, I began to point out how Tin wrote long melodic contours and built tension over several pages to just escape a true resolution to the tonic scale degree in each release of the melody. We discerned that the musical representation of courage was tension built and the unresolved release like the reality of sensing freedom in flying above the clouds yet still risking everything not being on the ground. As I admired, so did my student. Mutual admiration then gave insight into the imagination of the student, and we worked towards emulating the student's imagined scene with their voice and my piano accompaniment.

This led to the motivating work of emulating courage by musically taking the risks that Earhart advises. We formulated moments of tension building interpreted by the courageous performers we imagined we would be. The act of discussing our imagined selves was an act of courage and we worked to learn what the music demanded from us as such: tempi choices, timbre choices, articulation choices, harmony voices, and the like. Certainly, these are moments of interpreted choices of every work performed by musicians. However, they were decided not by preference or informed pedagogy, but by the emulative principle of courage.

These moments performed in front of an audience created honesty to our formulations and therefore reflected Zagzebski's theory well. Furthermore, it seems to employ the ethical

[93] Trondalen, *Ethical Musicality*, 63. (Emphasis original).

musicality Trondalen speaks of: "…musicality unfolds, focusing on the body, relationship, time, and space, incorporating context, involvement, power, responsibility, sustainability, and hope. Hence, an ethical musicality—an art of becoming—offering hope of a 'good life.'"[94] An exemplarist musical practice is one that deals with the "art of becoming" Trondalen asserts is ethical musicality.

CONSTELLATION ADMIRATION IN "ASTRONOMY"

As I mentioned in Chapter One, the application of exemplarism to the theoretical analysis is not an abdication of other analytical tools. This section will offer what I view is exemplarist musical practice in analysis.

The fifth movement of *To Shiver the Sky* is titled "Astronomy" and Tin draws upon Renaissance polymath Nicolaus Copernicus' *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium*. Tin creates a contemplative canvas which to emulate Copernicus as a star-gazer through the formal, thematic, and rhythmic material. Inspired by the words of Copernicus: "And what is more beautiful than the sky, which, after all, embraces everything beautiful? Therefore, if the dignity of the sciences is to be judged according to their subject, then the most incomparable one will be the one which they call astronomy," Tin composes by literally quoting the stars for this movement.[95]

Tin recreates several of the constellation patterns by mapping the star's locations as a note to be played within the orchestra. The star locations become one with the pointillistic character of the piece. Noteworthy, for the wholistic concept of flight, is the choice of Tin to use

[94] Ibid, 82.
[95] Christopher Tin, "Behind-the-Scenes: Astronomy," YouTube video, 7:37, Christopher Tin, March 21, 2025, https://youtu.be/8VW5M2fQA14?si=xTX-ULHeYLDDLFjT, 1:54-2:09.

constellations related to flying creatures: Pegasus, Cygnus the swan, Draco the dragon, etc. Quoting the stars presents some new questions. Are we limited to the only to the admiration of moral exemplars, musical exemplars, or exemplary ideas in our efforts to embody and emulate? Can we admire and emulate the virtuous of stars or ideas? Copernicus claims their virtues are beauty and dignity. I propose Tin engages an exemplarist musical practice, as a practice of Trondalen's claims on the "art of becoming," and teaches us how to allow the stars to be a part of our becoming.

The analysis begins with the composer's inspiration from the chosen text: Nicolaus Copernicus' *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium*. Tin draws upon the text to establish formal, thematic, and rhythmic motives. The original writings of Copernicus are in Latin; however, Tin chooses to familiarize it through a translation into Polish, Copernicus' mother tongue. This vernacular text embodies Copernicus' intimate understanding of the universe.

The text is separated into three sections and a final line creating a ternary form through the three sections. Tin writes an instrumental introduction, sets the first strophe within an A section and sets the second strophe to new music creating the B section. This is then followed by the return of the latter half of the first strophe as an A' section to finish with a coda that sets the final line. These are illustrated through a Text Analysis in Table 4.1 and a Formal Analysis in Table 4.2.

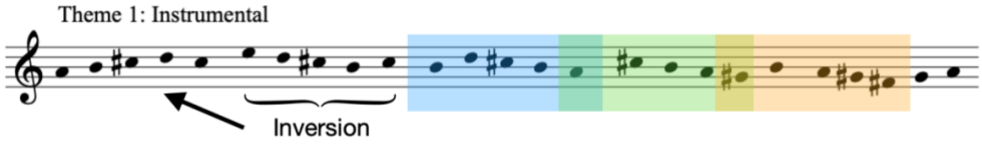
Table 4.1 - Text Analysis of Tin's "Astronomy"

	Polish	English
A	Astronomio, gwiezdna drogo, Tyś jest matką wszelkiej wiedzy Choćby człowiek żył ubogo Jego domem kosmos świetny Nic czystszego ponad gwiazdy. Sięgaj wyżej, gdy nad sobą Przewspaniałe śledzisz widowisko.	Astronomy, you're a path of stars, The mother of all knowledge. Even the poor Have the Universe as their home. Reach higher, and follow This most exquisite spectacle.
B	Astronomio, piękne nieba Ty poznajesz, masz za swoje Wobec twojej szlachetności Bledną ziemskie niepokoje. Patrząc w gwiazdy widzisz dzieło Boże.	Astronomy, beautiful skies Are yours to study. Your dignity is so great That all early troubles are nought. Looking at the stars, you see the work Of God.
A'	Astronomio, Nic czystszego ponad gwiazdy. Sięgaj wyżej, gdy nad sobą Przewspaniałe śledzisz Widowisko	Astronomy, Reach higher, and follow This most exquisite spectacle.
Coda	Gwiazdy, księżyc, I planety Astronomio	Stars, moon, and planet Astronomy

Table 4.2 - Formal Analysis of Tin's "Astronomy"

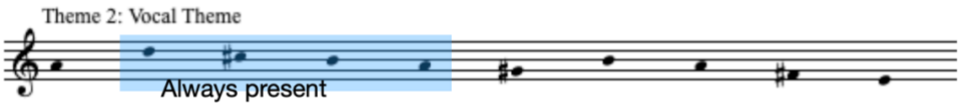
Sec	Measure	Form Label	Tempo	Text	Theme	Tonality	Harmony	Texture
Intro	1-12		Adagio, q=66		1	A major (I)	Pedal "A"	orchestra
1	13-23	A		Astronomio	2		Chromatic thirds seq. Over pedal "A"	S, A
2	24-42		Molto rit.	Choćby człowiek	2			S,A, add TB
3	43-49	B	A tempo	Astronomio	2 (1 descant) Vari/Dev	D major (IV)	D major - C#min7	Polyphonic, "twinkle"
4	50-56			Masz za swoje			C#min7 - D major	Duet, SA, TB
5	57-61		M. 61 - molto rit.	Widzisz dzieło Boże		E Major (V)	A min, Bmin7, E	Unison, homophonic
6	62-74	A'	A tempo	Astronomio, nic czysta	2	A major (I)	Chromatic thirds seq. Over pedal "A"	SATB homophonic
Coda	75-86			Astronomio	2		(F min, b vi)	

The primary thematic material is also an indicator of the ternary form. The piece begins with an introduction that outlines two major compositional features used throughout, descending scalar motion and the interval of a fourth. The introductory theme is broken into five melodic turns outlining the interval of a fourth and mostly with descending motion (Example 4.3). The first five notes are immediately inverted, and the last three create a sequence of three five-note motives overlapping each other, all beginning with a leap of a third and then descending, ending with an ascending cadential motion.



Example 4.3. First thematic motives of Tin's "Astronomy"

Following this introduction, each section of the ternary form is designated by the main "Astronomio" theme (Example 4.4). For the first occurrence, after an initial leap of a fourth, the descending scalar motive has a contour with almost "shooting star" like quality to its descent. This melodic motive appears at the second half of the first A section in measure 25 and reappears at the return of the A prime section in measure 62 and during the coda in measures 76–78.



Example 4.4. Second thematic motive of Tin's "Astronomy", the *Astronomio* motive

The B section begins with the first half of thematic descending scale which fits agreeably into the new tonality yet quickly moves into various new "falling star"-like motives that are traded between the high voices with a more static homophonic movement within the lower

voices. With each iteration the motive is slightly altered in its beginning or ending. This brings both continuity and newness to the motive, which enhances the familiar while evoking mystery.

The opening measures establish a unison pedal point on A. As mentioned above, the remaining instrumental introduction previews the harmonic and melodic material that will be use throughout the movement but all over the pedal A. As the choir enters in measure 13, the established pedal tone of A is present and continues throughout the entire A section. This pedal point acts as a "grounding" of sorts to the elusive melodies and harmonies written above. The pedal point is only broken in the B section as the bass line follows the harmonic oscillation of D major to C# minor 7 throughout. Eventually using chromatic modulations in the baseline, C# to C natural to create an A minor 6/4 chord, then from C natural to B natural to create a B minor7 chord which becomes the minor V of E major used throughout mm. 59–61 to create a major dominant to tonic relationship that returns us back to A major tonality (mixolydian borrowings in melody) in the return of the A' section in measure 62.

A final fascinating feature of the movement is the familiarity of rhythmic topoi in two instances. The first is a rhythmic motive that creates a "shimmer"-like effect or "twinkle," rather. In the second and fourth measure, Tin introduces a sixteenth and eighth note tied rhythmic combination to suggest a fast-moving embellishment. Melodically, the motive always appears embellished by a descending semitone turn. Tin uses this only one other time at the beginning of the B section, as part of a soprano descant, while each voice part has a moment of counterpoint to further establish a more developmental section of the piece. Another typical rhythmic motive is found in the B section, mm. 51–55, where Tin augments the text through a series of triplets. This text painting highlights the Polish phrases referring to "dignity," "troubles," and "looking." All can be assumed as important moments to draw out of the text, according to Tin's setting.

