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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

# KAREL HUSA'S *MUSIC FOR PRAGUE 1968*: AN EXPLORATION OF COMPOSITIONAL PROCESS AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A Document

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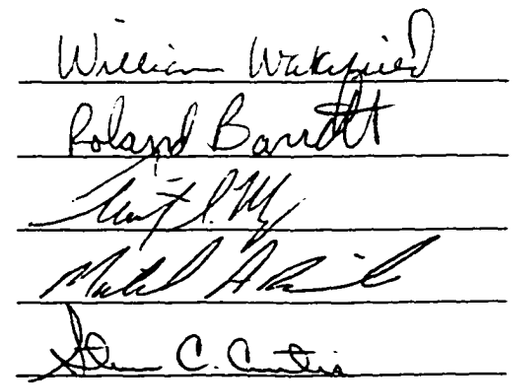
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KAREL HUSA'S *MUSIC FOR PRAGUE 1968*: AN EXPLORATION OF COMPOSITIONAL PROCESS AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A Document APPROVED FOR THE
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

Since its premier on January 31, 1969, *Music for Prague 1968* by Karel Husa has become an important part of the wind band repertoire. While Husa has composed a number of works for band since then, including *Apotheosis of This Earth* (1970), *Concerto for Wind Ensemble* (1982), and most recently *Les Couleurs Fauves* (1996), *Music for Prague 1968* is likely his most popular composition for band, with more than 7,000 combined performances of the original version for band and the orchestral transcription (1970).[1] Commissioned by Kenneth Snapp and the Ithaca College Concert Band, the piece was motivated by the invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 by Warsaw Pact countries, and composed during and immediately following the political turmoil.

Husa's stature as a composer extends well beyond the band world. After his studies at the Prague Conservatory from 1941-45, he studied composition with Arthur Honegger and developed a close friendship with Nadia Boulanger in Paris. He later served on the composition faculties at Cornell University from 1954-67 and Ithaca College from 1967-86.[2] Husa has composed in a number of genres, including works for keyboard, chamber ensemble, orchestra, solo voice, and chorus. Some of his more prominent compositions outside the band medium include his ballet, *The Trojan*

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[1] Susan Hayes Hitchens, *Karel Husa: A Bio-Bibliography*, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 10.

[2] Ibid., 4-9.

*Women* (1980), the Pulitzer Prize-winning *String Quartet*, no. 3 (1968), and the 1993 Grawemeyer Award-winning *Cello Concerto* (1988).

## Purpose and Scope of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to examine compositional elements in *Music for Prague 1968* in a manner that contributes new perspective to the existing scholarship. Specific attention is given to the use of serial technique, symmetrical relationships, and other identifiable patterns and relationships throughout the composition. Philosophical and metaphorical inferences are drawn, not with the intent of necessitating specific interpretational avenues or relaying the intent of the composer, but rather to connect the compositional elements with musical meaning in a manner that provides a broader context for interpretation by future performers and scholars.

The exploration of serial technique includes identification and discussion of varying degrees of serialism used in the four movements in order to create structure in the work as a whole. It points out increasing constraints placed upon the compositional system throughout the first three movements, moving from mild use of serialism in the first movement, through more use of complete tone rows, layering of rows, and stricter adherence to the rows in movement two, to the layering of three integrally serialized[3] lines over two other freely composed ones in movement three. By contrast, movement four uses no serial technique, relying instead on free rotation of smaller motives introduced earlier in the composition. This progression and

[3] The lines are serialized with regard to pitch/timbre, rhythm, and dynamics.

ultimate abandonment of constraint upon the compositional system creates structure within the composition, and suggests metaphorical representations of both the political unrest in Prague in 1968 and the broader concept of tyrannical oppression.

The examination of symmetry and other incidences of self-similarity, such as nested occurrences of motives, identifies such relationships at a wide variety of structural levels. For example, Husa makes reference in his published analysis to "strict mirror writing" in the third movement between rehearsal letters N and P, with the axis of symmetry occurring at letter O.[4] This study examines Husa's reference, explaining it textually, as well as with graphical representations that reveal the symmetrical structure. In addition to instances of symmetry identified by Husa, this study examines other examples not previously acknowledged in published scholarship.

A more microcosmic example of symmetry explored in this discussion is the notable prominence of interval classes 1-2-1 in succession. This relationship, identified for the purposes of this study as the Bell Motif because of its graphical relationship to the motion of a bell swinging atop a bell tower,[5] occurs in this and numerous other manifestations at a variety of structural levels. Nonserial symmetrical patterns occur throughout the work as well, such as the notable combinations of the intervals minor 2nd-major 3rd, or major 2nd-minor 3rd, in both melodic and

---

[4] Karel Husa, "Music for Prague 1968" in *The College and University Band: An Anthology of Papers from the Conferences of the College Band Directors National Association, 1941-1975* Compiled by David Whitwell and Acton Ostling. (Reston, VA: Music Educators National Conference, 1977), 264.

[5] Prague is often called the City of "Hundreds of Towers" because of the number of them scattered across the city.

harmonic constructions. This particular pattern shares aspects of similarity with the 1-2-1 Bell Motif, as well as with the treatment of the Hussite war hymn "Ye Warriors of God." The study examines the compositional and philosophical ramifications of these repeated occurrences of symmetry and the interrelatedness between these structures.

The secondary purpose of this study is to present extramusical information that fosters understanding of the social and political circumstances surrounding the development of Czech nationalism, the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, and ultimately, the composition of *Music for Prague 1968*. This information appears in three chapters, primarily narrative in content, which address key periods in the development of Czech nationalism. While the narrative in these chapters does not speak directly to the compositional process in *Music for Prague 1968*, it outlines the circumstances of the 1968 invasion in light of the broader history of the Czech nation. Deeper understanding of these circumstances directly supports the primary purpose of this study by providing a lens through which to view Husa's experiences, those of other Czech composers, and the Czech nation. While this endeavor clearly cannot replace actual experience, it can provide an opportunity for greater understanding and ultimately support a more informed interpretive process.

The work is deeply rooted in the history of the Czech people, as exemplified by the use of "Ye Warriors of God." The hymn is one of three unifying elements as explained by Husa in the Foreward to the score,[6] and reiterated in a great many articles written on this piece since its composition. However, description of who the Hussites were, why they had a war hymn, and why this hymn continued to bear

[6] Husa, 3.

significance to the Czech people in 1968, contributes to a greater understanding of this work, not only as one of high artistic merit, but also one which speaks to the interrelatedness between society and the artist.

Furthermore, such an examination highlights the importance of viewing historical events as part of a continuum, rather than as isolated events. Examining the 1968 invasion in its historical context reveals it as one of many tyrannical acts inflicted upon the Czech people by outside oppressors over the course of many centuries. This perspective informs the interpretive process by recognizing *Music for Prague 1968* not simply as an historical snapshot of the actual invasion, but also as a commentary on the broader concepts of oppression and nationalism.

## Need for the Study

As the band genre continues to develop, scholars who choose to examine existing repertoire will continually encounter the issue of breadth versus depth. Many important composers who have chosen to write for band have taken such an interest in the genre that they have written multiple pieces for band. Early examples include Gustav Holst, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Percy Grainger, Vincent Persichetti, and Morton Gould. More recent composers include Dan Welcher, David Gillingham, Warren Benson, Michael Daugherty, David Maslanka, and Donald Grantham. The existence of multiple pieces by one composer naturally compels the examination of

those works as indicative of a composer's stylistic traits. Studies by Batcheller,[7] Booth,[8] and McLaurin[9] provide examples of this line of scholarship.

In contrast to the broader examination of multiple pieces, other scholars have chosen to investigate one specific work. Examples include Belcik's analysis of the Hindemith *Symphony in Bb*,[10] and Wakefield's dissertation on Ernst Krenek's *Dream Sequence*.[11] While Wolverton will dedicate an entire dissertation to performance problems in *Music for Prague 1968*,[12] there has not been a dissertation published that focuses primarily on the compositional elements.

Augmenting the existing research is important in two ways. First, performers in the future can better understand this important composition and make more informed interpretive decisions. Second, as the band genre continues to grow, additional significant pieces are likely to be composed. Analyses that strive to create a depth of knowledge about these works in order to complement the breadth of information purported by much of the current research will help the band genre continue to grow as an artistic and scholarly field. Just as establishing a standard

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[7] James Christopher Batcheller, "An Analysis and Discussion of *Waking Angels*, *A Light Unto the Darkness*, and *A Crescent Still Abides* by David R. Gillingham." D.M.A. diss., University of Oklahoma, 2000.

[8] David Martin Booth, "An Analytical Study of David Maslanka's *A Child's Garden Of Dreams*." D.M.A. diss., University of Oklahoma, 1994.

[9] Donald McLaurin, "The Life and Works of Karel Husa with Emphasis on the Significance of his Contribution to the Wind Band." Ph.D. diss., The Florida State University, 1985.

[10] Mark Gerard Belcik, "Paul Hindemith's *Symphony in Bb for Concert Band*." D.M.A. diss., The University of Texas, 1996.

[11] William K. Wakefield, "Ernst Krenek's *Dream Sequence, Op. 224 for Concert Band*: An Analysis and Discussion of Performance Problems." D.M.A. diss., The University of Texas, 1990.

[12] Andrew Wolverton, unpublished D.M.A. dissertation, University of Southern Mississippi.

repertoire for band is critical for the growth of this emerging genre, development of other resources, such as multiple recordings of works in the repertoire and a body of scholarship that rigorously investigates this repertoire, will help advance the artistic and intellectual integrity of the band medium.

## RELATED LITERATURE

In *The College and University Band*,[13] Husa published an analysis of *Music for Prague 1968*, which acts as a primary source for many of the other existing discussions about the piece. This article discusses the source musical material and unifying elements, examines the circumstances surrounding the composition of the piece, and briefly explores the use of serial technique, as well as other compositional processes.

Other scholars have produced documents that address *Music for Prague 1968* in a variety of ways, most of which incorporate discussion of this work into general discussions of Karel Husa or specific compositional techniques. McLaurin discusses the work as part of a larger exploration of Husa's contribution to the wind band;[14] Casey explores the use of serial technique in works for wind band, including a chapter that identifies the tone rows in *Music for Prague 1968*;[15] and Davidson looks specifically at the concept of "growth."[16] Most recently, Pare examined percussion

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[13] Husa, 259-66.

[14] McLaurin.

[15] Robert L. Casey, "Serial Composition in Works for the Wind Band." Ed.D. diss., Washington University, 1971.

[16] Richard Carlisle Davidson, "An Analysis of Growth in Karel Husa's *Music for Prague 1968*." M.M. thesis, North Texas State University, 1976.

writing in *Music for Prague 1968*,[17] and Wolverton will soon publish a conductor's guide, with chapters on rhythmic, balance, and intonation problems inherent in the piece.

## OUTLINE OF STUDY

An analysis such as this one, which examines specific musical characteristics as they apply to a multi-movement work, presents a particular challenge with regard to structure of the analysis. Given the clarity with which the different compositional processes seem to present themselves, organizing discussion by musical concept seems logical. However, since each movement utilizes these concepts in unique ways, organizing discussion by movement also seems logical. Ultimately, the interrelatedness of serial and nonserial compositional techniques becomes the deciding factor in that organization by movement will allow discussion to flow more freely, fostering greater clarity in the arguments. Furthermore, the contention that large-scale structure results from the varied use of serialism over the four movements can be more clearly articulated by emphasizing the differences between the movements.

Discussions of extramusical concepts inserted between analyses of the individual movements provide context for metaphorical inferences drawn throughout the study. Chapter 3 examines the origins of the Hussite movement, with an emphasis

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[17] Craig Thomas Pare, "An Examination of Innovative Percussion Writing on the Band Music of Four Composers: Vincent Persichetti--*Symphony for Band*; Karel Husa--*Music for Prague 1968*; Joseph Schwantner--*and the Mountains Rising Nowhere*; Michael Colgrass--*Winds of Nagual*." D.M.A. diss., University of Cincinatti, 1993.

on the life and martyrdom of Czech Reformation leader Jan Hus. A champion of Czech solidarity and cultural development in the early 15th century, Hus has become a central figure in Czech folklore. McLaurin states regarding the Hussite hymn: "Since the fifteenth century this chorale has served as a symbol of resistance and hope for the Czech nation."[18] The historical narrative in Chapter 3 points to why this hymn and the Hussite legacy evoke such strong nationalistic feelings for the Czech people.

Chapter 5 explores the development of the Czech national and cultural identities between 1526 and 1900. It outlines events leading to an extended period of Czech oppression at the hands of the Hapsburg Empire. As political oppression eased in the late 18th century, Czech artistic and linguistic expression began to flourish in a period known as the Czech National Renascence. A national compositional style, and more importantly, a tradition of overtly nationalistic musical gesture, evolved primarily through the efforts of Bedrich Smetana. The background historical information presented in Chapter 5, also predominantly narrative in nature, supports this study in two ways. First, it further develops the timeline begun in Chapter 3 that recognizes a long history of oppression of the Czech people. This timeline provides a background for the development of Czech nationalism not readily available in the currently published scholarship on this composition. Second, it supports the claim that *Music for Prague 1968* is part of a larger tradition of Czech nationalism manifested through musical composition.

The final historical narrative occurs in Chapter 7 with a discussion of the events leading up to the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Increasingly, the

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[18] McLaurin, 101.

disciplines of band scholarship and performance will be comprised of people who have no personal frame of reference for this invasion. On a fundamental level, Chapter 7 gives a brief explanation of why the 1968 invasion occurred, providing a readily available resource for this information within the literature specific to *Music for Prague 1968*. Additionally, it culminates arguments forwarded in Chapter 3 and Chapter 5 that relate this composition to the history of oppression of the Czech nation and to the tradition of Czech nationalistic musical gesture.