Despite the efforts to use compositional techniques that elicit familiarity, “Astronomy” evokes mystery by evading the often kitsch conventions of compositional patterns. It is evident that in creating a piece that emulates the vast expanse of space and the planetary bodies that hang there, the sense of vagueness, other worldly, and unknown ventures solicited through mixolydian scales, plagal cadences, accented suspensions, chromatic harmonic sequences, and texture.

Tin capitalizes on the relationship of the fourth scale degree by interchanging a mixolydian scale in the melodies above the pedal A. The mixolydian scale is identified by lowering the G or seventh scale degree in an A major scale, effectually creating a descending major scale on D over the pedal point A. Tin returns to the G# anytime there is cadential momentum to create a “ti - do” relationship within the melodic contour.

Plagal sensibilities are present not only in the use of mixolydian melodies, but also in plagal cadences. This is a primary harmonic feature of Tin’s “Astronomy.” During the renaissance period, Copernicus would have heard very similar plagal sounds created by modality such as mixolydian melodies and plagal cadences. This was so prominent in the church music of his time, that eventually the plagal cadence becomes known as the “Amen” cadence.[96]

Instead of using the typical dominant to tonic at cadential moments, the majority of the cadences are perfect plagal cadences. With the A major tonality and a pedal point “A” present throughout the entire A and A’ sections, Tin utilizes a D minor in first inversion to create the perfect plagal cadences. This serves two functions: 1) minor tonality evokes mystery and vagueness, while 2) the fourth and lowered sixth scale degrees pull inward to the third and fifth creating a strong cadential feeling. These can be found in measures 8–11, 22–24, 39, 71–75, 80–

[96] Terry, Jason. "A history of the plagal-amen cadence." PhD diss., University of South Carolina, 2016.

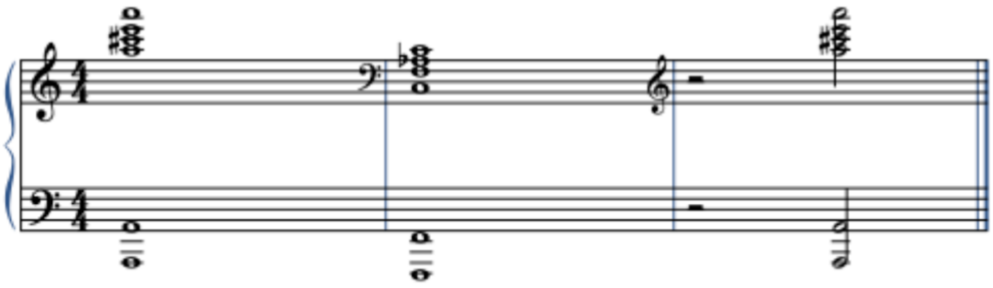
84. In every case, whether over multiple measures or within one measure, the chromatic movement gives strength to the cadence by a first inversion chord over the pedal A.

Tin technically does create a dominant to tonic modulation through an extended A major tonality release into D major in the B Section, measures 41–42. The harmonies oscillate between A major and E major over the pedal A, to create a functional V and V/V oscillation to I in the new key of D major. One might expect the modulation to establish E major as the new tonic given it is the dominant of A major; however, the D major tonality further establishes Tin's plagal sensibility of mystery and weakens the strict dominant relationship to serve the creation of a vastness or vagueness of the universe.

Even more, Tin uses accented suspensions to diffuse the strength of the release in these cadential moments. After six measures of harmonic tension building through the chromatic modulation of C# minor to A minor (C natural bass) to B minor to E major to A major of measures 55–62, the final release of measure 62 to A major includes a 4-3 suspension on the new key. Thus, accenting the suspension in the release rather than using the suspension to build tension for a release. This is a creative use in evading the strongest feeling of resolution. A similar tactic is used in measures 71–75 with an accented 9–8 suspension.

The use of chromaticism within the harmonic progression throughout the movement allows Tin to maneuver through the tonality with functional mystery. This is accomplished specifically using chromatic parallel major to minor chord progressions, common tone diminished seventh chords, and enharmonic modulations. Previously stated, one example is how Tin chromatically progresses from a D major to the D minor chord through the lowering of the F# to F natural. Thus, creating a perfect plagal cadence at the end of the phrases in the A sections.

The A sections also feature common tone diminished seventh chords. Tin utilizes the G# to serve as an enharmonic Ab and creates a common tone that can functionally be a diminished stepwise motion when against the pedal A in the bass as in measures 15 and 26 of the A section and measures 64–65 of the A' section. However, in the coda, Tin uses the enharmonic spelling of the same G# to Ab to bring an ominous F minor or flat VI chord in the penultimate harmony. The F minor is certainly striking but also shares neighboring chromatic movement to the final A major chords that precede and follow it (Example 4.5). Therefore, creating a mysterious secondary dominant-like cadence. Useful for reminding the hearer that as much as we can admire and know about the "stars, moon, and planets," the boundaries of the universe are yet to be drawn.



Example 4.5. Last three measures of reduced orchestration in Tin's "Astronomy"

It would be heinous to not observe the most unique feature of this movement in Tin's literal quotation of the stars through the texture of the B section. Tin chooses constellations of winged creatures to map onto the musical score through placing the constellation points in the texture of the orchestra. These stars are accompanied by the voices interplay of brief contrapuntal lines and the quick scalar and arpeggiated chords of the piano, celeste, and harp. These runs and arpeggiated chords in the upper register of the instruments elicit the magical "twinkle" effect we associate with the observing the stars.

The concepts of mystery and familiar are not often be used within the same sentence; however, when discussing the rapturous attention given to observing the universe, it feels appropriate. Indeed, it is our home; yet, we know so little of its boundaries. Tin replicates this juxtaposition of mystery and familiar in "Astronomy" through various compositional techniques that elude convention yet convincingly allude to it. The movement successfully emulates what Copernicus said where the virtue of the stars: beauty and dignity. Tin demonstrates exemplarism in musical meaning and settles in with Copernicus to testify their beauty and dignity. The one who analyzes with an exemplarist musical practice seeks to emulate beauty and dignity in their performance or study of this movement.

CONCLUSION

Forming an exemplarist musical practice can offer pedagogical, performative, and analytical methods to our lives as musicians. Trondalen points towards an ethical musicality that requires us to attend to the "art of becoming" and I propose that theories such as exemplarism allow us to explore the materials to become. Exemplarism purports that emulation is a form of becoming what you admire in another, as illustrated by Tin's emulation of Copland, Williams, and Beethoven. Applying exemplarism in the work of performance preparation and coaching can result in a process that aids in acquiring virtues through performance. Exploring how Tin engages a non-human exemplar in his musical emulation of the stars realizes the exemplarist musical practice in the work of analysis. If musicality is ethical, as Trondalen claims, when we "become musical humans recognizing that music changes people's *real* lives," then exemplarist musical practice offers a path to achieve this.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Philosophy is customarily not a first consideration when analyzing music. Many studies involve theoretical analysis and historical facts purposed to provide interpretative insight to performers with goals like creating authentic performance practices, understanding a composer's original intent, or identifying compositional techniques, to name a few. After we play, study, or hear the physical sounds of music we usually turn immediately to theoretical analyses of form and harmony or to the historical analyses of origination and performance practice. In some cases, these analyses may well satisfy the question of what drew our admiration to a musical piece. However, in many cases, an empirical approach fails to adequately answer. For such a moment, philosophy becomes practical.

The evident necessity of philosophy in that instance causes us to consider the philosophical conditioning, specifically in epistemology, we have undergone. In this paper, I have suggested the need for our philosophy to undergo a therapy-of-sorts and consider that how we know, why we know, and what we know about a piece of music requires good philosophy to explicate. This is helpful when considering the works of Christopher Tin who conceives of entire concepts for his multi-movement works and masterfully synthesizes disparate musics, musical gestures, cultures, and ideas into artful coalescence.

To Shiver the Sky, Tin's monumental work on human flight, demonstrates his ability to bring together that which seems worlds apart. Not in the least, the worlds of philosophy and music. Tin's work indubitably stretches its wings in a philosophical framework like we discovered in Zagzebski's Exemplarist Moral Theory. The oratorio features each of the elements of Exemplarist Moral Theory through musical composition. The most apparent of which is Tin's

choice of creating a libretto with the words of literal exemplars. These exemplars, whether hero, saint, or sage, became the objects of admiration as Tin composed each movement with music to fit their words and emulate the styles of their own historical periods. The work of emulating these exemplars is in the genre of oratorio, setting the exemplars as characters in the narrative. Moreso, Tin musically reveals the same premise of Exemplarist Moral Theory: the actions, motives, and judgements of exemplars are worthy of our admiration.

In Tin's other multi-movement vocal works, similar threads of exemplarism can be found, yet none more explicit than that of *To Shiver the Sky*. In determining the limitations of this study, it was necessary to exclude his other works. However, research of exemplarism within his other works is needed. Equally, it is likely that Tin's multi-movement works, including *To Shiver the Sky*, harbor other philosophical influences. Additionally, without greater scholarly interest in Christopher Tin's works, we are without insights into the composers and compositional movements that have influenced his own writing. Tin's *oeuvre* is already burgeoning and provides a vast playground for musicologists and philosophers interested in the intersection of music, virtue, and philosophy.

As I have studied exemplarism and applied it to *To Shiver the Sky*, I found myself asking the question does musically admiring exemplars work to really acquire virtue? I explored this in Chapter Four and considered the charge given by Trondalen that ethical musicianhood, so to speak, is when our music aids us "in becoming."[97] I proposed that an exemplarist musical practice, using the tenets of exemplarism as applied to music making, is a way to ethically practice musicianhood and outlined three seminal ideas on how to do so as a composer, vocal coach/teacher, and in musical analysis. It would seem there are direct implications in the field of

[97] Trondalen, *Ethical Musicality*, 4.

pedagogy, performance, and analysis. I suspect a comprehensive exemplarist musical practice could be outlined to include all aspects of musicianhood. This, I believe, requires more reflection by practitioners and scholarly studies over the course of its implementation from myself and those those who pick up its mantle.

An exemplarist musical practice identifies and executes ways to musically say, "I want to be like that." It combines the philosophical work of Zagzebski's Exemplarist Moral Theory with the daily practice of a musician. This study of Christopher Tin's *To Shiver the Sky* provided a textbook, if you will, to investigate exemplarism in musical form. Certainly, there are more musical works that can be investigated for exemplarism and possibly inform exemplarist musical practice. You may have one in mind that is supremely admirable to you. Or maybe one does not come to mind. In either case, the next time you come across an "I want to be like that" moment, pick up your exemplarist hat and try it on.

Bibliography

Baur, Steven. “Music, Morals, and Social Management: Mendelssohn in Post-Civil War America.” *American Music* 19, no. 1 (2001): 64–130.

Birondo, Noell. “Exemplarist Moral Theory.” Review of *Exemplarist Moral Theory* by Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski. *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* (Oct 2017). https://ndpr.nd.edu/reviews/exemplarist-moral-theory/#:~:text=The%20second%20major%20difference-%20is,account%20of%20virtue%20(128).

Brooks, Edward, Oliver Coates, and Liz Gulliford. 2024. “The Use of Biographical Narratives in Exemplarist Moral Education.” *Journal of Moral Education* 53 (1): 176–94.

Brown, Howard Mayer. “Emulation, Competition, and Homage: Imitation and Theories of Imitation in the Renaissance.” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 35, no. 1 (1982): 1–48.

Brown, Steven. "Creativity as emulation: the cultural basis of creative cognition." *Frontiers in Psychology* 15 (2024): 1364596.

Cardew, Ben. “Wadada Leo Smith: Rosa Parks: Pure Love. an Oratorio of Seven Songs.” Pitchfork, February 15, 2019. https://pitchfork.com/reviews/albums/wadada-leo-smith-rosa-parks-pure-love-an-oratorio-of-seven-songs/.

Cockayne, Daniel. “Considering Matthew Shepard: Normative and Anti-Normative Queer Spatial Narratives and the Politics of Performance in Choral Music.” *Cultural Geographies* 26, no. 4 (2019): 471–85.

Croce, Michel. 2019. “Exemplarism in Moral Education: Problems with Applicability and Indoctrination.” *Journal of Moral* Education 48 (3): 291–302.

Duchan, Joshua S. “Collegiate a Cappella: Emulation and Originality.” *American Music* 25, no. 4 (2007): 477–506.

Harman-Bishop, Caroline. "Aristotelian Virtue and Teaching and Learning in Music Performance." Ed.D diss., University of Glasgow, 2018.

Harold, J. “On the Ancient Idea that Music Shapes Character.” *Dao*, 15, 341–354 (2016).

Kascsak, T. D. “The good, the bad and the excellent: An exploration of moral exemplarism theory.” Master’s thesis, Oklahoma State University, 2021.

Kotsonis, Alkis. “On the Limitations of Moral Exemplarism: Socio-Cultural Values and Gender.” *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 23, no. 1 (2020): 223–35.

"Looking Back... Civilization IV." CVG. July 6, 2006. Archived from the original on August 8, 2014. Retrieved December 31, 2012. Accessed March 29, 2025. https://web.archive.org/web/20140808054803/http:/www.computerandvideogames.com/142558/interviews/looking-back-civilization-iv/?page=2

Meek, Esther Lightcap. *Loving to know: Introducing covenant epistemology*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011.

Meek, Esther Lightcap. *Doorway to artistry: Attuning your philosophy to enhance your creativity*. Cascade Books, 2024.

Muffling, Adrian van. "Human Flight throughout the Ages." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 131, no. 1 (1927): 1–6.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*. Translated by Peter Preuss. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publ. Co, 1980.

Oxfeld, Jenna "Getting in Synch". *Stanford Magazine* (May 2004). Archived from the original on January 26, 2018. Retrieved May 16, 2017. Accessed March 29, 2025. https://web.archive.org/web/20180126223833/https:/alumni-esc.stanford.edu/get/page/magazine/article/?article_id=35936.

Odegard, Douglas. "Locke as an Empiricist." *Philosophy,* 40, no. 153 (1965): 185–96.

Scruton, Roger. "Analytical Philosophy and the Meaning of Music." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 46 (1987): 169–76.

Snow, Nancy E. 2023. "Teaching Virtues in the Military." *Journal of Military Ethics* 22 (3/4): 185–99.

Smither, Howard E. "Oratorio." *Grove Music Online.* 2001; Accessed 10 May. 2023. https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000020397.

Szutta, Natasza. 2019. "Exemplarist Moral Theory – Some Pros and Cons." *Journal of Moral Education,* vol. 48 (3): 280–90.

Terry, Jason. "A History of the Plagal-Amen Cadence." PhD diss., University of South Carolina, 2016.

Tin, Christopher. "Behind-the-Scenes: Astronomy," YouTube video, 7:37, Christopher Tin, March 21, 2025, https://youtu.be/8VW5M2fQA14?si=xTX-ULHeYLDDLFjT.

Tin, Christopher, "Behind-the-Scenes: Daedalus and Icarus." YouTube video, 4:44. Christopher Tin. March 20, 2025. https://youtu.be/OPUovqNfA5Q?si=SmJwLWV5M7rdOy-x.

Tin, Christopher, “Behind-the-Scenes: The Fall.” YouTube video, 6:09. Christopher Tin. March 20, 2025. https://youtu.be/9YlLOTVi0qQ?si=yb64T0JlJpjE1Pt2.

Tin, Christopher, “Behind-the-Scenes: The Heavenly Kingdom.” YouTube video, 7:40. Christopher Tin. Accessed March 20, 2025. https://youtu.be/-8uzp8CzLAQ?si=bcQKd2EAep4Cy9LH&t=216.

Tin, Christopher. “Behind-the-Scenes: *Sogno di Volare*.” YouTube Video, 6:00. Christopher Tin. July 12, 2020. Accessed March 20, 2025. https://youtu.be/vU6TQB_Hpks?si=tpKn6yzm-gpL4kbA.

Tin, Christopher. “Full Length Biography.” Christopher Tin – Composer. Accessed March 17, 2025. https://christophertin.com/pages/biography.

Tin, Christopher. “Let's Go There – ‘A Turandot for Today’ with the Chinese American Museum - Washington National Opera.” 6 May 2024, interviewed by Eric Hing Tao Hung. YouTube video. https://youtu.be/EEXly6XThNg?si=EsTmZE18Rth1xNrN.

Tin, Christopher. *To Shiver the Sky*. Los Angeles, California: Tin Works Publishing [BMI], 2020.

"The 'shakti' of sound". *The Hindu*. Mar 27, 2003. Archived from the original on August 21, 2003. Retrieved December 31, 2012. https://web.archive.org/web/20030821140518/http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/mp/2003/03/27/stories/2003032700930100.htm.

Trondalen, Gro. *Ethical Musicality*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2023.

Turri, John, Mark Alfano, and John Greco. "Virtue Epistemology." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2021 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.). https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2021/entries/epistemology-virtue.

Watson, L & Wilson, A 2019, 'Review essay: Exemplarist moral theory', *Journal of Moral Philosophy*, vol. 16 (6), 755-768.

Watson, Lani. 2019. “Educating for Inquisitiveness: A Case against Exemplarism for Intellectual Character Education.” *Journal of Moral Education* 48 (3): 303–15.

Weilerstein, Joshua, and Christopher Tin. “Christopher Tin talks to Joshua Weilerstein,” interview by Joshua Weilerstein, nkoda, June 18, 2020, *YouTube,* video, 48:20, https://youtu.be/CIcgUVDLoFI?si=6RcBguNza6DwV0in.

Westover, Jonas. "Tin, Christopher." *Grove Music Online.* January 20, 2016. Accessed March 4, 2025. https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.A2289576.

Zagzebski, Linda Trinkaus. *Divine Motivation Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Zagzebski, Linda Trinkaus. *Exemplarist Moral Theory*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019.

Appendix A: Preface of *To Shiver the Sky: An Oratorio*
By Christopher Tin

This is the story of flight: of humanity's quest to break the bonds of earth, challenge the heavens, and take our rightful place among the stars.

It's a story whose main protagonists strapped on helmets and boots, to brave the longest distances just to leave their footprints on new lands. But it's also the tale of those who made these great achievements possible: like the astronomers who showed us our place among the stars, and the poets who showed us our place between heaven and hell. Or the 19th-century French novelist who invented science fiction— whose imaginings, a century later, stoked a thirst for space travel, and gave an American president the public support needed to commit his country towards humanity's singular greatest achievement: landing a man on the Moon, and returning him safely to earth.

This is a story of courage: the courage to be the first woman to fly the Atlantic, or the first man launched across the threshold of space. But it's also a story of failure: of the fall of man, whose hubris made him reach for forbidden knowledge. It's a story riddled with cataclysmic disaster; where the soaring inventions of great men and women plummet to earth in fiery wreckage. And at its darkest moments, it's also a story of death: one where airplanes built to soar among the clouds are used instead for dropping bombs; or on one day of extreme darkness, are used as bombs themselves.

But humans are resilient, and the call of the sky unavoidable. And despite innumerable failures, whenever the night seems darkest, that dream of flight beckons to us back to our feet—to emerge from the darkness to re-behold the stars.