With introductory and concluding chapters, the structure is:

I. Introduction
II. Analysis of Movement One
III. Who were the Hussites? Jan Hus and the Czech Reformation
IV. Analysis of Movement Two
V. From the Hussites to the National Renascence: Evolution of the Czech National and Cultural Identities
VI. Analysis of Movement Three
VII. Political Circumstances Surrounding the 1968 Invasion
VIII. Analysis of Movement Four
IX. Conclusion

Placing the historical chapters in between musical analyses of the four movements provides the reader with a sense of chronology in the struggle of the Czech people, from the 15th century in Chapter 3 through the 19th century in Chapter 5, to the 1968 invasion in Chapter 7. The layering of this chronology over the analysis of the four movements also supports the inferred metaphorical relationship between musical structure and actual events by creating a similar interrelation between musical analysis and historical narrative. Additionally, alternating between musical analysis and historical narrative emphasizes the dualistic nature of the Bell Motif—a relationship further supported by the fact that the historical chapters relate philosophically to the adjoining musical analyses. Discussion of the Hussites follows

the opening movement, which evokes their hymn. The impact of the Hapsburg Empire and the Czech National Renasence occurs between the Humanistic "Aria" and the totalitarian "Interlude," and discussion of the 1968 invasion precedes the frenetic and explosive "Toccata and Chorale."

## CHAPTER 2

## ANALYSIS OF MOVEMENT ONE

The title of movement one, "Introduction and Fanfare," is descriptive in many respects. Although the "Fanfare" becomes clear at letter C, the introductory nature of the preceding material remains somewhat less obvious. While the initial interplay between timpani, piccolo solo, and harmonic figures most certainly engages the listener from the opening moments of the piece, closer examination reveals the material from the beginning to letter C to be introductory on many levels. Not only does it tempt the aural palette with coloristic harmonies and lyrical melodic figures, but it also plants a number of "musical seeds" that evolve to reveal themselves as structural elements as the composition progresses.

The movement contains two large sections, with a brief eight-measure return of the opening material at the end of the movement in measures 100-107.




**Example 1. Formal Diagram of "Introduction and Fanfare"**

Section A occupies the first 34 measures, leading to rehearsal letter C. This section, characterized by use of serial technique and lyrical melodic writing, builds steadily from solo timpani and piccolo at the beginning to a thick, colorful texture before the fanfare at measure 35. Section B, introduced by trumpets stating the initial fanfare,

occupies the remainder of the movement with the exception of section A', which occupies the last eight measures. Section B does not make use of serial techniques. Rather, it relies heavily on free rotation of smaller units presented in the opening.

While not obvious to a first-time listener at this point in the piece, the shift from the compositional constraints of serial technique in section A to the relative absence of such constraints in the freely rotating smaller motives of section B foretells a similar structure to the composition as a whole. Use of serial technique becomes noticeably more pronounced throughout the first three movements of the composition, leading to a musical and emotional breaking point at the end of the third movement. With no more room for further constraint, the fourth movement can only rely on the antithesis of constraint—freedom from serialism manifested in the abandonment of this process. In exploring the relationship between constraint and freedom, *Music for Prague 1968* becomes not only a metaphor for the1968 invasion of Prague, but perhaps more so for the centuries-long struggle of the Czech nation against oppressive forces.

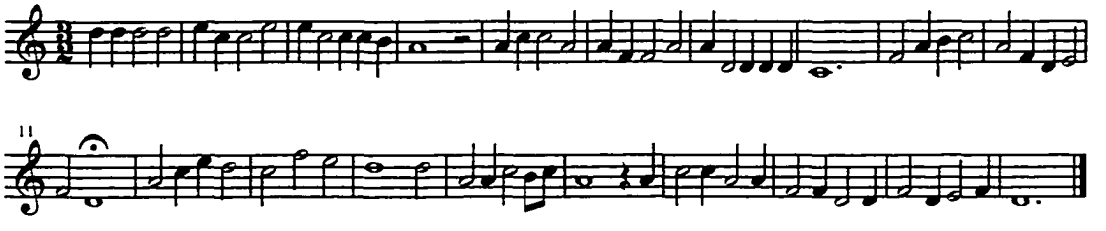
The opening moments of the first movement do not merely foretell structural events, as Karel Husa indicates in the Foreward to *Music for Prague 1968*:

> Three main ideas bind the composition together. The first and most important is an old Hussite war song from the 15th century, "Ye Warriors of God and His Law," a symbol of resistance and hope for hundreds of years, whenever fate lay heavy on the Czech nation. It has been utilized also by many Czech composers, including Smetana in *My Country*....
>
> The second idea is the sound of bells throughout; Prague, named also the City of "Hundreds of Towers," has used its magnificently sounding church bells as calls of distress as well as of victory.
>
> The last idea is a motif of three chords first appearing very softly under the piccolo solo at the beginning of the piece, in flutes, clarinets and

horns. Later it reappears at extremely strong dynamic levels, for example, in the middle of the *Aria*.[1]

All three main ideas occur within section A, thereby laying both the musical and philosophical foundations of the four-movement composition within the first 34 measures.

The movement begins with solo timpani stating the opening motive of "Ye Warriors of God."[2] Fragments of this melody continue in the timpani part throughout the Introduction in measures 1-34. While Husa never utilizes the entire melody, he does provide us with his source material in his own analysis of this composition:[3]



**Example 2. "Ye Warriors of God"**

---

[1] Karel Husa, *Music for Prague 1968* (New York: Associated Music Publishers, Inc., 1969), 2.

[2] Sources differ on the complete title of this hymn. While Husa refers to it as "Ye Warriors of God and His Law," others shorten it to "Ye Warriors of God." In the interest of brevity, the latter is used in this document.

[3] Husa analysis, 259-66.

The reference to Smetana[4] is rather overt in that the initial four-note timpani motive alludes directly to the "Tabor" movement in Smetana's *Ma Vlast (My Country)*. This motive provides the basis for the entire "Tabor" movement, and also occupies a prominent role in the sixth movement, "Blanik." Anyone familiar with *Ma Vlast* would recognize this motive in *Music for Prague 1968* and draw a connection between these two composers. Such a direct connection serves not only to relate Husa's composition to the music of another Czech composer, but also to the period of the Czech National Renascence in the 19th century.[5] In this period, much of the nation's social and artistic identity finally solidified, as manifested in such events as the codification of the written Czech language and the establishment of the Czech National Opera. Therefore, the use of this song as source material in *Music for Prague 1968* alludes not only to15th century Czech history, but also to significant events in the 19th century.

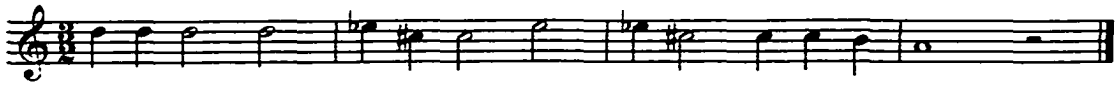
Husa's treatment of the Hussite song involves modifications to the original pitch content "...in order to preserve the tension of ascending and descending movements."[6] He flats the E and sharps the C, yielding the following:

---

[4] Smetana is known as the father of Czech opera, and transitively, this makes him the father of the Czech national compositional style, as well. His involvement in consciously creating such a style is well documented in: Brian Large, *Smetana* (New York: Praeger Press, 1970).

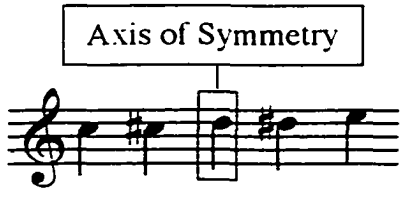
[5] Husa, Smetana, and the Czech National Renascence are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

[6] Husa analysis, 260.



**Example 3. "Ye Warriors of God" with Husa's Alterations**

Combination of the altered pitches, their original counterparts, and the central note of D, around which these pitches rotate, yields the following symmetrical pitch class set:




**Example 4. Pitch Class Set Resulting from the Combination of Altered and Original Notes from "Ye Warriors of God"**

This set relates directly to construction of the twelve-tone rows used in the first two movements, as well as much of the non-serial musical content throughout the work, and serves as a point of reference throughout the remainder of this analysis.

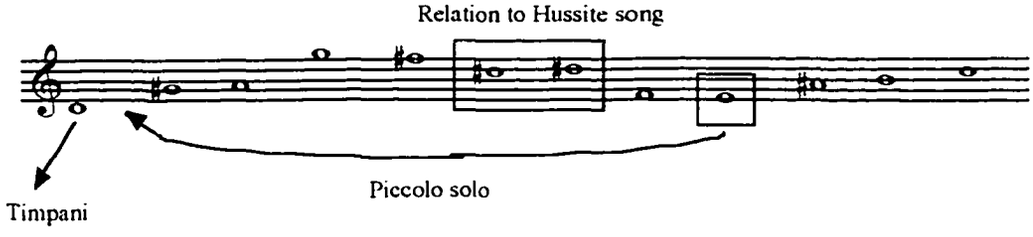
The intervals that result by calculating the distance between C, Pitch Class 0 (hereafter PC) and the other pitches in this collection yield the following:

| Bottom note | Top note | Interval Class | Traditional Interval |
|---|---|---|---|
| C | C# | 1 | Minor second |
| C | D | 2 | Major second |
| C | D# | 3 | Minor third |
| C | E | 4 | Major third |

**Table 1. Intervals in**
**Example 4 Pitch Collection**

These intervals become significant in that they account for much of the harmonic and melodic content throughout the entire composition. Particularly, the combination of Interval Class 1 (hereafter IC) with IC-4 (m2-M3) and IC-2 with IC-3 (M2-m3) permeates much of the work.

Husa identifies the initial sketch of the tone row used in this movement:




**Example 5. "Introduction and Fanfare" Tone Row**[7]

Husa indicates that the C# to D# movement relates to the Hussite song.[8] While these are the notes Husa changed in the original tune, they also create harmonic

[7] Ibid., 262.

motion towards the note D, which acts as both a tonal center in the hymn tune and a basis for tonal centricity in *Music for Prague 1968*:

> Although the *Music for Prague 1968* is not written in any tonality, the song's use at the beginning and end of the work gives it a strong "center-note" which is D, even if the last unison at the end is on E. I have mentioned in the preface a few examples of symbolism. Another can be the ending of the work on the E which is the highest note of the choral. This note, together with the A (2 measures before V), which I have put one octave higher in the trumpets although the line of the song descends, is a gesture of defiance and hope.[9]

Husa's metaphor relies on the similarity between the ascending melodic lines and his desire for the Czech nation to rise above oppression. Comparing the C# and D# with the set in Example 4 reveals rotation around the same axis of symmetry -- that of D. In the original version of the tone row, the axis between C# and D# occurs exactly halfway through the row. This continual reference to D in a variety of ways augments Husa's symbolic landing on E at the end of the fourth movement.

In the initial statement of the row, begun by timpani in measure 1 and continued by solo piccolo in measure 2, Husa moves the E natural from order number 8 to order number 1.[10] This re-ordering foretells the eventual rise from D to E at the end of the composition. Hence, the first two notes become a microcosm for the tonal motion of the entire composition.

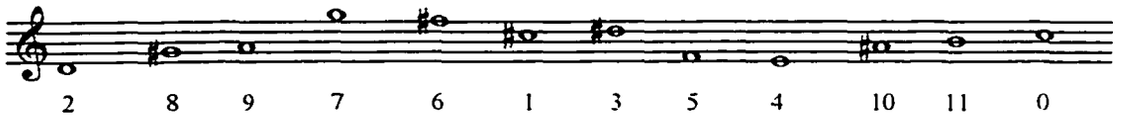
Attaching pitch class (PC) numbers to the notes of the tone row with C as PC-0, the tone row can also be expressed numerically:

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[8] Ibid.

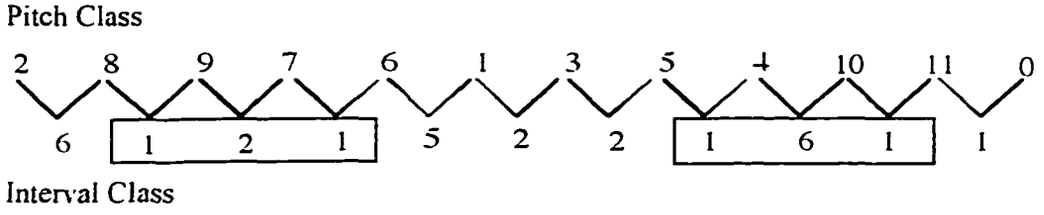
[9] Ibid., 260-1.

[10] In this analysis, order numbers are assigned sequentially to successive pitches in the row, beginning with 0 and proceeding through 11.




**Example 6. "Introduction and Fanfare" Pitch Classes**

This allows for easier identification of interval classes (IC), or the distance between two successive pitch classes reduced to the smallest possible inversion. Such a process reveals symmetrical constructions in the successions of IC 1-2-1 and 1-6-1.




**Example 7. "Introduction and Fanfare" Interval Classes**

The overt usage of such materials at a variety of compositional levels remains significant in multiple respects. First, it reflects the degree of constraint placed upon the compositional system, thereby influencing the larger formal structure of the piece. In this case, the constraints are minimal with regard to the structure inherent in serial composition. However, they do help establish the starting point for a pattern of increased constraint throughout the first three movements.

In addition, such patterns reflect the alternation between states of being: 1-2-1, A-B-A, serial-nonserial-serial, freedom-oppression-freedom. This pattern recurs at a wide variety of structural levels throughout the piece, from the alternation of interval classes shown in Example 7, to large-scale mirror writing in large sections of the

"Aria" and "Interlude." Graphing the alternation between two states of being yields a graph that resembles the path of a pendulum, or the striker of a bell in a church tower moving back and forth:



**Example 8. Bell Graph**

Unfolding this graph horizontally allows one to view this with respect to the time:



**Example 9. Bell Graph Represented over Time**

Because musical performance occurs over time, this graph more accurately represents the listener's experience with such linear symmetrical structures as those identified in Example 7.

While Husa's reference to bell tones is far more literal, the relationship between a ringing bell and other incidences of symmetry provides a window of opportunity for connecting this musical process with artistic interpretive endeavors. With this goal in mind, and given the frequency with which such patterns occur in *Music for Prague 1968*, this pattern is labeled the Bell Motif for the purposes of this

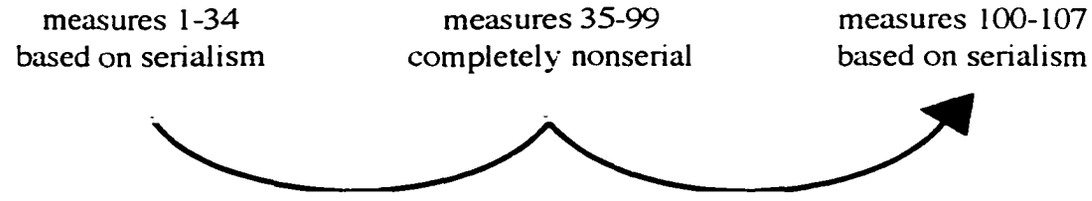
study. This term can be applied to any instance of symmetry, whether in a succession of interval classes or a retrograde-inversion restatement of large sections of a movement, as in the "Interlude" movement discussed in Chapter 6.

Regarding the "planting of seeds" utilizing serial technique, Casey's identification of the tone rows reveals that Husa does not make a complete, correctly ordered statement of the P-0 form of the row. Partial statements occur in the piccolo part in measures 1–6 with the remainder of P-0 completed out of order in the piccolo part in measures 7-10. A complete statement of P-1 moves throughout the choir of clarinets in measures 24-27, and R-6 occurs in measures 30-31 in the clarinets similar to the previous statement of P-1. A partial return of P-0 occurs at the end of the movement, in measures 100-107.[11]

Use of primarily incomplete rows with no complete statement of P-0 creates a weakening of the serial system much in the same manner that an absence of the tonic chord weakens the tonality of a composition that utilizes functional harmony. In this case, the weakening occurs through: (1) the alternation between serial and nonserial segments, with the majority being nonserial, and (2) the relative lack of strictness in adherence to the serial system.

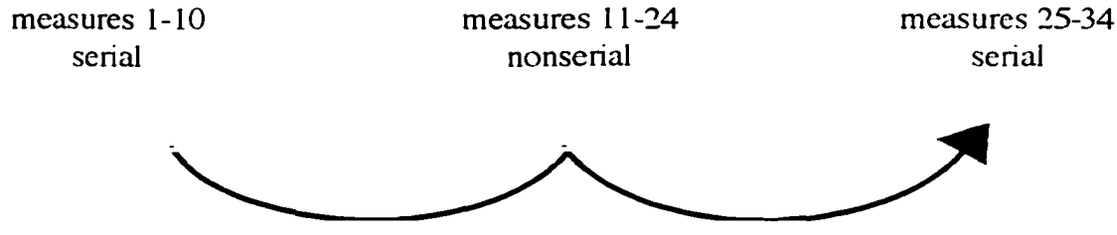
In addition, when considering the large formal plan of the movement, one finds a relationship between serial-nonserial and the Bell Motif:

[11] Casey, 145-9.




**Example 10. Bell Motif in Formal Structure of "Introduction and Fanfare"**

Also, Casey explains: "Very little of the material in measures 11 through 24 can be related to the set or one of its transformations."[12] Therefore, another smaller Bell Motif is nested within the first larger formal section from measures 1-34:

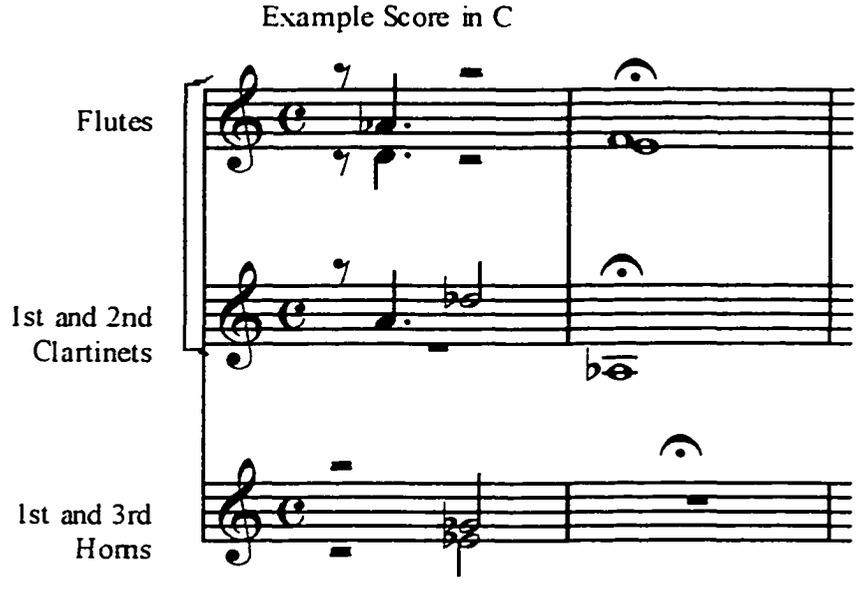



**Example 11. Bell Motif in Measures 1-34 of "Introduction and Fanfare"**

These symmetrical formal constructions reveal the Bell Motif at four separate structural levels: (1) succession of interval classes, (2) the pitch class set identified in Example 4, (3) formal structure of section A, and (4) formal structure of the entire movement.

[12] Ibid., 146.

Husa also refers to a three-chord Chorale Motif that helps bind the composition together. The first instance occurs in measures 3-4, in flutes, clarinets, and horns:

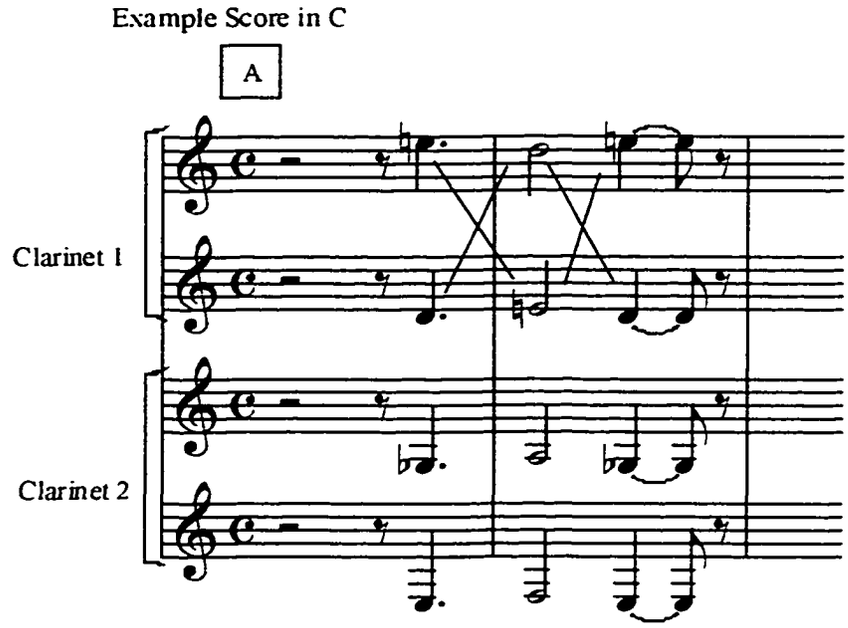



**Example 12. "Introduction and Fanfare" Measures 3-4**

Casey explains that the tones are derived from the tone row this time, but not in subsequent occurrences.[13] Husa indicates three additional occurrences of this motif in the first movement: (1) at letter A in clarinets (2) seven measures after A in clarinets, and (3) at letter B in horns, trombones, and tuba.[14] By contrast to the first occurrence shown in Example 12, the remaining occurrences of the Chorale Motif begin and end on the same chord. This provides yet another example of the Bell Motif:

[13] Ibid., 145-6.

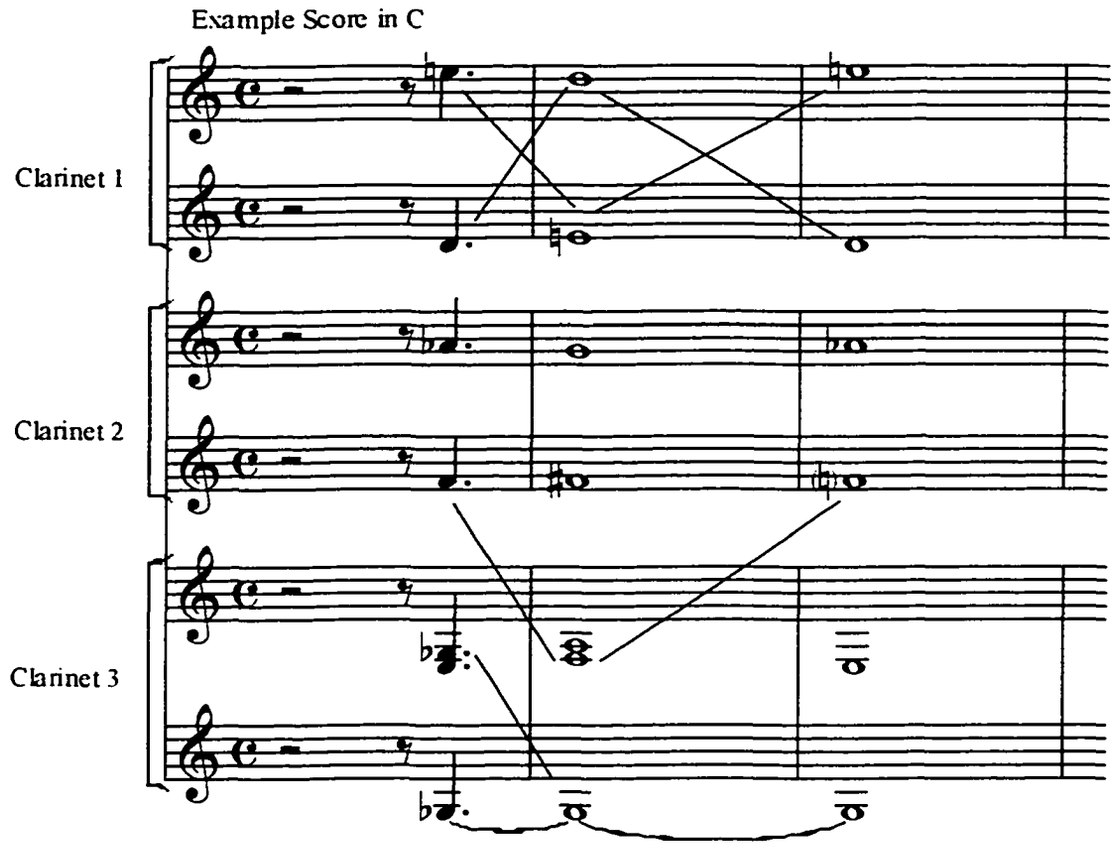
[14] Husa analysis, 261.




**Example 13. "Introduction and Fanfare" Letter A – Measures 15-16**

Example 13 also demonstrates the rotation of shared pitches between the clarinet 1 performers. Only two tones, D and E (concert) occur in alternation, thereby highlighting the Bell Motif while creating coloristic undulations by displacing the tones at the octave amidst the alternation. The Bell Motif also occurs with respect to rhythm, with alternation of 3-4-3 (eighth notes contained within each tone).

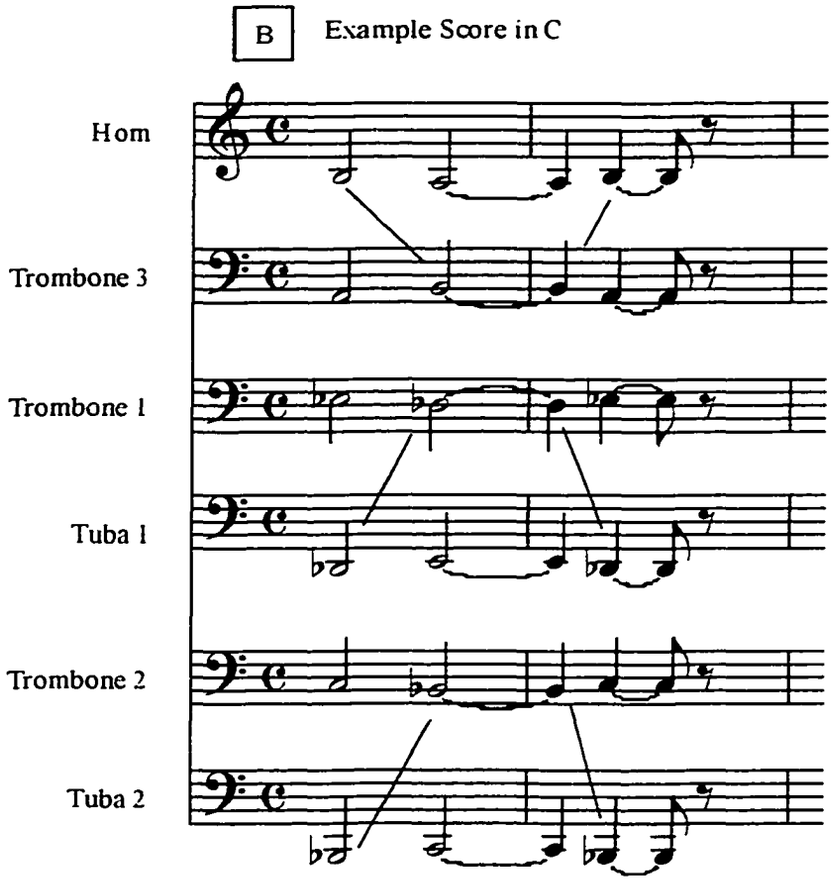
Beginning in the seventh measure of A, measures 21-24, the next example of the Chorale Motif occurs:




**Example 14. "Introduction and Fanfare" Measures 21-24**

This instance is slightly more complex, with six notes per chord rather than four, as at letter A. Similar to the previous example, the two alternating chords share many common tones. In this case, four tones are shared: concert D, E, F, and Gb.