This is the story of flight told through music, and through the words of 11 of history's pioneers: pilots and engineers, scientists and storytellers, stargazers and mystics; men and women who freed us from the shackles of gravity, and stretched the limits of our imagination. It's the greatest adventure on which man has ever embarked.

Appendix B: Lyrics & Translations

I: Sogno di Volare ("The Dream of Flight")
Lyrics from Leonardo da Vinci's writings on flight
Adapted by Chiara Cortez
Sung in Italian

Una volta che avrai
Spiccato il volo, deciderai
Sguardo verso il ciel saprai:
Lì a casa il cuore sentirai.

Prenderà il primo volo verso il sole il grande uccello
Sorvolando il grande Monte Ceceri
Riempendo l'universo di stupore e gloria.

Una volta che avrai spiccato il volo,
Allora deciderai
Sguardo verso il ciel saprai:
Lì a casa il cuore sentirai.

L'uomo verrà portato dalla sua creazione
Come gli uccelli, verso il cielo...
Riempendo l'universo di stupore e gloria.

Gloria!

Once you have taken flight,
You'll decide
Gaze towards the sky, you'll know that
That is where your heart will feel at home.

The first great bird will take flight towards the sun,
Sweeping over the great Mt. Ceceri,
Filling the universe with wonder and glory.

Once you have taken flight
You'll decide
Gaze towards the sky, you'll know that
That is where your heart will feel at home.

Man will be lifted by his own creation,
Just like the birds, towards the sky,
Filling the universe with wonder and glory.

Glory!

II: The Heavenly Kingdom
Lyrics from Hildegard von Bingen: "Scivias"
Sung in Latin

"Qui sunt ii qui nubes Volant, et quasi columbae ad fenestras suas?"
Quod dicitur: Qui sunt ii qui pleno desiderio et plena devotione ad superna volant.
Hi enim sunt, qui propter supernum amorem terrena regna conculcant, et coelestia quaerunt.

"Who are these who fly like clouds, and like doves to their homes?"
That is to say: Who are these who fly full of longing and devotion to heavenly things.
For these are they who, in celestial love, abandon earthly kingdoms, and seek heavenly ones.

III: Daedalus and Icarus
Lyrics from Ovid's "Metamorphoses"
Sung in Latin

"Terras licet et undas obstruat:
et caelum certe patet; ibimus illac:
omnia possideat, non possidet aera Minos.

Icare, me duce carpe viam!"

Caelum certe patet
non possidet aera Minos.
Caelum certe patet
Icare, me duce carpe viam!

"Although the lands and waters are blocked,
the sky at least lies open; we will fly there.
Minos may possess everything, but he does not possess the air.
Icarus, lead the way!"

The sky is open
Minos does not possess the air
The sky is open
Icarus, lead the way!

Dixit et ignotas animum dimittit
in artes naturamque novat.
Nam ponit in ordine pennas a minima coeptas,

longam breviore sequenti,
ut clivo crevisse putes:

sic rustica quondam fistula
disparibus paulatim surgit avenis;

tum lino medias et ceris alligat imas

atque ita conpositas parvo curvamine flectit,

ut veras imitetur aves.

Instruit et natum: "medio" que "ut limite curras,
Icare,"
ait "moneo, ne, si demissior ibis, unda gravet
pennas,
si celsior, ignis adurat:
inter utrumque vola."
"Me duce carpe viam!"

Dedit oscula nato non iterum repetenda

suo pennisque levatus
ante volat comitique timet.

Et iam Iunonia læva parte Samos
dextra Lebinthos erat fecundaque melle
Calymne,
cum puer audaci cœpit gaudere volatu
deseruitque ducem cælique cupidine tractus

altius egit iter. Rapidi vicinia solis
mollit odoratas, pennarum vincula, ceras;

tabuerant ceræ: nudos quatit ille lacertos,
remigioque carens non ullas percipit auras,
oraque cærulea patrium clamantia nomen
excipiuntur aqua.

"Icare, Icare, ubi es?

Ubi es, Icare?"

He spoke and sends down his mind
into unknown arts and changes his nature.
For he puts feathers in a row beginning with the
small ones,
and the shorter ones following the long ones,
so that you should think it has grown on an
incline;
in the same way that a countryman's pipe
gradually builds up with reeds of different
lengths.
Then he binds the middle ones with thread and
the last feathers with wax
and then bends what he has created by a small
curvature as
to mimic real birds.

He taught his son: "Travel the middle course,
Icarus,
I warn you, if you go too low, the water will
weigh down your wings,
too high and the sun will scorch you:
stay between both."
"Lead the way!"

He gave to his son kisses, never again to be
repeated,
and having lifted himself up on his wings
he flies first, yet fears for his companion.

And now Juno's Samos was on the left side
and on the right was Lebynthos and Kalymnos
rich in honey,
when the boy began to rejoice in his bold flight
and deserted his leader, and attracted by a desire
for the sky
he took his path higher. The vicinity of the sun
softened the fragrant wax, the chains of the
feathers;
the wax melted: he shook his bare arms
but lacking wings he took up no air,
and his mouth, shouting his father's name,
was swept up in the blue sea.

"Icarus, Icarus, where are you?

Where are you, Icarus?"

IV: The Fall

Lyrics from Dante Alighieri's "Divine Comedy"
Translation by Charles Eliot Norton
Sung in Italian

O gente umana, per volar sù nata,
perché a poco vento così cadi?

"E però leva sù; vinci l'ambascia

con l'animo che vince ogne battaglia,
se col suo grave corpo non s'accascia.

Più lunga scala convien che si saglia;
non basta da costoro esser partito.
Se tu mi 'ntendi, or fa sì che ti vaglia."

(Una volta che avrai
Spiccato il volo, deciderai
Sguardo verso il ciel saprai:
Lì a casa il cuore sentirai.)

Salimmo sù, el primo e io secondo,
tanto ch'i' vidi de le cose belle
che porta 'l ciel, per un pertugio tondo.

E quindi uscimmo a riveder le stelle.

O human race, born to fly upward,
wherefore at a little wind dost thou so fall?

"And therefore raise thee up, o'ercome the anguish
With spirit that o'ercometh every battle,
If with its heavy body it sink not.

A longer stairway it behooves thee mount;
'Tis not enough from these to have departed;
Let it avail thee, if thou understand me."

(Once you have taken flight,
You'll decide
Gaze towards the sky, you'll know that
That is where your heart will feel at home.)

We mounted up, he first and I the second,
Till I beheld through a round aperture
Some of the beauteous things that Heaven doth bear;

Thence we came forth to rebehold the stars.

V: Astronomy

Lyrics from Nicolaus Copernicus' "De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium"
Polish translation and poeticization by Janusz Mrzigod
Sung in Polish

Astronomio, gwiezdna drogo,
Tyś jest matką wszelkiej wiedzy.
Choćby człowiek żył ubogo,
Jego domem kosmos świetny.

Nic czystszego ponad gwiazdy.
Sięgaj wyżej, gdy nad sobą
Przewspaniałe śledzisz
Widowisko.

Astronomio, piękne nieba
Ty poznajesz, masz za swoje.
Wobec twojej szlachetności
Bledną ziemskie niepokoje.
Patrząc w gwiazdy
widzisz dzieło
Boże.

Gwiazdy, księżyc, I planety.

Astronomy, you're a path of stars,
The mother of all knowledge.
Even the poor
Have the Universe as their home.

There is nothing purer than the stars.
Reach higher, and follow
This most exquisite
Spectacle.

Astronomy, beautiful skies
Are yours to study.
Your dignity is so great
That all earthly troubles are nought.
Looking at the stars,
You see the work
of God.

Stars, moon, and planets.

VI: To the Stars

Lyrics from Jules Verne's "De la Terre à la Lune"
Adaptation and translation by Gabriel Majou
Sung in French

L'homme a commencé par voyager à quatre pattes,
et puis un beau jour, sur ses deux pieds, puis en charette.
Rapidement, il bâtit la patache et prit la mer.
Le lendemain, partit en diligence puis en chemin de fer.

On va voyager sur la Lune,
on ira aux planètes,
on ira aux étoiles!

L'homme a commencé par voyager à quatre pattes,
puis il a continué par voyager sur ses deux pieds.

On établira prochainement des trains en forme de fusées
dans lesquels se fera commodément
le voyage de la Terre à la Lune.

L'homme a commencé par voyager à quatre pattes,
puis il a continué par voyager sur ses deux pieds,
avancer en charrette, en coche, patache, et diligence.
Aujourd'hui c'est les chemins d'fer, les montgolfières, les aéroplanes,
demain l'on construira pleins de fusées dans lesquels se fera
prochainement le voyage de la Terre à la Lune!

De la Lune vers les cieux,
et des cieux aux nuages,
des nuages à la Terre,
et de là, s'élancer loin dans l'espace aux étoiles!

Man began by traveling on all fours,

then one day, on his own two feet, then in a cart.

Soon after, he built a vessel and took to the seas.
The next day he went by stagecoach, and then by train.

We shall travel to the Moon,
we shall travel to the planets,
we shall travel to the stars!

Man began by traveling on all fours,

then he continued on his own two feet.

Soon, we will create trains made of rockets,

in which we will comfortably make
the journey from the Earth to the Moon.

Man began by traveling on all fours,

then he continued on his own two feet,
travelling by cart, carriage, vessel, and stagecoach.
Today it's trains, hot air balloons, and planes,

tomorrow we build rockets in which

we will soon travel from the Earth to the Moon!

From the Moon to the sky,
from the sky to the clouds,
from the clouds to the Earth,
and from there, we launch ourselves into space, to the stars!

VII: Oh, the Humanity

Lyrics from speeches by Ferdinand von Zeppelin
Adaptation and translation by Evita Wagner
Sung in German

Es gibt mir die Zuversicht,
dass mein Werkzeug ausgenutzt wird
zum Segen und zum Vorteil des Deutschen
Reiches.