At letter B, the alternating chords of the Chorale Motif become even more complex with six tones, yet also remarkably more similar through the sharing of tones between the middle chord and the outer chords:

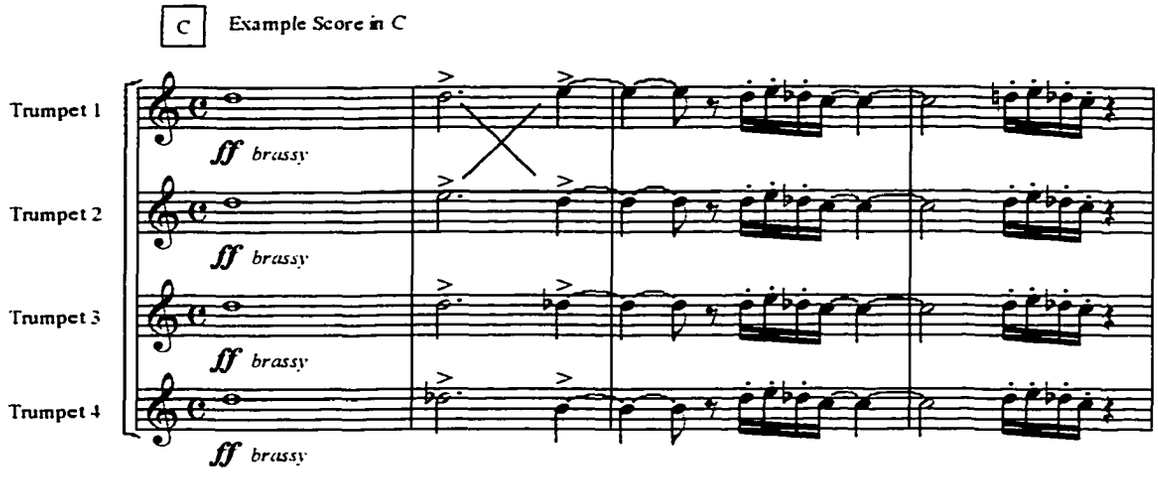



**Example 15. "Introduction and Fanfare" Letter B – Measures 29-30**

Identifying the common tones between the chords reveals that the two alternating chords are fundamentally a re-voicing of the same chord, with only one note in either chord not common to the other. Common tones include: concert A, Bb, B, C, and Db. The only tones not shared are the Eb in the outer chords and the E natural in the inner chord. In this instance, the Bell Motif manifests itself more in terms of orchestration than pitch content, as the latter actually changes very little.

Beginning at measure 35, letter C, Husa abandons use of serial technique, though the compositional elements do share some degree of commonality with the previous serialized material. Trumpets begin the "Fanfare" at letter C, and horns,

trombones, and baritones answer beginning in measure 39. While movements two and three make more specific use of bell tones with percussion instruments, the accented unison brass articulations make overt reference to bell sounds at this point as well.

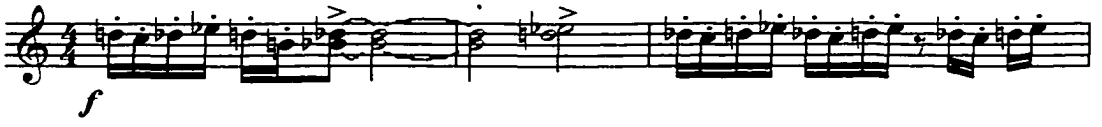



**Example 16. "Introduction and Fanfare" Letter C – Measures 35-38**

The pitch material in this section is identical to that identified in Example 4. Also, the trading of pitches between trumpet 1 and trumpet 2 in the second measure of C resembles the clarinet lines identified in Examples 13 and 14, although there is no octave displacement in Example 16. Given that the alternation of these pitches is between performers on the same instrument, the color change would be extremely subtle. In addition to the change in tone color between two individual performers, this effect would also be enhanced by the nearly imperceptible change in intonation that occurs on a wind instrument in the instant between beginning a new note and sustaining it. In Example 16, were trumpet 1 and trumpet 2 to simply re-articulate the

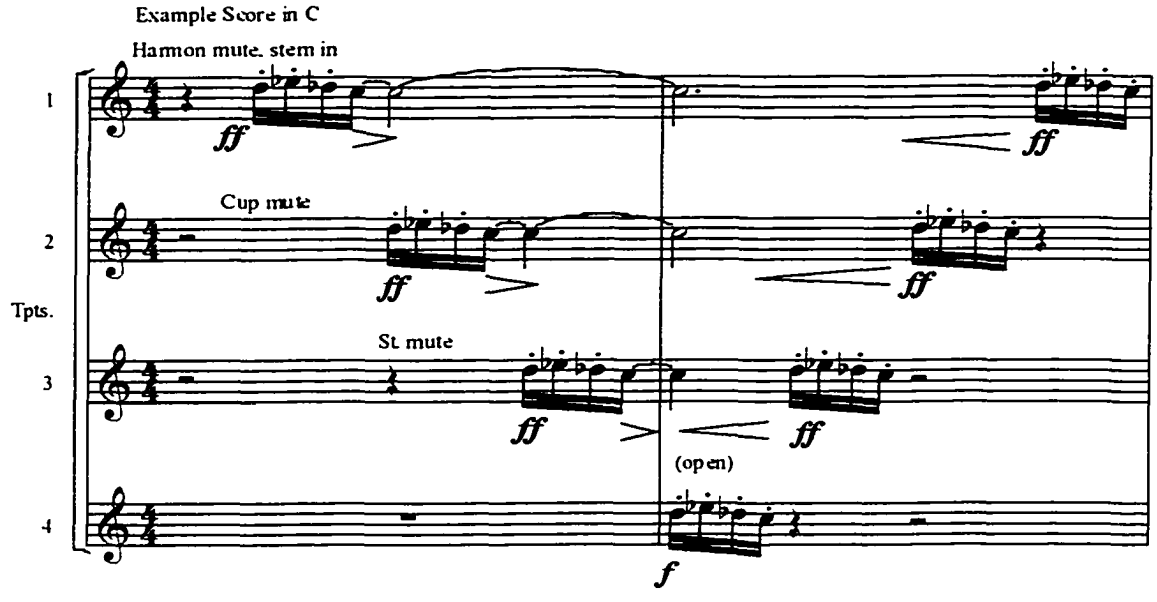
same note on count 4 of measure 36, the subtle effect created by the trading of these pitches would be mitigated.

From measures 35-99, much of the musical development consists of rotations of the four-note motive played by trumpets on count three in measure 37. From measure 44 through the downbeat of 65, the motive appears predominantly in larger choirs exemplified by the woodwind statement in measures 57-59. The sixteenth-note patterns performed by piccolo, flutes, oboes, English horn, bassoons, and Eb, Bb, alto, and bass clarinets represent a variation of the indicated figure.




**Example 17. "Introduction and Fanfare" Measures 57-59**

Beginning in measure 65, the same figure is passed throughout the ensemble, simultaneously evoking the ringing bells throughout the city of Prague.




**Example 18. "Introduction and Fanfare" Measures 65-66**

Additionally, at rehearsal letter E, a variation of the Hussite song appears in sustained, syncopated rhythms in the flute, oboe, English horn, contrabassoon, Bb clarinet, trumpet, baritone, tuba, and string bass parts.




**Example 19. "Introduction and Fanfare" Letter E - Measures 60-62**

This example relates to the Hussite song by emphasizing the chromatic alternation between F and F# above E, just as Husa's implementation of the Hussite song similarly emphasizes the alternation of E and Eb above D. Given the transposition up to E in this instance, it may be seen as foretelling the eventual final move up to E at

the end of the composition, similar to the re-ordering of the initial tone row displayed in Example 5.

The process of motivic manipulation utilized in measures 35-99 establishes a framework for the development of constraint placed upon the compositional system throughout the remainder of the piece. Such freedom from a defined process will not occur again until the fourth movement. With a short return to the opening serialized tone row statement in measures 100-107 to end the movement, the "Introduction and Fanfare" establishes the point of reference from which the remainder of the composition will develop. Proceeding through increasingly constrained compositional processes in the two subsequent movements, *Music for Prague 1968* returns suddenly to the freedom of motivic manipulation in the "Toccata and Chorale." This development throughout the length of the composition gives it structural cohesion that is augmented by continued use of Husa's three unifying elements.

## CHAPTER 3

## WHO WERE THE HUSSITES?

## JAN HUS AND THE CZECH REFORMATION

With the use of the Hussite war hymn, "Ye Warriors of God" in *Music for Prague 1968*, Karel Husa alludes to the history of the Czech people from the time of Bohemian kings and the Holy Roman Empire. Although the reference is overt, both musically and in Husa's own writings about the piece, simply identifying the song as Hussite does little to convey its significance to those unfamiliar with Czech folklore. Use of the hymn tune, well known in Czech culture, evokes the tradition of the 15th century Hussite warriors and cuts directly to the core of Czech nationalism. It also associates Karel Husa with Czech nationalist composer Bedrich Smetana, who used "Ye Warriors of God" in his symphonic work, *Ma Vlast*. Because of the hymn's significance across a broad range of Czech history and its direct association with the Hussites, its historical context speaks to the magnitude of quoting this specific hymn.

The Hussites were followers of a Bohemian teacher and priest named Jan Hus, who lived from c. 1370 to 1415. An outspoken proponent of religious reform, Hus preached against corruption in the Catholic clergy and papal abuse of power. A convincing speaker with a powerful moral compass, Hus was able to garner support from across many social classes. However, his aggressive pursuit of reform ultimately led to his demise, as he was arrested and tried for heresy by the Council of Constance. On July 6, 1415, Jan Hus was burned at the stake. His martyr's death resulted in violent uprisings by his followers across the Bohemian countryside, and the

subsequent battles, known as the Hussite Wars, lasted for more than twenty years. While the Hussites were ultimately defeated, the legacy of Jan Hus lived on as the motivating figure in the Czech nationalist movement.

The Hussite warriors, the Czech nationalist composers, the victims of the 1968 invasion, and Karel Husa are all bound together by philosophical ideals of Czech solidarity and direct experience with the tyranny of outside oppressors. The Hussite hymn forms a common link between them all by paying homage to the legacy of Jan Hus. The connection between Husa and Smetana is directly musical in that both composers used quotations of "Ye Warriors of God" in overtly nationalistic musical gestures. Karel Husa, the Hussites, and the citizens of 1968 Czechoslovakia also share a common bond, not only through the nationalist ideals espoused by the hymn, but also through direct experience with oppressive forces. Husa lived in Czechoslovakia during the 1939 Nazi occupation,[1] and while living in Paris in 1948, he surrendered his citizenship rather than submitting to Communist Party demands that he return to Czechoslovakia.[2] In this respect, they are all "warriors of God," each participating in the struggle against oppression in uniquely personal gestures of defiance. While the Hussites took up arms, and the Czechs in 1968 largely offered passive resistance, *Music for Prague 1968* represents Karel Husa's personal gesture of defiance.

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[1] McLaurin, 13.

[2] Ibid., 29.

Although the Hussite movement was relatively short-lived, its legacy grew at the hands of nationalist historians, and understanding the basis for this movement does much to explain how the 1968 invasion was not an isolated incident for the Czech people. Furthermore, this specific hymn not only connects *Music for Prague 1968* with Czech folklore, but also interconnects the musical analyses in chapters 2, 4, 6, and 8. While the two internal movements do not quote the hymn directly, they do display musical elements that refer to it in more subtle ways. Therefore, "Ye Warriors of God" is connective in multiple respects: (1) musically, through either direct quotation or shared compositional elements between the movements, (2) musicologically, it connects Karel Husa to earlier Czech musical traditions, (3) historically and philosophoically, it recalls the nationalistic spirit of the Hussites in subsequent times of oppression at the hands of the Hapsburg Empire, the Nazi regime, and the Soviet Bloc, and (4) within the scope of this study, it creates a conduit for interrelation between musical analysis and socio-historical commentary.

Prague's earlier development as a center of cultural, religious, and commercial activities was no accident. Recognizing the natural resources in the area and the central location along trade routes, King Charles IV of Bohemia chose to make Prague the central nexus of his administration. Founding the University of Prague, Charles IV brought in foreign scholars from Poland and Germany to diversify the faculty. Additionally, he brought Austrian preacher Konrad Walhauser to Prague, "a man already distinguished for his eloquence and moral fervor." [3] Thus began the religious revival in Prague. Fanning the ecclesiastical flames, Charles also separated

[3] Ibid.,183.

the Bohemian church from control of the Archbishop of Mainz by establishing an archbishopric in Prague.[4] This action was significant on two distinct levels. First, it provided an antecedent for the German-Slavic conflict that would continue for centuries. Second, in conjunction with the creation of the University, it established Prague as a cultural center in its own right, rather than as a German satellite.

The death of Charles IV in 1378 resulted in heightened political disarray throughout Bohemia. That year, his son Vaclav IV[5] became head of the Czech lands. While Vaclav was generally supportive of the reformist ideals of his father, his reign was not distinguished by success.

> He interfered in ecclesiastical affairs, committed numerous administrative blunders, alienated members of his own family, and was a conspirator to torture and murder.. Vaclav did have one good adviser: his second wife, Zofie, who understood him perfectly. At their wedding, she presented him with a wagonload of conjurers and juggling fools, which pleased him enormously. Queen Zofie attended Hus' sermons in Bethlehem Chapel and used her influence in Bohemia to facilitate Hus' reforms.[6]

Vaclav ultimately became a victim of political conspiracy. He was deposed as Holy Roman Emperor by Boniface IX, and imprisoned by his half-brother and new Emperor, Sigismund.[7] The resulting civil war between factions loyal to Vaclav and Sigismund further eroded political stability.