Die Wissenschaft wird sich der Sache annehmen,
die Technik wird sie vervollkommnen,
die Naturkunde
wird die Gesetze klarlegen,
die Erd- und Völkerkunde
wird es als ganz besonderes Instrument
ausnutzen,
die Volkswirtschaft
wird die Notwendigkeit, den Vorteil und Nutzen
einer Investition zeigen.

Die Luftschifffahrt wird sich zum friedlichen
Austausch
der Völker ausbilden lassen!

Oh, Unglück!

It gives me confidence
that my instrument is being used
for the blessing and advantage of the German
Empire.

Science will adopt this project,
technology will perfect it,
natural science will
unearth the laws,
geography and ethnology will
use it as a special instrument,

the economy will
show the necessity and the advantage and
benefits of investments.

Air travel will be used for peaceful interaction

between nations.

Oh, the misfortune!

VIII: Courage

A setting of Amelia Earhart's poem 'Courage'
Sung in English

Courage is the price that Life exacts for granting
peace.

The soul that knows it not, knows no release
from little things:

Knows not the livid loneliness of fear,
Nor mountain heights where bitter joy can hear
The sound of wings.

How can life grant us boon of living, compensate
For dull gray ugliness and pregnant hate
Unless we dare

The soul's dominion? Each time we make a
choice, we pay
With courage to behold the resistless day,
And count it fair.

IX: Become Death

Lyrics from the Bhagavad Gita, as quoted by J. Robert Oppenheimer
Sung in Sanskrit

divi sūrya-sahasrasya
bhaved yugapad utthitā
yadi bhāḥ sadṛśī sā syād
bhāsas tasya mahātmanaḥ

kālo 'smi loka-kṣayakṛt pravṛddho

If the radiance of a thousand suns
were to burst at once in the sky,
that would be like the splendor
of the mighty one.

Now I have become death, destroyer of worlds.

X: The Power of the Spirit

Lyrics from quotes by Yuri Gagarin
Sung in Russian

Obletev Zemlyu v korable-sputnike,
ya uvidel, kak prekrasna nasha planeta.
Lyudi, budem hranit i preumnozhat etu krasotu,
a ne razrushat ee!

Ved glavnaya sila v cheloveke –
eto sila duha!

Orbiting Earth in the spaceship,
I saw how beautiful our planet is.
People, let us preserve and increase this beauty,
not destroy it!

The main force in man –
is the power of the spirit!

XI: We Choose to Go to the Moon

Lyrics from John F. Kennedy's Address at Rice University on the Nation's Space Effort
Sung in English

We choose to go to the moon.
We choose to go to the moon in this decade
and do the other things, not because they are easy,
but because they are hard.
Because that goal will serve to organize and measure
the best of our energies and skills.

We choose to go to the moon.
We choose to go to the moon in this decade
because that challenge is one that we are willing to
accept,
one we are unwilling to postpone,
and one which we intend to win.

We set sail on this new sea,
because there is new knowledge to be gained.
New rights to be won, and they must be won
and used for the progress of all people.

For space science, like nuclear science
and technology has no conscience of its own.
Whether it will become a force for good or ill depends
on man.
Whether this new ocean will be a sea of peace
or a new terrifying theatre of war...
a theatre of war!

For the eyes of the world now look into space,
the moon and the planets beyond,
with hopes for knowledge and peace.
We have vowed that we shall not see space filled with
weapons,
but with instruments of knowledge.
We have vowed that we shall not see it governed by a
hostile flag,
but with a banner of freedom and peace.

There is no strife, no prejudice, no conflict in outer
space.
Its conquest deserves the very best of all mankind.

We choose to go to the moon!

But why some say the moon? Why choose this as our
goal?
Why thirty-five years ago fly the Atlantic?
And they may well ask why climb the highest
mountain? Why?

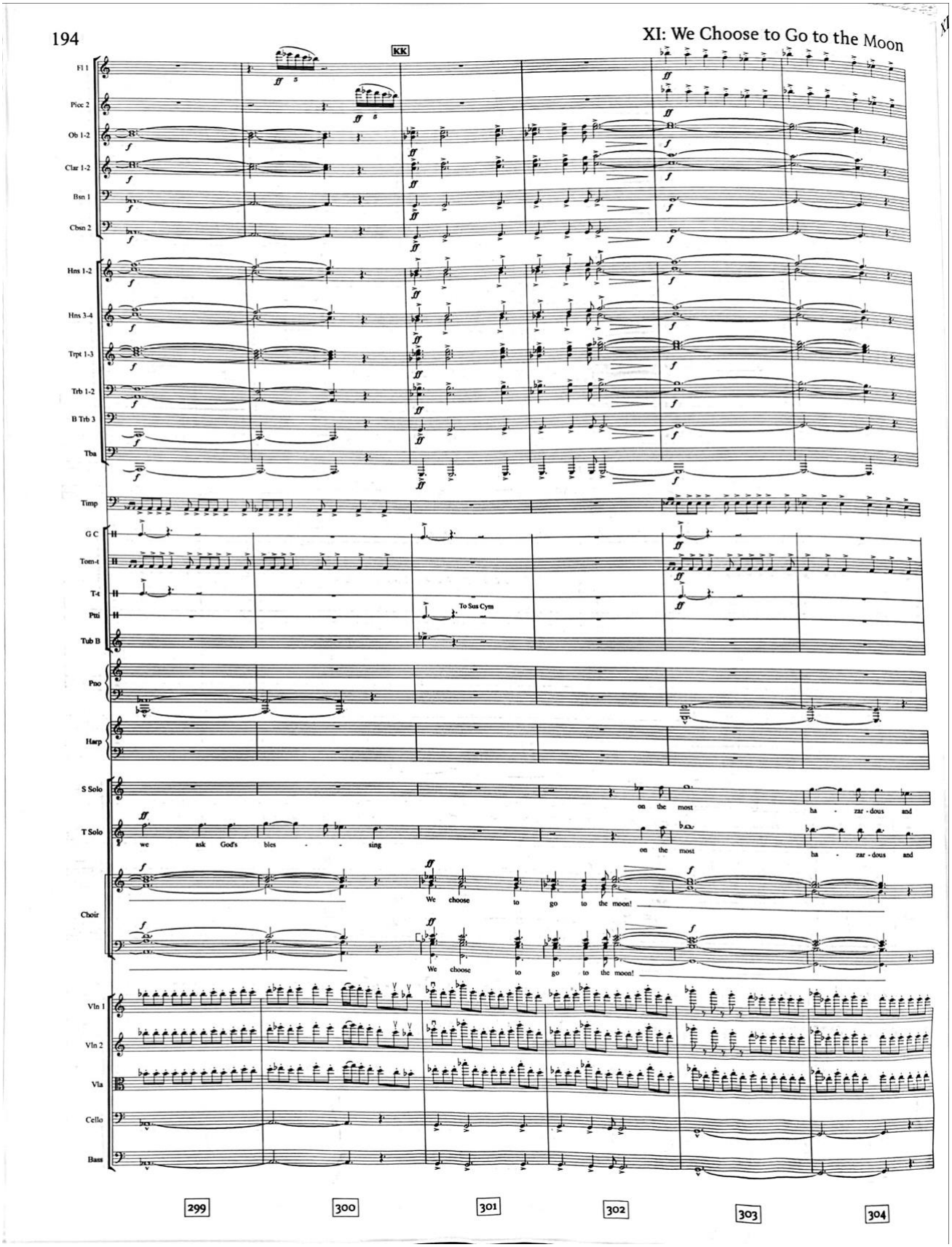
Many years ago the great British explorer George
Mallory,
who was to die on Mt. Everest, was asked why did he
want to climb it.
He said: "Because it's there."

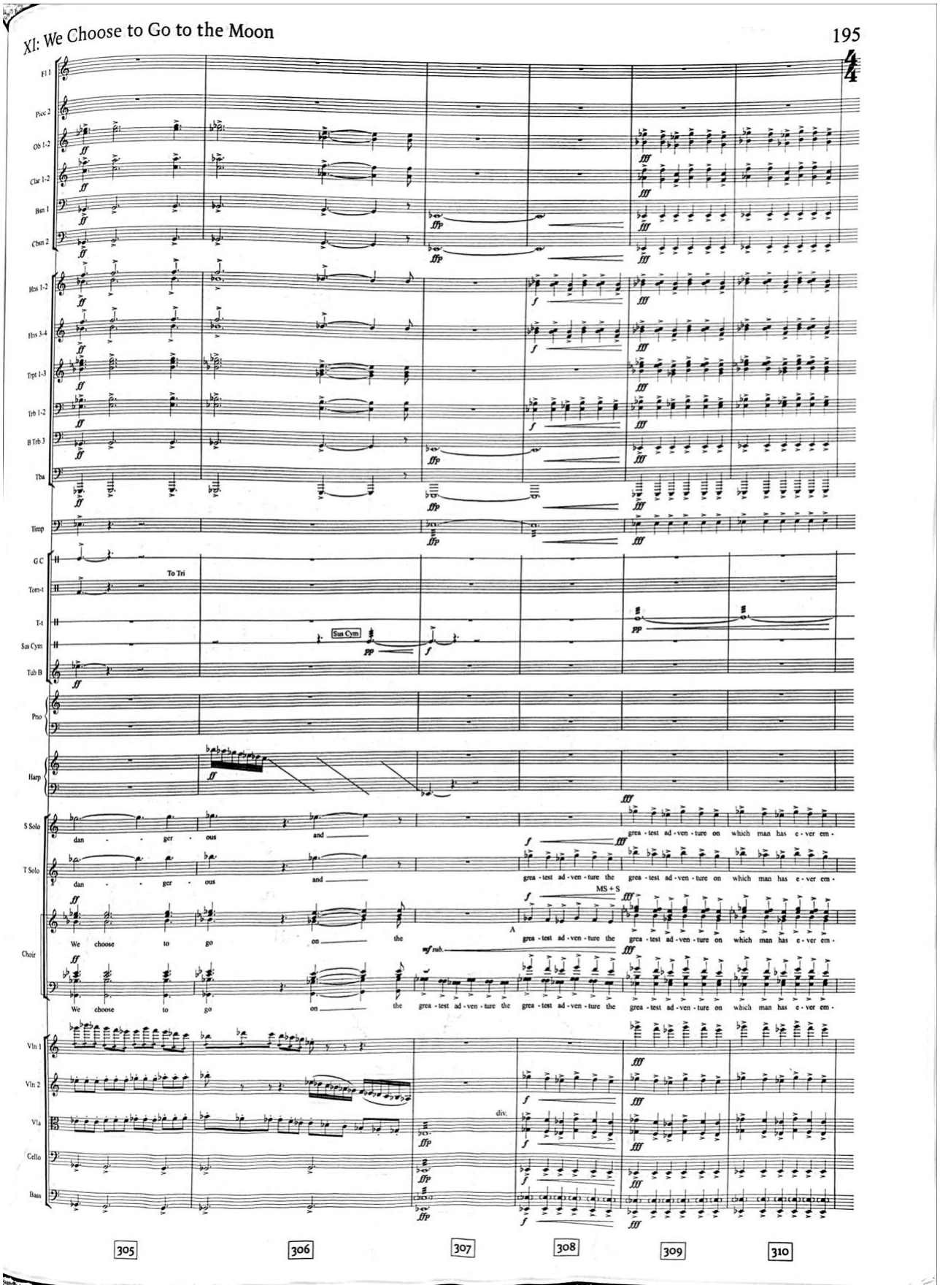
Space is there and we're going to climb it!
Space is there and the moon and the planets!
Space is there, and new hopes for knowledge and
peace are there!

And therefore as we set sail,
we ask God's blessing
on the most hazardous and dangerous
and greatest adventure on which man has ever
embarked.

We choose the moon,
We choose the stars,
We choose the sky...
We choose to go!

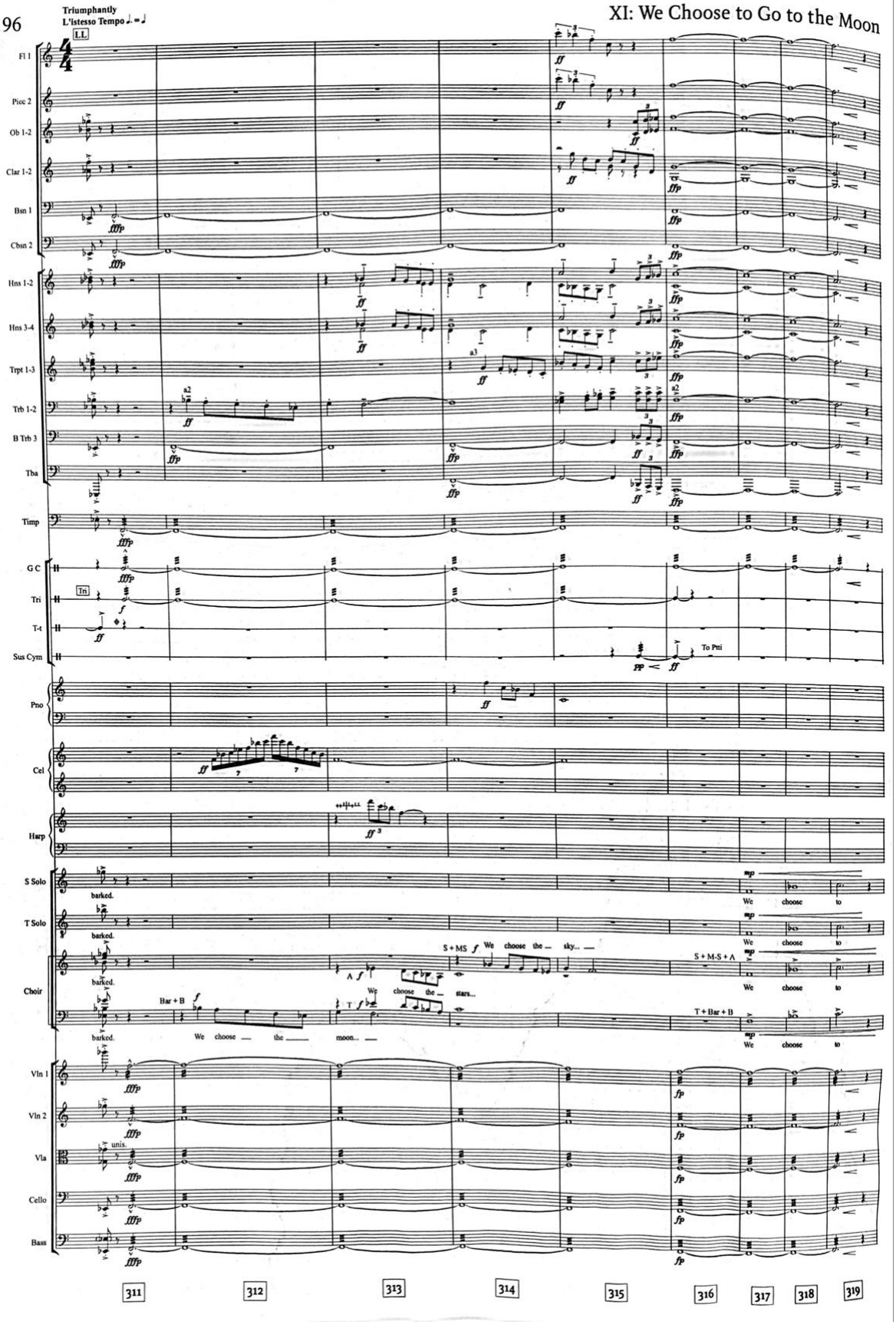
Appendix C: Excerpts of Tin's *To Shiver the Sky* & Beethoven's Ninth Symphony