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[4] Ibid.

[5] He is also referred to in mythology as King Wenceslas.

[6] Thomas A. Fudge, "To Build a Fire," *Christian History*, 2000, V. 19 Issue 4 [accessed via Academic Search Elite database through the University of Oklahoma Libraries, October 4, 2001].

[7] R.R. Betts, *Essays in Czech History* (London: The Athlone Press, 1969), 189. Sources vary somewhat on the actual dates of these events, between 1400 and 1403.

Jan Hus lived in a time of interrelated religious and political structures. The kingdom of Bohemia existed loosely under the umbrella of the Holy Roman Empire, although the leadership structure became particularly confusing when the Great Schism occurred in the papal leadership in 1378. After the death that year of Pope Gregory XI, the College of Cardinals elected Pope Urban VI. Later believing they had made an error in doing so, they declared the election void and elected Clement VII within six months. Urban VI's refusal to acknowledge the decision to replace him resulted in a split in the Catholic Church, with the Papacy of Urban VI based in Rome, and that of Clement VII in Avignon.[8]

Localized clergy also displayed disarray and corruption. There was no expectation that Catholic clergy accept a life of poverty at this time, and the keys to the Kingdom of God were often a matter of local commerce. The practice of simony, the purchasing of religious posts, was practiced. Additionally, the sale of indulgences was a common manner of raising funds for the church. In effect, one could purchase absolution from the church for sins yet to be committed. It was also not uncommon for priests to charge fees for the administration of holy sacraments, or to accept "multiple paid positions without faithfully serving any."[9]

With regard to the balance of social power, this era is characterized by a growing middle-class. One example of this developing social stature is the "establishment and endowment of the chapel of 'Bethlehem,' which was founded in

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[8] Phillip H. Stump, *The Reforms of the Council of Constance (1414-1418)*, (E.J Brill: Leiden, The Netherlands), xi.

[9] Fudge.

1391 by a group of middle-class property-owners and merchants to provide specifically for evangelical preaching."[10] At Bethlehem chapel, preaching occurred in the vernacular, and Jan Hus upheld this practice when he accepted the post of preacher at the chapel in 1402.

The vernacular became more significant in 1406, when the Prague synod granted permission to sing Czech hymns in worship.[11] The use of the Czech language was important because it elevated the stature of the common peasants in the church. Previous use of Latin excluded the largely illiterate peasant classes by creating a linguistic barrier. Just as congregational singing became important to followers of Martin Luther the following century, this practice also occupied an important role in the Hussite sects. Given the reliance placed upon oral traditions in illiterate and semi-literate cultures worldwide, such a devotion to congregational singing fits logically within the social strata of the Czech peasant classes. Therefore, as an early proponent of preaching and singing in Czech, Jan Hus was not only upholding these practices as worthy, but was also upholding the Czech people as similarly worthy.

Credit given to Hus in uplifting the Czech peasantry also points to a dualism within the 1968 Soviet-Czechoslovakian conflict. After all, the Socialist political structure of the Soviet government rested upon the ideal of eliminating struggles between the social classes. In this respect, Jan Hus and Karl Marx may, hypothetically, have shared similar goals for the 15th century Czech peasantry.

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[10] Betts, 184.

[11] Stanley Sadie, ed. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* [article on-line] (London: Macmillan Publishers, Limited, 1980, accessed February 1, 2002). S.v. "Cantional," by Jiri Sehnal. [available from Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians database through University of Oklahoma Libraries - Library Online Resource Access].

However, the reality of the Soviet machine was that it relied on oppression for its survival. Although the philosophy behind the Soviet system may have been to uplift the common peasant in a gesture of social equality, the dualism resides in that the system in this instance also sought to dominate the Czech nation as a whole. Such a dualism did not exist in the 15th century, as the church made no claims of equality between the classes. Subjugation of the lower classes fit clearly within established political doctrines.

This brief background reveals Jan Hus as the beneficiary of extraordinary timing. While his influence on the Bohemian Reformation was indeed profound, he was by no means the sole instigator of the movement. With shifting social classes, widespread corruption in the clergy, and an extremely fluid character to the political leadership, social and political forces contributed immeasurably to the developing spirit of the Reformation. Nonetheless, Hus' influence on both the history of Bohemia and the evolution of religious thought was indeed significant:

> ...outside theology his greatest achievement was in the development of the Czech language...he did a great service to Bohemia by writing a dissertation on Bohemian orthography which did much to standardise spelling and the use of those diacritical signs which put the writing of a Slavonic language in Roman characters on a scientific basis.[12]

Hus clearly had an interest in scholarship, as indicated by his place on the faculty at the University of Prague. A leader of the Czech party at the university, he was elected Dean of Faculty of Arts in 1401.[13]

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[12] Betts, 185.

[13] Ibid., 186.

Also demonstrating leadership in ecclesiastical circles, Hus displayed a deep commitment to reform within the Catholic Church. The reforms he advocated would have yielded two fundamental results: (1) compelling virtuosity and holiness in the Church, and (2) uplifting the stature of the layperson. He took exception to the highly commercialized nature of religious practice that resulted in clergy living, as he put it, as "the Lord's fat ones."[14] Hus objected to the practice of simony, the sale of indulgences, and the charging of extravagant fees for the performing of sacraments. He also favored communion for the layperson and preaching in the vernacular.

In one of his more radical commentaries, Hus wrote: "Priests living criminally in any manner whatever pollute the priestly power, and as faithless sons, they think faithlessly concerning the seven sacraments of the Church."[15] While the doctrine that sacraments performed by corrupt clergy are invalid is more directly attributable to English theologian William Wycliff, this statement by Hus suggests a measure of support for the concept. Clearly, the idea that one's marriage or last rites might be invalid in the eyes of God because a sinful clergyman performed them would have been exceptionally inflammatory. When combined with Hus' other criticisms of ecclesiastical practice, such rhetoric could only have served to attract negative attention from the Archbishopric and from the Papacy.

Perhaps the most profound difference between Hus and Wycliff concerns the issue of transubstantiation, the belief that the bread and wine in Holy Communion

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[14] Fudge.

[15] Matthew Spinka, John Hus at the Council of Constance (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), 261.

actually become the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Hus always maintained that this was correct, but Wycliff preached remanence, that the bread and wine are not transformed into the actual body and blood. Nonetheless, Hus' enemies incorrectly associated his teachings with Wycliff's on this issue, and were successful enough in doing so that the teaching of remanence was one of the bases upon which he was ultimately convicted of heresy.[16] Given Hus' noble objectives and his being convicted by partially incorrect evidence in order to serve a larger political cause, it has become easy for history to view him as a martyr.

Shortly after Hus began his career at Bethlehem Chapel, Zbynek of Hamburg became the successful bidder in 1402 for the Archbishopric of Prague. Having purchased his position, Zbynek naturally differed with Hus on the practice of simony. Additionally, through sermons and published writings, Hus not only criticized the Papacy, but also addressed indiscretions of local clergy. Such public criticisms tainted Zbynek's image as Archbishop, compelling him to take action against Hus.[17] In 1410, after Hus objected to the burning of Wycliff's books, Zbynek excommunicated Hus. When Hus attempted to fight the action, Pope John XXIII ordered the closing of Bethlehem chapel and threatened to place Prague under an interdict, which would have banned all church services, including funerals. Seemingly left with no other option, Hus went into voluntary exile to spare the people of Prague such a fate.

Such Papal intervention bears a striking similarity to the experience of Alexander Dubcek and his experience with the Soviets. He, like Hus, sought

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[16] Ibid., 34.

[17] Fudge.

systematic reforms while maintaining an anti-separatist mentality. Just as Pope John XXIII forced Hus' hand by threatening oppression of the populace, the Soviets forced Dubcek into political submission with an armed invasion. Both appeals to power utilized the ability to punish the innocent for the actions of few in order to reach a political goal.

Regarding Jan Hus and Pope John XXIII, the larger political goal was complex. In addition to the tide of religious doctrinal uprising, the church was also in the midst of the Great Schism. Three separate men, John XXIII, Benedict XXIII of Avignon and Gregory XII of Rome, all laid claim to the Papacy. Emperor-elect Sigismund of the Holy Roman Empire convinced John XXIII to summon a council to meet at Constance in 1414. The purpose of the council was threefold: (1) the ending of the Great Schism, (2) the combatting of heresies, and (3) reform of the head and membership of the Church.[18] While first of these purposes would ironically depose John XXIII at a later time, this would not occur until Hus became a victim of the attack on heresy, as Betts indicates:

> John XXIII saw in Hus a great opportunity: he would proceed at once to the trial and condemnation of the arch-heretic in order to divert the attention of the council from his own unsavory past and in order to earn the applause of Christendom for destroying the enemy of the faith.[19]

By using the Council of Constance to eliminate Hus, John XXIII could not only quell much of the religious discontent, but also perhaps become the only remaining Pope at

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[18] Stump, vi-xiv.

[19] Betts, 193.

the end of the reunification process. Only the former of these ambitions would come to fruition.

Living in exile, Hus was invited to appear before the council in 1414. A Decree of Safe Conduct issued by King Sigismund on Hus' behalf was to insure his safety in his dealings with the council. Hus viewed this as an opportunity to affect real reform in the Church by pleading his case with the council in a public arena. Although Hus made light of the potential for danger in his early letters sent to friends upon his arrival in Constance, writing: "the goose is not yet cooked and is not afraid of being cooked,"[20] he also took the solemn step of leaving his last will and testament with a pupil before leaving for Constance. This testament included the proclamation that Hus was prepared "to profess the Lord Christ and, if necessary, to suffer death for His most truthful law."[21] In this, it seems that knowing the likely peril that awaited him, Hus was a willing martyr.

Shortly after arriving in Constance, Hus was indeed imprisoned to await trial for heresy. Smahel indicates the ensuing predicament for the King:

> Sigismund, after he arrived in Constance, showed goodwill in dealing with this Hus affair and, during his first encounter with the cardinals, he pressed for Hus' release. Some of the cardinals threatened to leave if the council could not make independent decisions in religious matters.[22]

Sigismund, whose embattled kingdom needed the stability of reunification, submitted to the will of the council, and settled for arranging more suitable living conditions for

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[20] Fudge.

[21] Frantisek Smahel, "Jan Hus—Heretic of Patriot?" *History Today*, April 1990, V. 40 Issue 4 [Accessed via Academic Search Elite database through the University of Oklahoma Libraries, October 4, 2001].

[22] Ibid.

Hus. While Hus waited in prison, John XXIII realized that his efforts in bringing Hus to Constance would not protect him from the actions of the council, and fled on March 21, 1415.[23]

Nonetheless, the trial continued without Hus' chief ecclesiastical critic. While one may reasonably argue that Hus had no real opportunity to combat the charges against him, perhaps two specific events ultimately led to the outright betrayal of Hus by Sigismund. At the second public hearing on June 7, 1415, King Sigismund "took umbrage at Hus' statements regarding the moral disqualification of sovereigns, popes, and prelates in a state of mortal sin, exclaiming 'John Hus, no-one lives without sin!'"[24] Hus' bold reply that "I am standing in front of God's tribunal, which will justly pass judgement on both you and me according to our merits" served to distance the King from his cause.

At the same hearing, Hus was accused of "stirring up strife in Bohemia."[25] In his defense, Hus indicated that he was loved by many of the Bohemian lords to the extent that they would even hide and protect him from the King. One of Hus' supporters, Jan of Chlum, upheld this testimony: "What he speaks is true...There are many great lords who love him and would keep him in their castles as long as they chose, even against both kings together."[26] Betts characterizes the King's reaction: "Sigismund heard these words—not heresy, but treason, and henceforth abandoned

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Smahel.

[25] Betts, 193.

[26] Ibid.

Hus to the council."[27] Betrayed by Sigismund and eventually convicted by the Council of Constance, Jan Hus was burned at the stake on July 6, 1415.

Immediately, public outcry in Bohemia led to "riots against the clergy, and within two months of his [Hus'] death, the lords of the country had formed an armed league to defend the liberty of the preachers."[28] The fierce Hussite uprising continued for years, with many Bohemians rejecting Sigismund as their king and embracing Reformationist ideals. They repelled four separate Counter-Reformationist crusades against them between 1420 and 1427. Suffering their first military loss in 1431, the Hussites entered into open discussions with the Catholics in 1433, and reached the final version of an agreement in 1436.

In examining the role Jan Hus occupied in the Czech Reformation, one finds that his reputation as a martyr grew logically out of his own actions and motivations, as well as injustices done to him by other more powerful, oppressive elements in society. His commitment to virtue and equality did not only resonate with his followers in the 15th century. The values for which he stood and the means by which he was betrayed are timeless issues that exemplify the classic struggle between the oppressed and the oppressor. Such an experience would resonate with Czechs and others in any subsequent era. Furthermore, given the Germanic – Slavic conflicts throughout history, Hus' commitment to uplifting the peasant classes translates into the uplifting of the Czech nation in the stand against oppression in any instance.

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., 193–4.

Therefore, Hus was not simply a martyr who gave his life for a greater good. He was the first significant martyr for Czech nationalism, a role bolstered by 19th century Czech historians. Frantisek Palacky's *History of the Czech Nation in Bohemia and Moravia* was "dominated by a romantic, idealistic nationalism which attributed to the Czech people, especially in its great age of Hussite struggle, a role of humanist leadership that made it possible for contemporary Czechs to look with intense pride upon their glorious past and to believe again in a future."[29]

According to Hussite historian Thomas Fudge, Jan Hus did not write the hymn "Ye Warriors of God."[30] Nonetheless, its prominence in the Hussite folklore clearly connects Hus with subsequent nationalistic musical traditions. Karel Husa's decision to quote the hymn in *Music for Prague 1968* pays tribute to the Hussite struggles in a gesture easily understood by any listener familiar with Czech musical and cultural traditions. His beloved Prague was yet again facing the forces of oppression. Just as the Hussites struggled with the Holy Roman Empire and King Sigismund over 500 years before, the people of Prague in 1968 were now facing oppressive forces in the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries. By evoking this early hymn tune, Husa connects *Music for Prague 1968* not only with the continuing spirit of Czech nationalism, but also with a long tradition of paying homage to Jan Hus as a bastion of hope and national pride.

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[29] Frederick G. Heymann, *Poland and Czechoslovakia*. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), 105.

[30] Personal email message received January 25, 2002.

# CHAPTER 4

## ANALYSIS OF MOVEMENT TWO

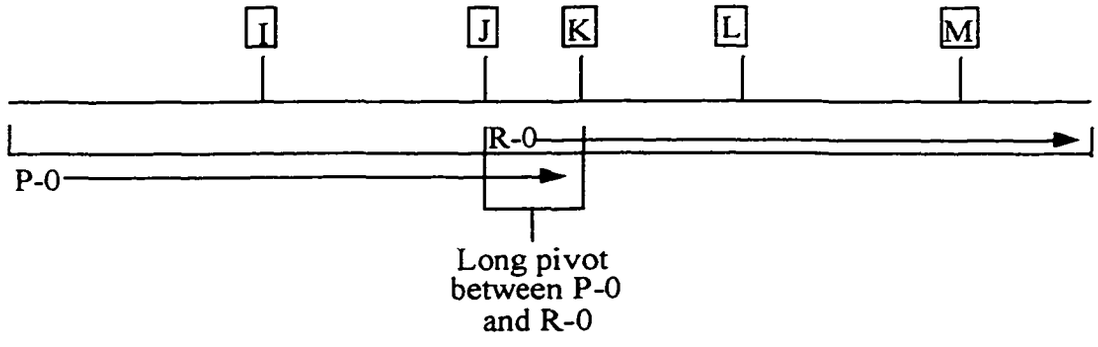
In a composition about a military invasion of one's beloved homeland, entitling one of the movements "Aria" may seem like a curious decision. Husa indicates his reasoning: "The title of 'Aria' might be a little surprising; it is, of course, not an 'aria' in an operatic sense, the word may be a little sarcastic for that occasion: it was not a happy aria."[1] Through sarcasm, Husa makes his own rebellious statement in this movement, contrasting the horror of military invasion with the beauty of lyrical melodic writing. In addition to the sarcastic rebellion specific to the "Aria," the compositional practices demonstrated throughout the movement also secure its place in the larger metaphor conveyed by the pattern of serial tension and release. Fundamentally more complex than the "Introduction and Fanfare," the "Aria" employs more use of complete tone rows, layering of rows, and creation of symmetrical structures at a number of compositional levels. It establishes a pattern of increasing compositional constraint while remaining integrally bound to the preceding musical material through exploration of common musical elements.

Formally, the movement relies on serial construction for structure. Divided primarily into halves, the "Aria" begins with a long statement of a different P-0 row than the one used in the "Introduction and Fanfare." Order number 11 lingers from mm 30-38, acting as a pivot between P-0 and R-0, which occupies the remainder of the movement. Therefore, based on this treatment, the movement is a loose formal

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[1] Casey, 155.

palindrome. The musical material that occurs over this foundation does not display the same mirrored shape.

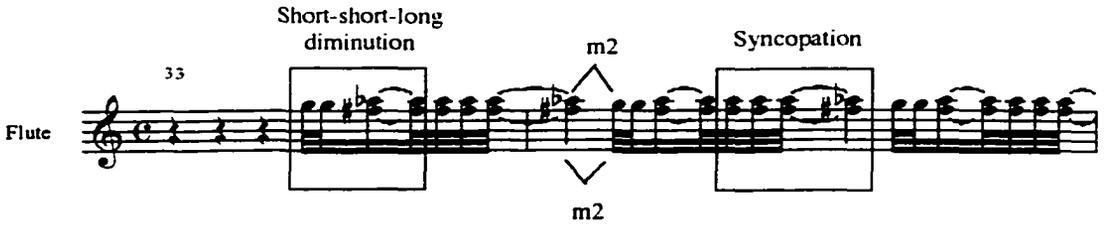



**Example 20. Formal Diagram of "Aria"**

In the "Aria," Husa makes use of all three unifying elements described in Chapter 2. From the beginning of the movement, repeated quarter notes in the marimba and vibraphone create bell tones. While these notes also have a serial function to be discussed later in this chapter, the indicated mallet choices of "medium sticks" in vibraphone and "medium hard sticks" in marimba create a clearly articulated line reminiscent of the brass fanfare at letter C in the previous movement.

Fragments of the Hussite song appear from measure 33, beat 4 through measure 40, beat 1 in the piccolo, flute, oboe, Eb clarinet, and Bb clarinet parts.[2] The fragment is a diminution of the first three notes of the Hussite song, alternating between a transposed tonic and the two chromatically altered pitches identified in Chapter 2, Examples 3 and 4.

[2] Husa analysis, 261.



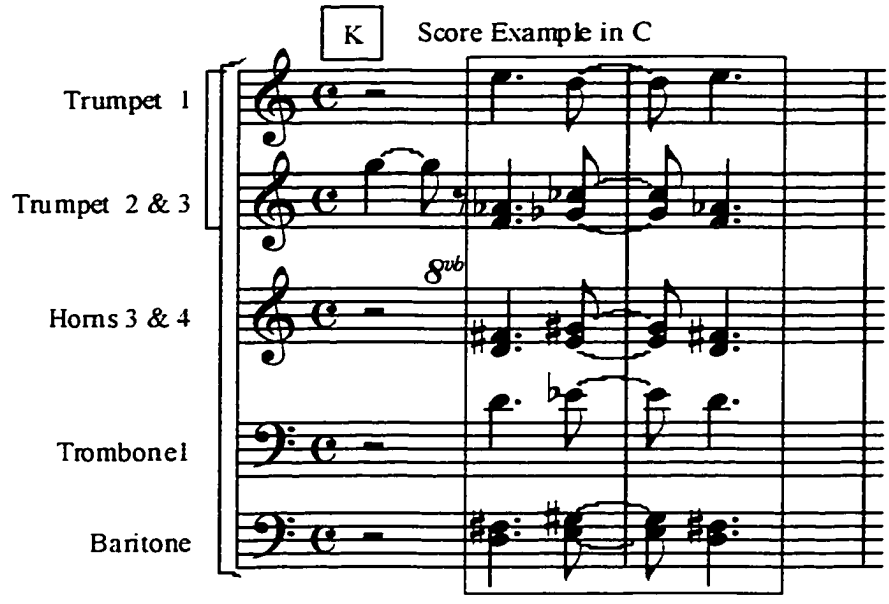

**Example 21. "Aria" Measures 33-34**

The diminution utilizes the short-short-long pattern in measure 1 of the Hussite song,[3] as well as the syncopation in measure 3. The pitch content creates a symmetrical structure with each of the altered pitches a semitone away from the initial "center tone," thereby creating another example of the Bell Motif described in Chapter 2.

The three-chord Chorale Motif first occurs in this movement in measures 36-37 in trumpets 1-3, horns 3-4, trombone 1, and baritones with the indication "not brassy."[4] As with selected examples in the first movement, the Chorale Motif is actually a simple back-and-forth alternation of two chords, fitting the symmetrical Bell Motif model.

[3] See Chapter 2, Example 3.

[4] Husa score, 38-9.



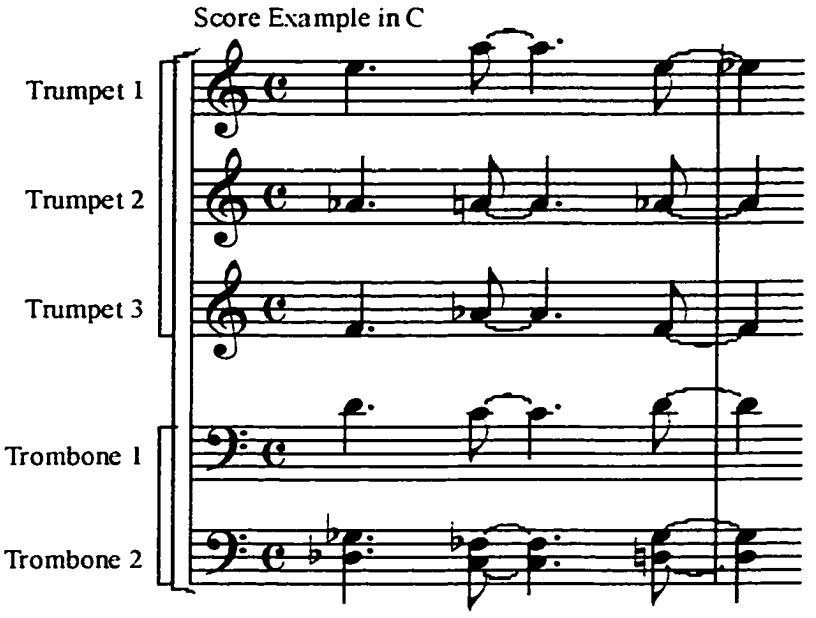

**Example 22. Chorale Motif at Letter K - Measures 36-37**

The alternating chords share a number of common tones, as illustrated in Example 22. Of the five notes in the first and third chords, four are also contained in the middle chord, with only F exclusive to the outer chords. The more complex middle chord, with seven tones, has three unique pitches: Cb, G#, and Eb.

The motif occurs again in measures 41-42 in all trumpet, horn, and trombone parts with the marking "brassy."[5] Also scored in higher tessituras with the specific tone color indicated, the second statement projects a greater sense of urgency than the first. In contrast to the previous statement, the two alternating chords share little pitch material in this case, with only Ab and E/Fb in common. Additionally, while most pitches in the first and third chords are identical, there are some differences between the two, thereby mitigating the symmetrical structure in this case. For instance,

[5] Ibid., 40.

Trombone 3 begins on Db, moves to C, but then returns to D natural, leaving no Db in the third chord.

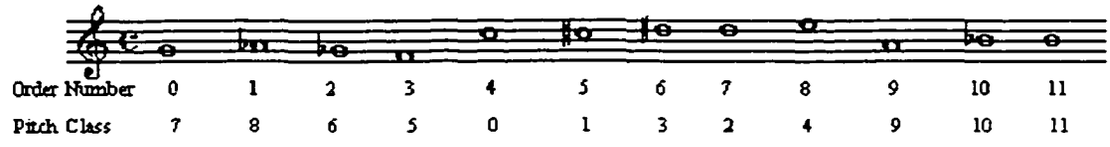



**Example 23. Chorale Motif Measures 41-42**

While Husa makes use of all three unifying elements in the "Aria," the method of implementation is generally more complex than in the "Introduction and Fanfare." For instance, the Hussite song is virtually indistinguishable without close intervallic and rhythmic analysis. Although the use of bell tones is still overt, binding this element to the serial constructions adds a new layer of complexity to the presentation. Furthermore, while the prominent use of marimba in this line creates a shared membership with bells in the percussion family, the wooden sonority and more abrupt decay of the marimba almost separates this line further from the actual sound of a bell than that evoked by the brass instruments in Section B of the first movement.

The use of the Chorale Motif also builds upon the complexity of the first movement by exploring thicker textures and higher degrees of autonomy between the outer and inner chords, paricularly in Example 23.

In addition to his more complex treatment of the three unifying elements, Husa imposes a higher degree of serial constraint on the second movement than the first. One example occurs in the opening measures of the "Aria" with a complete statement of the P-0 form of the tone row used in this movement. The listener may not immediately identify a higher degree of constraint in the opening measures of the movement. Nonetheless, the complete statement of P-0 does represent a heightening of constraint in relation to the "Introduction and Fanfare." Husa identifies this tone row.[6]

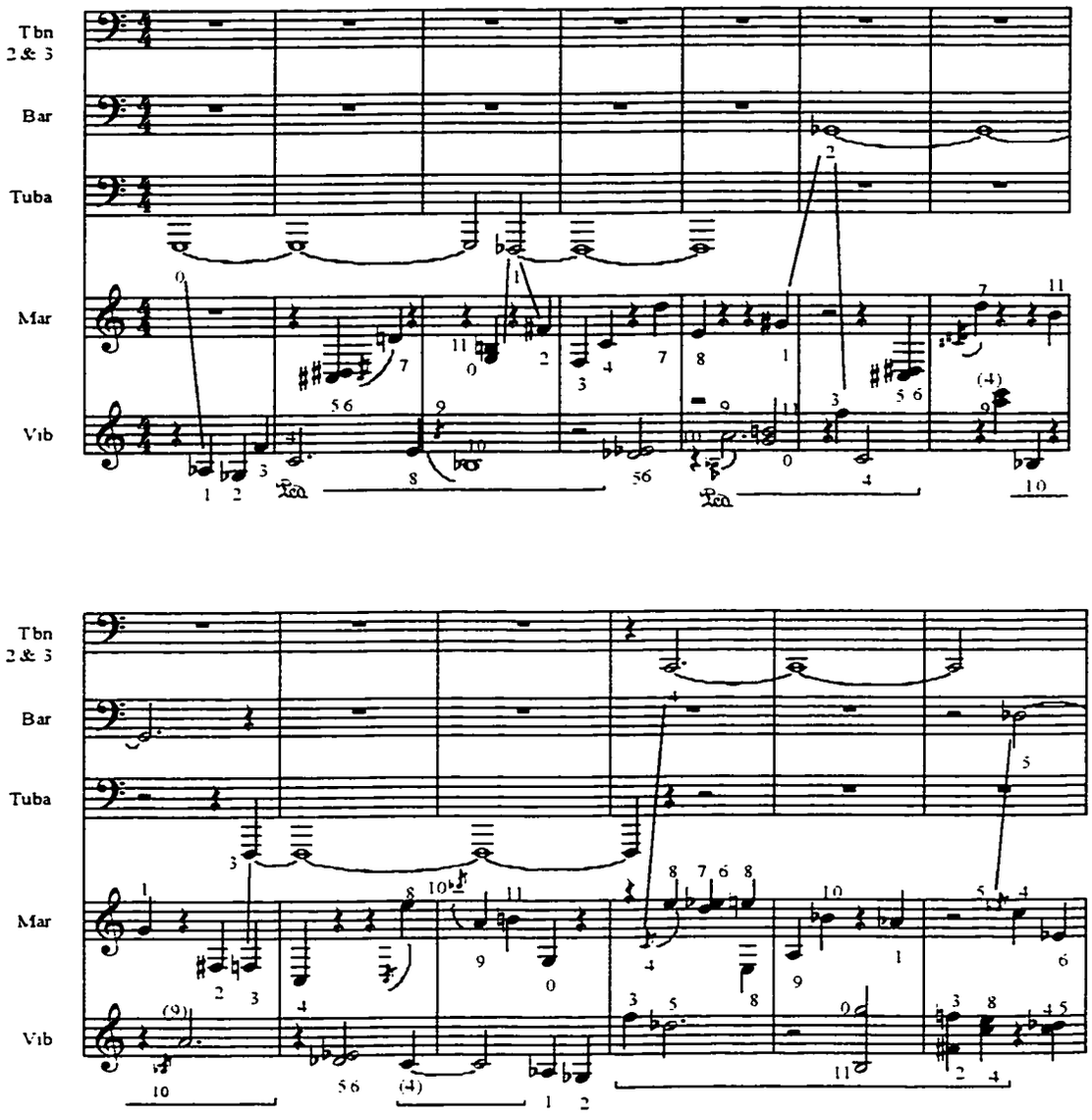



**Example 24. "Aria" Tone Row**

The row begins with the first note in the tuba part, and continues in keyboard percussion on count 2 of measure 1. The statement of the entire row continues until its completion in measure 3, count 2 in the marimba part.