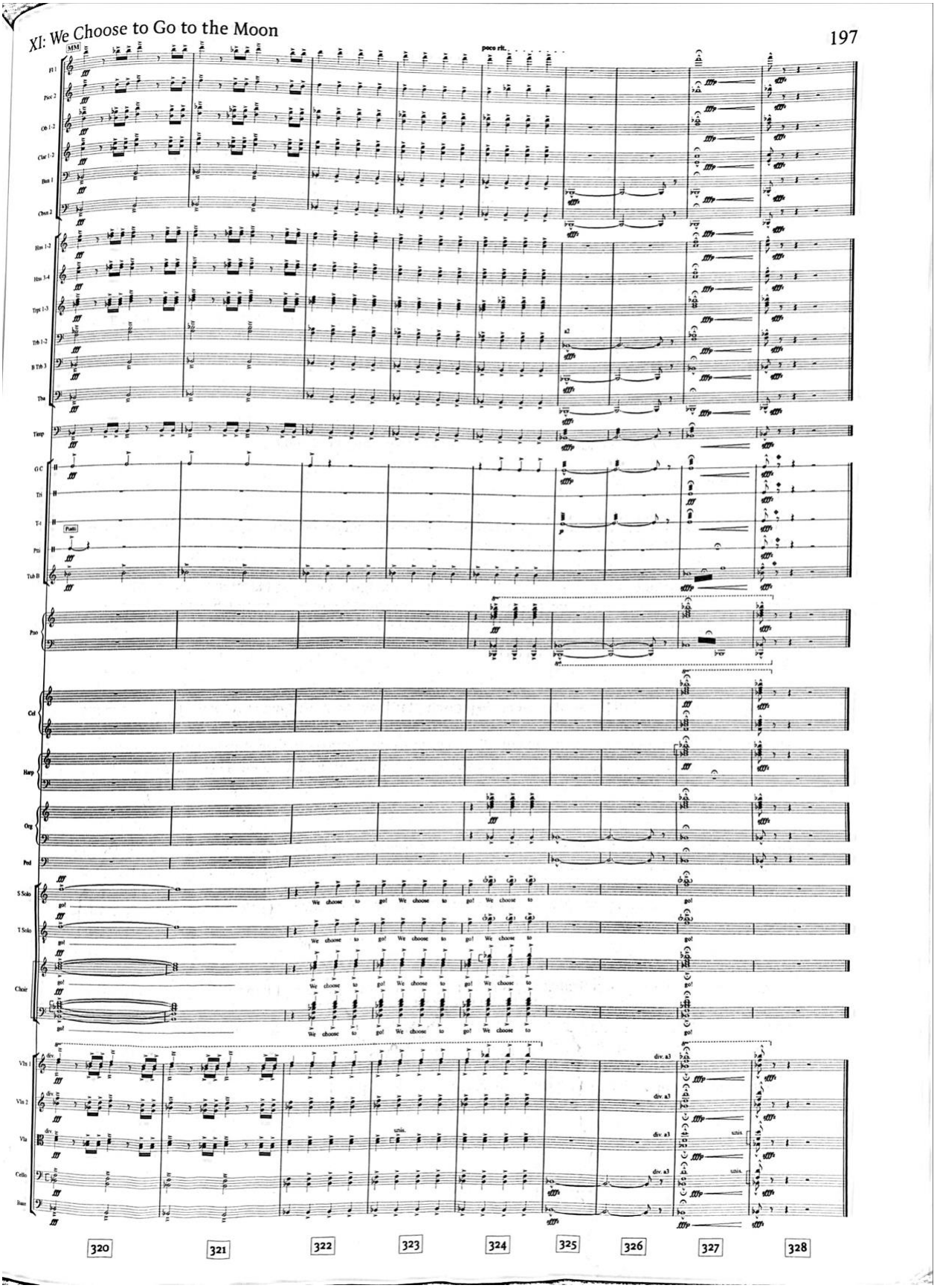


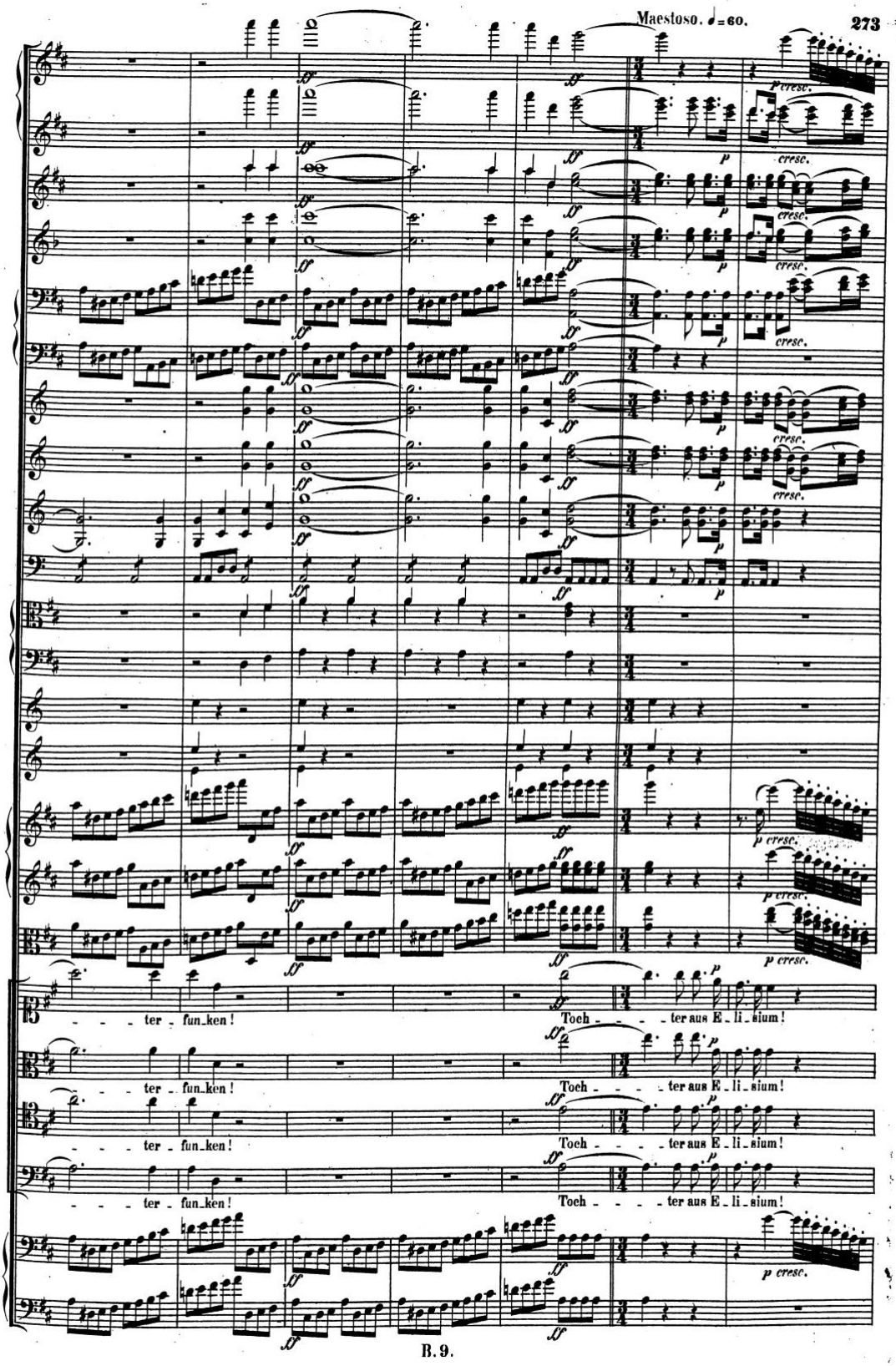

Fl 1
Picc 2
Ob 1-2
Clar 1-2
Bsn 1
Cbsn 2
Hns 1-2
Hns 3-4
Trpt 1-3
Trb 1-2
B Trb 3
Tba
Timp
G C
To Tri
Tom-t
T-t
Sus Cym
Tub B
Pno
Harp
S Solo
T Solo
Choir
Vln 1
Vln 2
Vla
Cello
Bass
dan - - ger - ous and
We choose to go on the
grea - test ad - ven - ture on which man has e - ver em -
grea - test ad - ven - ture the
MS + S
A
div.
305
306
307
308
309
310