[6] Husa analysis, 262.

Order Numbers indicated




**Example 25. "Aria" Measures 1-13**

Casey explains that this row repeats in varying degrees of strictness through measure 31.[7]

[7] Casey, 152-3.

The first note of the movement in the tuba part actually begins two separate statements of the same row. While this tone acts as order number 0 of the P-0 statement carried on by percussion in quarter note rhythms, it also occupies the same position in a statement of the same row, with longer note values, moving throughout the ensemble. This elongated statement of P-0 lasts through the first 39 measures. The retrograde form of the same row begins in measure 40, occupying the remainder of the movement, with the final tone lasting from measure 65 beat 4 through measure 68.[8] With P-0 occupying roughly the first half of the movement and R-0 the second half, the reflective symmetry of large sections provides an example of the Bell Motif on a grand scale.

While complete statements of the P-0 row distinguish this movement from the first, the interplay between the layered P-0 statements further augments the difference in compositional constraint between the two movements. For instance, in measure 3, the underlying quarter-note row has a rest on count three, where order number 1 would occur within the quarter-note pattern.[9] This pitch does occur, but is contributed by the tubas. The tuba pitch on count 3 occupies order number 1 in both the faster percussion row statement and the slower statement described above. Similar instances occur on the downbeat of measure 6, where baritone contributes order number 2, and measure 8, count 4, where order number 4 occurs simultaneously in tuba and marimba, and so forth along the progression of the elongated P-0 statement.

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[8] Ibid., 151-2.

[9] See Example 25

Casey makes the point that the elongated statement of the P-0 row is "somewhat reminiscent of Renaissance cantus firmus techniques."[10] This does resemble compositional practice in the early Renaissance, particularly in light of the layering of the faster P-0 "melodies" over the slower one in the style of the late Medieval or early Renaissance motet. In an ironic twist, this connection seems additionally bound to the use of the Hussite song in *Music for Prague 1968*, with the transition from Medieval to Renaissance occurring in the early 15th century at the same time as the Hussite rebellion.

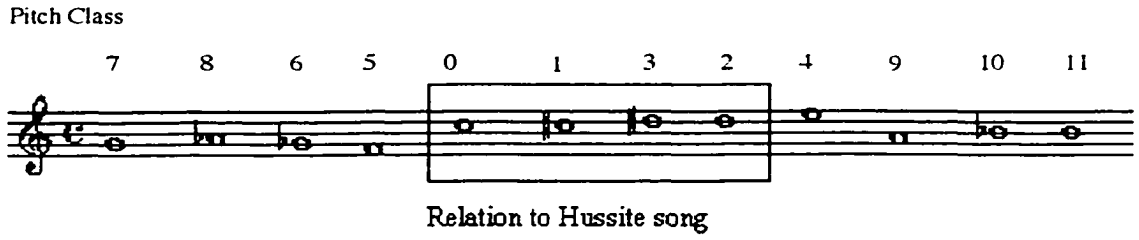
In another issue of compositional constraint, Casey explains that all four standard permutations of the tone row, P, I, R, and RI occur in this movement.[11] He continues by identifying the saxophone melodies beginning in measure 4 as being derived from RI-1. Additionally, he explains that material in measures 17-20 is derived from I-5 and measures 21-25 from I-8. Without further reiterating Casey's tone row identifications, one can recognize in his work the clear distinction between serial technique in the "Introduction and Fanfare" and the "Aria." While the two movements demonstrate cohesive melodic qualities, adherence to a serial compositional system is stricter in the "Aria." This creates a pattern of development that continues to grow in the "Interlude," as detailed in Chapter 6.

The tone row used in Movement 2 displays similarities to the row used in Movement 1, as well as to the Hussite song. Husa identifies the relation to the Hussite song in his analysis:

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[10] Ibid., 151.

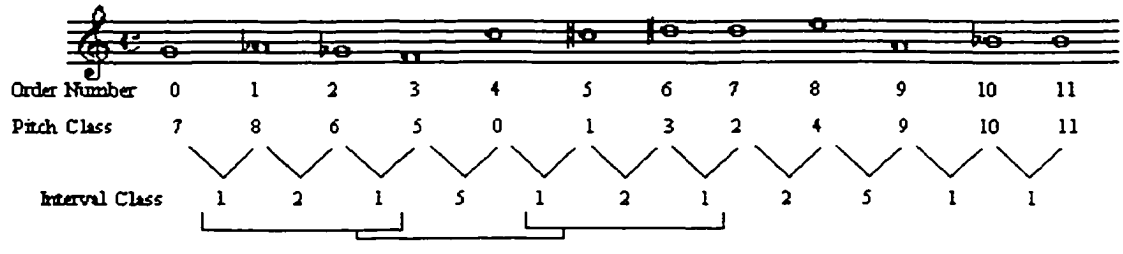
[11] Ibid., 150.




**Example 26. "Aria" Tone Row Relation to "Ye Warriors of God"[12]**

The notes indicated in Example 26 form exactly the same pitch class set displayed in Chapter 2, Example 4. The connection is the same as in Movement 1, the collection of altered and unaltered pitches from "Ye Warriors of God." Additionally, the halfway point in the "Aria" tone row, order numbers 5 and 6 are the two altered pitches, C# and D#. Example 5 in Chapter 2 reveals that the "Introduction and Fanfare" tone row is bisected by exacty the same tones, C# and D# in order numbers 5 and 6, respectively.

Further examination of the "Aria" tone row interval classes yields the following:



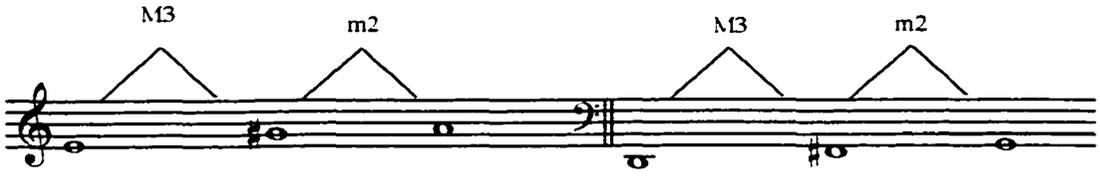

**Example 27. "Aria" Tone Row Interval Classes**

This reveals more successions of the 1-2-1 interval classes from order numbers 0-3 and again from order numbers 4-7. Additionally, the interval classes from order

[12] Husa analysis, 262.

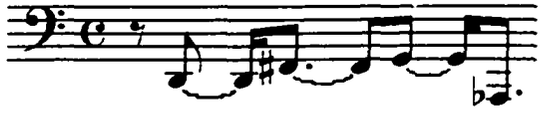
numbers 2-5 yield a symmetrical construction of 1-5-1, which represent the Bell Motif at the motivic level. These motivic examples of the Bell Motif also combine to create a larger symmetrical construction from order numbers 0-7.

Husa also mentions the importance of intervallic content in the "Aria," "There is another important figure that repeats itself in the free middle section of the 'Aria,' it is the major third and minor second intervals that start the first movement:"[13]




**Example 28. Major Third and Minor Second Examples in Movement 1 and Movement 2**

An example of this pattern occurs in measure 38 in bassoon, contrabassoon, trombones 2-3, tuba and string bass.



**Example 29. "Aria" Measure 38**

The major third and minor second intervals also relate to the construction of the row in the same fundamental manner as demonstrated in Chapter 2, Example 17. With the 1-2-1 interval class succession, the outer interval classes are minor seconds,

[13] Husa analysis, 263-4.

and the combined distance of the inner interval with either outer interval yields a minor third (a total distance of three semitones). Husa does not elaborate on the importance of these intervals, but their prominence in both serial and nonserial motivic structures lends cohesion to the composition.

Husa's orchestration choices support the model of increased compositional constraint, and therefore, the overriding metaphor for societal constraints imposed upon the Czech people throughout their history. In the admittedly sarcastically titled "Aria," percussion occupies a much stronger role as a structural element than in the "Introduction and Fanfare." From the opening moments, vibraphone and marimba present the prime form of the tone row, the most fundamental element of a serial composition. By contrast, percussion in the first movement is limited largely to supporting moments of impact and lending coloristic suport to brass and woodwind parts. While it is true that the timpani performs the opening fragments of the Hussite song, the role is clearly subservient to that of the Keyboard percussion writing in the "Aria."

Extending the role of the percussion section throughout the work becomes more significant in observing that the third movement is entirely percussion. Recognizing the martial quality of the percussion family, particularly with use of snare drums in the third movement discussed in Chapter 6, one can find a crescendo not only of compositional constraint in the treatment of pitch content, but also in the increased reliance on these martial instruments for structural integrity. This suggests a metaphorical relationship between the increased martial quality of the orchestration and the military buildup leading to the August 1968 invasion.

Adding another layer of irony, Husa places the main melody of the "Aria" in the low single reeds with primary emphasis on the saxophones because of their potential for sustained, full singing lines. He likens this to the "vox humana" on an organ,[14] or the "human voice." This main melody presents the RI form of the row, in musical opposition to the P-0 form running concurrently. The irony lies in that the humanistic voice of the reeds presents the retrograde-inversion of the line performed by the martial percussion section in a subtle yet bold statement of defiance.

Husa completes the "Aria" with what seems to be another more directly defiant gesture. During the final three measures, the high siren-like long tones of flute, piccolo, and Eb clarinet proceed without crescendo for two measures, then diminuendo in the final measure. Meanwhile, the "vox humana" single reed instruments enter at the piano dynamic on low long tones, but with the marking *crescendo molto* through the end of the movement, suggesting ultimate victory by the voice of humanity.

[14] Ibid., 264.

# CHAPTER 5

# FROM THE HUSSITES TO THE NATIONAL RENASCENCE: EVOLUTION OF THE CZECH NATIONAL AND CULTURAL IDENTITIES

Karel Husa's compositional style displays aspects of the Czech musical tradition established by Bedrich Smetana in the 19th century. Specifically in *Music for Prague 1968*, he juxtaposes nationalistic ideals with use of traditional folksong, set in a 20th century tonal language. His use of "Ye Warriors of God" calls upon a similar usage of the same tune by Smetana in his symphonic work, *Ma Vlast*. Use of the same musical gesture of nationalistic expression connects the two composers on both the musical and philosophical levels.

Although Husa had spent nearly half his life outside his homeland by 1968, he clearly identified with the struggle of the Czech people, having personally felt the impact of totalitarian oppression.[1] Though he does not specifically label himself a nationalist in his written commentary on *Music for Prague 1968*, Husa does display a kindred spirit with Czech nationalists via his background, personal experiences, writings, and compositional practices. Given the overt nature of his reference to both Smetana and the Hussite era with "Ye Warriors of God," an examination of Smetana's role in the development of the Czech national musical style supports the claim that Karel Husa is a participant in the Czech nationalist tradition.

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[1] Husa's personal experiences with oppressive regimes are discussed in more specific detail in Chapter 7.