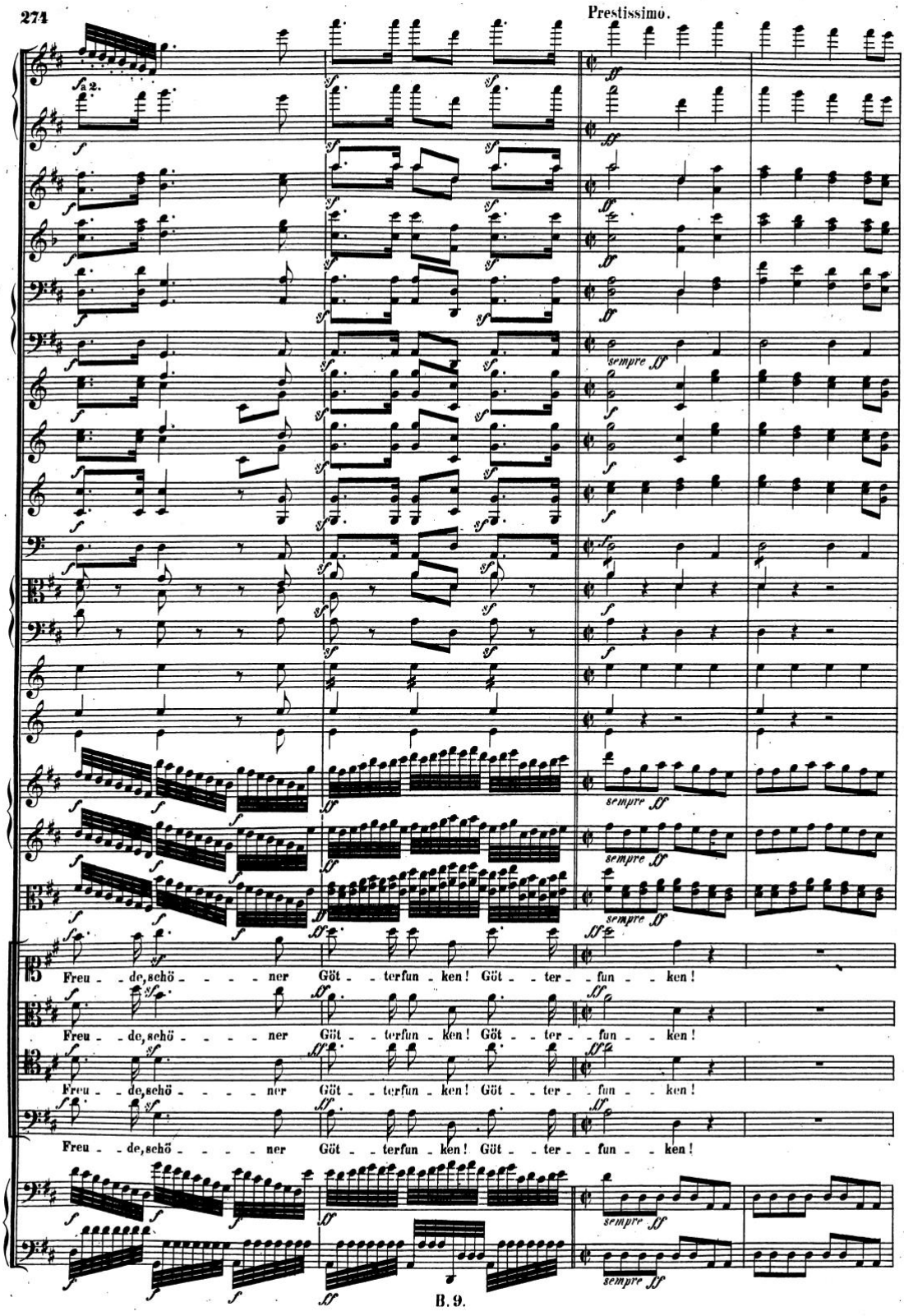
Triumphantly
L'istesso Tempo ♩. = ♩

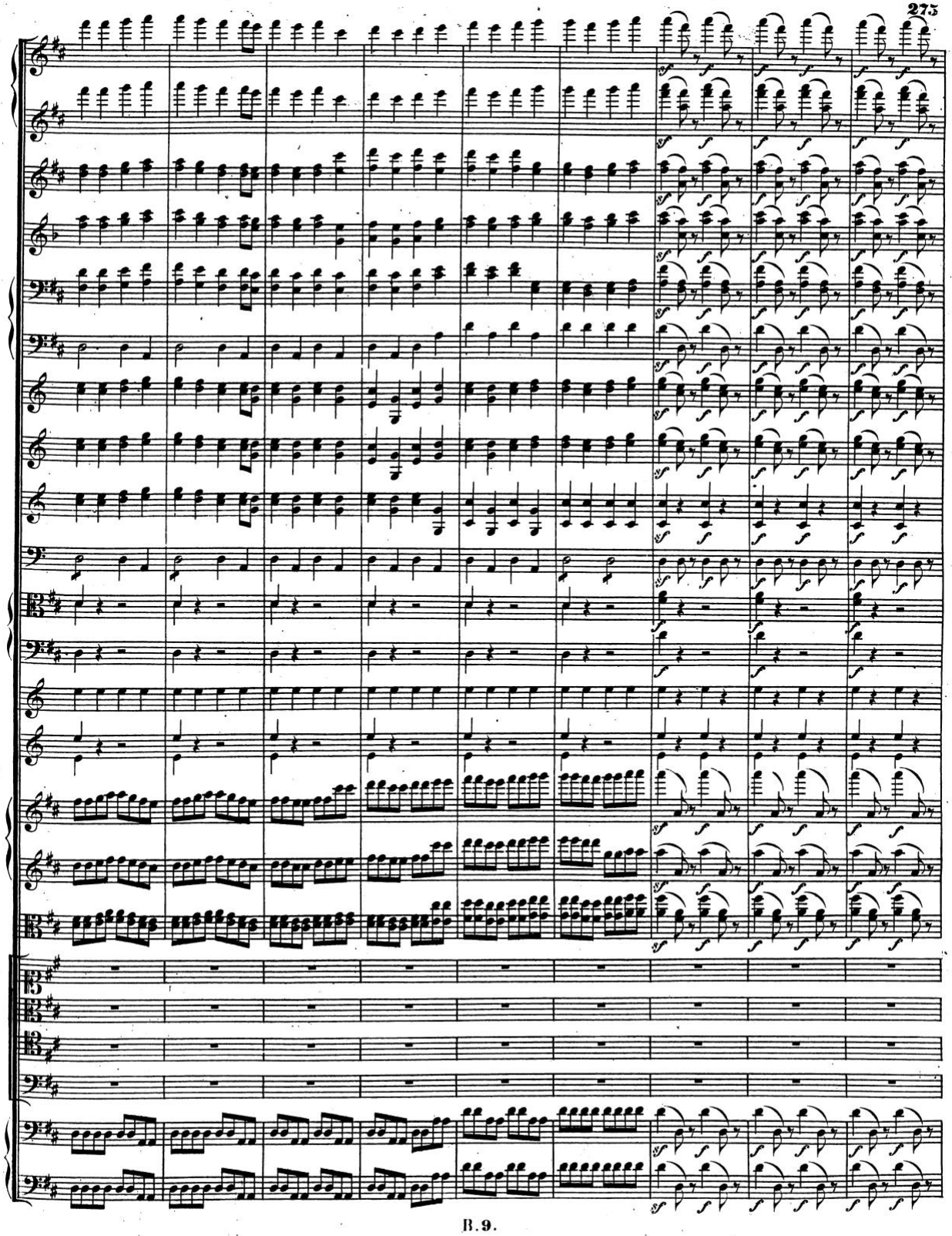
XI: We Choose to Go to the Moon



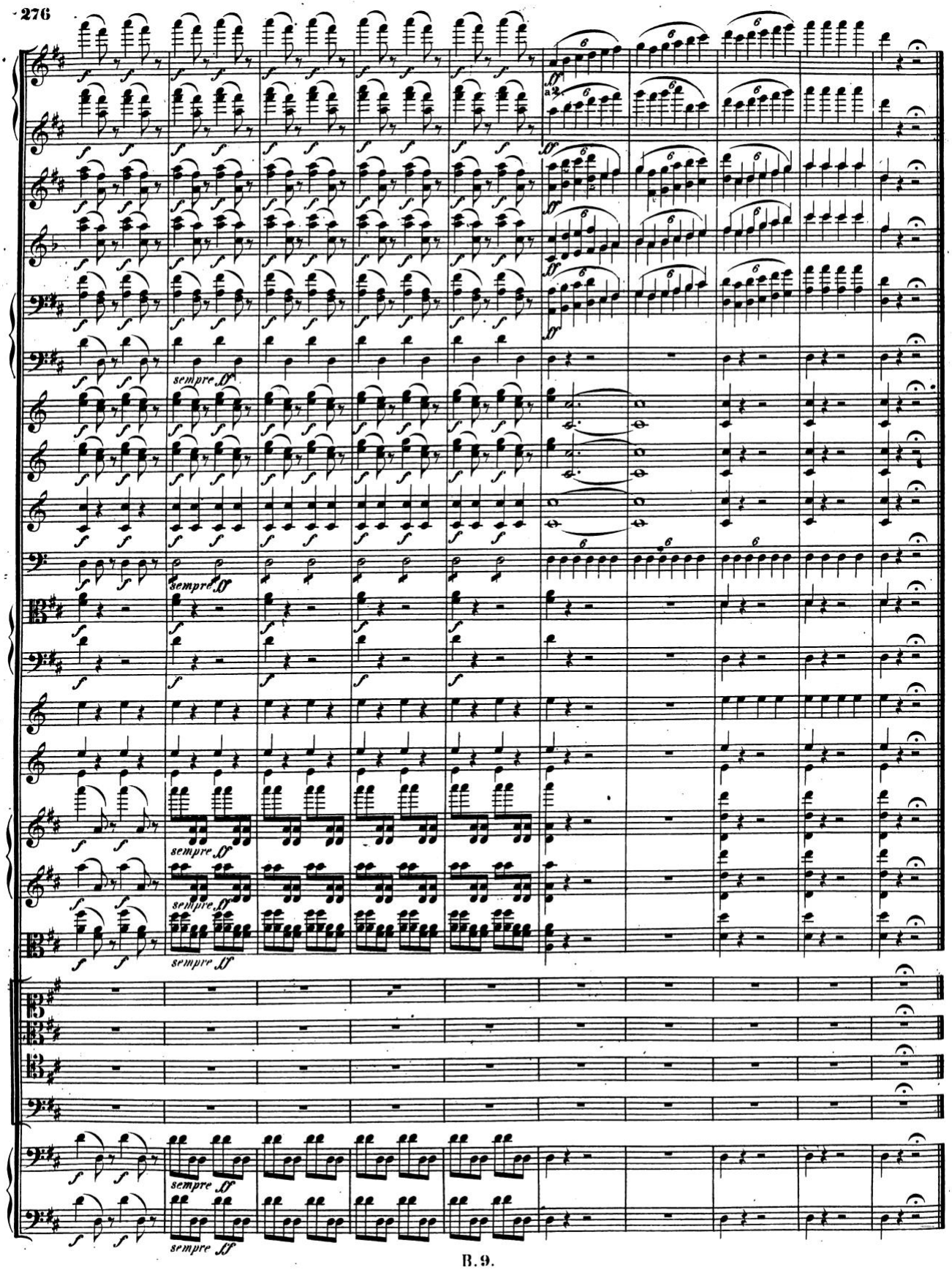

MM
poco rit.
Fl 1
Picc 2
Ob 1-2
Clar 1-2
Bsn 1
Chon 2
Hrn 1-2
Hrn 3-4
Tpt 1-3
Tbn 1-2
B Tbn 3
Tba
Timp
Cel
Hp
Org
Pno
S Solo
T Solo
Choir
Vln 1
Vln 2
Vla
Cello
Bass
We choose to go! We choose to go! We choose to go!
320
321
322
323
324
325
326
327
328


Maestoso. ♩= 60.
273
ff
p cresc.
ter - fun-ken!
Toch - - - - ter aus E - li - sium!
B. 9.


274
Prestissimo.
a 2.
sempre ff
Freu - de, schö - - - - ner Göt - - terfun - ken! Göt - - ter - - fun - - ken!
B. 9.



B. 9.



B. 9.

Appendix D: IRB Letter



Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

Human Research Determination Review Outcome

Date: February 17, 2025

Principal Investigator: Joshua S Smith

Study Title: Exemplarism in Christopher Tin's To Shiver the Sky: A philosophical analysis of virtue moral theory in music

Review Date: February 17, 2025

I have reviewed your submission of the Human Research Determination worksheet for the abovereferenced study. I have determined this research does not meet the criteria for human subject's research. The proposed activity involves the analysis of pre-existing, publicly-available data. Therefore, IRB approval is not necessary so you may proceed with your project.

If you have questions about this notification or using iRIS, contact the HRPP office at (405) 325-8110 or irb@ou.edu. Thank you.

Cordially,

Kendra L Williams-Diehm

Kendra Williams-Diehm, Ph.D.
Vice Chair, Institutional Review Board

Appendix E: Publisher Permission Letter

From: **Gia Stratton** georgia.stratton@concord.com
Subject: Re: BH473123 - Print Request for 'To Shiver The Sky' by Tin
Date: April 16, 2025 at 8:52 AM
To: Smith, Joshua S. joshuastephensmith@ou.edu

GS

Use the following wording in your dissertation:

> Permission to reproduce extract (measures 299-328) from 'We Choose to Go to the Moon' from *To Shiver The Sky* (Christopher Tin) and the opening pages of texts and translations of the following movements: 'The Dream of Flight,' 'Heavenly Kingdom,' 'Daedalus and Icarus,' 'The Fall,' 'Astronomy,' 'To the Stars,' 'Oh, the Humanity,' 'Courage,' 'Become Death,' 'The Power of the Spirit' and 'We Choose to Go to the Moon' in a dissertation entitled *Exemplarism in Christopher Tin's To Shive the Sky: A Philosophical Analysis of Virtual Moral Theory in Music* is granted on a gratis basis on this occasion. The said reproduction is authorised solely for the use of Joshua Smith and may not be transferred, hired or sold to any third party. Please make sure to print the following acknowledgement:
>
> © Tin Works Publishing LLC (BMI)
> administered by Concord Music Publishing OBO The Musical Company
> Reproduced by permission of Boosey & Hawkes
> Solely for the use by Joshua Smith

Best wishes,

Gia

BOOSEY & HAWKES
A CONCORD COMPANY

GEORGIA STRATTON | International Copyright Associate, Boosey & Hawkes