*Music for Prague 1968* is not Husa's only composition that evokes the spirit of his homeland, as McLaurin explains: "In 1956 he composed *Twelve Moravian Songs* for voice and piano. As with the *Eight Czech Duets*, he sought to preserve the folk songs of his native land while maintaining the inherent accessibility of folk music."[2] Other works in this vein include *Evocations of Slovakia* (1951) for clarinet, viola, and cello, and the subsequent revisions: *Serenade* (1963) for woodwind quintet with strings, harp, and xylophone, and a re-scoring of the *Serenade* for woodwind quintet and piano that same year.[3]

Additionally, while Husa composed *Music for Prague 1968* in the immediate aftermath of the 1968 invasion of Prague, he actually wanted to compose the piece before the invasion and Kenneth Snapp's commission compelled him to act. "I thought about writing about Prague for some time because the longer I am away from the city (I left Czechoslovakia in 1946), the more I remember the beauty of it. In my idealization, I see Prague as more beautiful, perhaps, than it really is."[4] This commentary helps frame *Music for Prague 1968* as a nationalistic expression in a number of ways. First, it emphasizes Husa's long-standing admiration for the beauty of his homeland and a desire to pay tribute to it, allying this musical gesture with other similarly motivated compositions such as Bedrich Smetana's *Ma Vlast*. Second, the suggestion that his own idealism may be so profound that it distorts the truth points to a highly romanticized aesthetic that shares a common bond with

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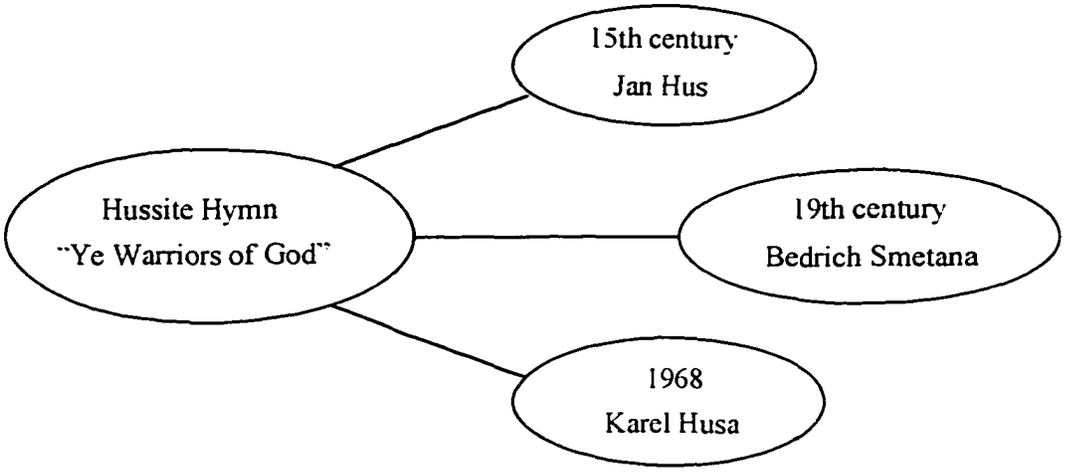
[2] McLaurin, 46.

[3] Ibid., 57.

[4] Husa analysis, 259.

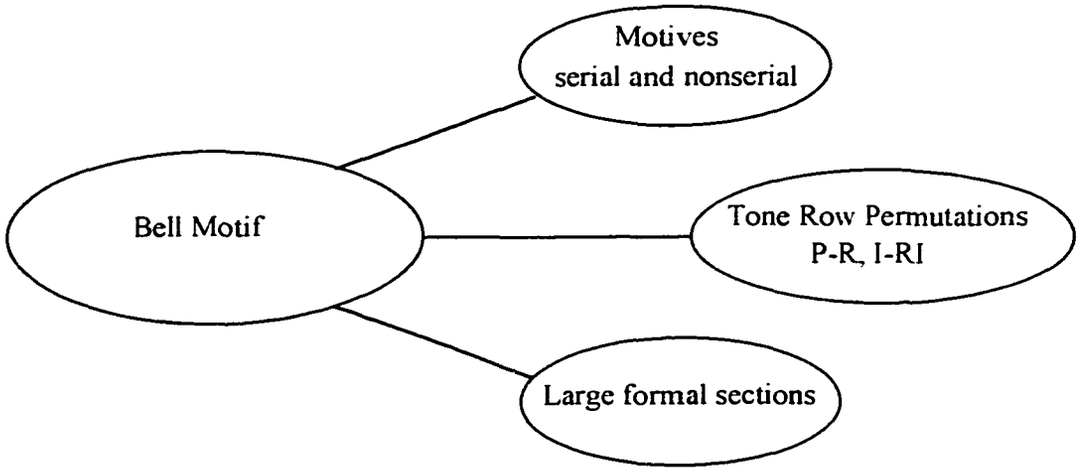
nationalism. Indeed, nationalism depends highly on romanticism, and the interrelatedness of the two trends was key in their concurrent development in the 19th century.

The multiple references evoked by the Hussite song share an ironic commonality with the compositional practice in *Music for Prague 1968*. They do so (a) historically to the Hussites in the 15th century and (b) philosophically to the 19th century nationalists. The hymn provides multiple layers of reference to the history of the Czech people.



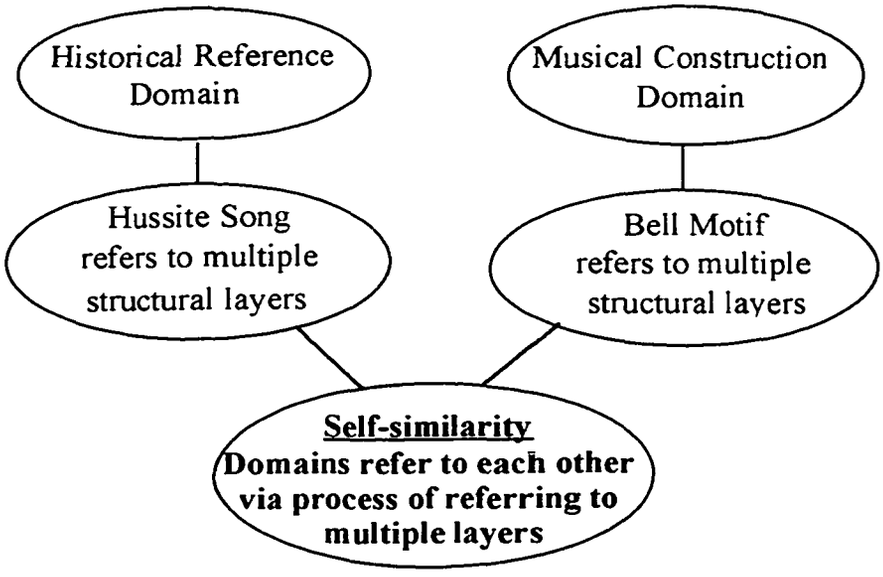

**Example 30. "Ye Warriors of God" Multiple Historical References**

The Bell Motif similarly occurs at multiple structural levels within the composition.




**Example 31. Bell Motif Multiple Musical Manifestations**

In this, *Music for Prague 1968* becomes self-referential within (a) the domain of historical reference, and separately in (b) the domain of musical construction. Additionally, the composition displays a broader example of self-reference in that the two domains share the same self-referential characteristics, thereby referring to each other as well.




**Example 32. Similarity between Domains of Reference**

Following the Hussite rebellion, the degree of control exerted upon Bohemia by the Hapsburg Empire varied with the leadership, but perhaps the harshest control began in 1621 following the defeat of Bohemian rebellion forces at the Battle of White Mountain. The following 160 years, often referred to as the "dark times" in Czech history, were characterized by the conscious squelching of Bohemian cultural identity. It was not until the Patent of Toleration in 1781 by Josef II that efforts to develop this cultural identity were allowed, accompanied by a new policy of religious freedom.

From 1781 through the 19th century, one finds the conscious and rapid developments of the cultural and national identities of the Czech people in a period labeled the Czech National Renascence. The Czech artistic culture did not grow organically out of natural societal developments in the same manner as in the German, Italian, French, and English cultures. Rather, it was consciously created, not only as an outward cultural expression, but also as a means of lending credibility to the overriding socio-political nationalist agenda. Nineteenth century nationalist leader Frantisek Palacky believed that success of the Czech nationalists "would greatly depend on making use of established cultural institutions."[5] Means of developing such cultural institutions included establishment of the Royal Bohemian Society of Sciences in 1784, the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague in 1799, and the Bohemian Museum Society in 1818. Palacky's vision placed these cultural institutions not simply in the role of reflecting Czech society, but of driving its development.

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[5] John F. N. Bradley, *Czech Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century*, (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1984), 9.

Therefore, they became not only a source of national pride, but also of nationalistic validation.

Regarding the development of a Czech national musical style during the Renascence, one finds a central figure in Bedrich Smetana, whose conscious efforts in developing a characteristically Czech operatic style shared a commonality of purpose with the socio-political agendas of the Czech nationalists. Smetana's influence in creating a national style lives on today in the compositional style of Karel Husa, as exemplified in the use of "Ye Warriors of God" in *Music for Prague 1968*. Therefore, Karel Husa represents an extension of the Czech nationalist musical tradition developed by Smetana. This tradition is particularly important in Czech culture because it played a key philosophical role in attempts to break the pattern of oppression that dated back to the Hapsburg Empire and before.

The creation of the Hapsburg Empire dates to the early 16$^{th}$ century, when Ferdinand I became the Hapsburg ruler in Austria in 1522. Rudolf II, who assumed power in 1576, had a personal preference for Counter Reformationist ideals. Nonetheless, he approved a measure of religious freedom for Protestants in 1609 with the Letter of Majesty in an action intended to quell unrest in the Czech nobility. Later, with Rudolf's forced abdication in 1612, his childless brother Matthias took the crown, leaving Archduke Ferdinand as the heir. Both Matthias and Ferdinand were committed to the elimination of Protestant opposition, and numerous violations of the principles set forth in the Letter of Majesty resulted in riots by the Czech nobility in the 1618 Defenstration of Prague.

The resulting crackdown in 1621 included the confiscation of possessions of all nobles and townsmen who either participated in the rebellion, or would not convert to Catholicism. By 1628, more than 36,000 families had left Bohemia and over 75% of the land had been confiscated. The Jesuits strictly controlled all publishing, and more than 60,000 Czech language books were burned in an attempt to extinguish the non-Germanic elements.[6] In these occurrences, one finds another chapter in the history of German-Slavic conflict and the continued oppression of the Czech people. Each subsequent example further clarifies Karel Husa's description of the Hussite hymn "Ye Warriors of God" as "a symbol of resistance and hope for hundreds of years, whenever fate lay heavy on the Czech nation."[7] In reality, fate often lay heavy on the Czech nation throughout its history, and the combination of political, religious, linguistic, and cultural oppression over hundreds of years planted the seeds of Czech nationalism long before political circumstances allowed outward expression of such a sentiment.

Little would change until late in the 18th century, with the accession of Joseph II in 1781. His issuing of the Patent of Toleration opened the door for a measure of religious and cultural freedom for the Protestant Czechs. He also abolished serfdom, permitting those previously bound to servitude in the countryside to relocate to the cities. The resulting migration to Prague created urban growth, allowed a relatively uneducated Czech population to be exposed to and influenced by a more sophisticated culture, and provided for a higher degree of social mobility with greater economic

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[6] R. W. Seton-Watson, *A History of the Czechs and Slovaks* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1965), 117-9.

[7] Husa score, 2.

opportunities for the lower and middle classes. Dobrovsky's development of the concept of Slavonic studies and Jungmann's authorship of the history of Czech literature and a Czech language dictionary supported this trend.

Palacky's *History of the Czech Nation in Bohemia and Moravia* kindled nationalistic ideals in the Czech intelligentsia and middle class as he emerged as a major figure in the Czech nationalist movement in the 19th century. While he was never able to see his dream come to fruition, Palacky favored a government in Prague that was actually loyal to the Hapsburgs, but also maintained a measure of Bohemian autonomy and recognition of their culture. As a composer and university professor, Karel Husa represents the logical extension of the 19th century intellectual activity inspired by Palacky. Although Husa relocated to the United States, his personal experience in his homeland was not one of political autonomy or cultural recognition. Nonetheless, his *Music for Prague 1968* displays a clear commitment to Czech solidarity manifested in artistic expression. Though displaced from his homeland, Husa represents the same spirit of Czech intellegentsia as Palacky and Smetana.

In comparing the Czech developmental timeline with that of the majority of other European cultures, one finds that this national identity developed much later than others. In 1620, when the Hapsburg Empire quelled any serious development of Czech culture, the remainder of Europe was firmly entrenched in the Baroque, with the plays of the recently deceased William Shakespeare, the paintings of Rembrandt, and the operas of Claudio Monteverdi. Later, the 1781 Patent of Toleration opened the door for development of Czech cultural idioms. That same year, Franz Joseph Haydn composed his Op. 33 String Quartets, upheld by many as a model for the

development of the Classical style. In an ironic twist, one finds that the Czech National Renascence[8] began at the same time that Western European musical culture welcomed the formal manifestation of Classicism. This correlation becomes significant in that it emphasizes the degree to which Czech cultural development lagged behind other European cultures. Recognizing this discrepancy connects 17th - 19th century Czechs with the experiences of the earlier Czech peasantry championed by Jan Hus, further bolstering nationalistic sentiment.

In examining the development of a characteristically Czech national musical style, one finds that Bedrich Smetana was the early leader in this endeavor. For Smetana, the development of a national operatic style in Prague was a goal that ultimately came to fruition, as Tyrrell observes: "The canon of Smetana's eight completed operas constitutes the most important body of Czech nineteenth-century opera. It is remarkable for its consistent quality, for its personal voice that became virtually synonymous with a 'Czech' style, and for the models it provided for Smetana's contemporaries and successors."[9]

In the years after joining his friend and nationalist activist Karel Havlicek in Prague in 1839, Smetana's connection with the Czech nationalist movement grew considerably. As national awareness grew, so did the understanding that a national musical identity was bound up in the creation of that national awareness. Rather than relying on repertoire from other cultures, there was a need for the Czech art to speak to and for the Czech people--a need that was initially fulfilled in Smetana's music.

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[8] This can be compared with the Renaissance in other European cultures.

[9] John Tyrrell, *Czech Opera*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 71.

Smetana would certainly have been exposed to nationalist ideals through his association with Havlicek. His interest in such ideologies became apparent in his 1845 association with the Prague Repeal, a radical association organized by a number of Czech artists. By 1860, the end of absolutist rule made possible the National Revival Movement, and accordingly, the creation of a Czech opera. With the combination of music, theater, literature, philosophy, and often history or politics, opera typically reflects the character of a culture, and is therefore of tremendous interest to historians. In the case of Czech opera, the genre also did much to inform and define the culture.

Prior to the National Revival Movement, operas were performed in Czech with German direction, but were the translated works of foreign composers. Now the opportunity to proceed independently of German direction and foreign composers presented itself. Smetana had hoped to become the director of the Provisional Theater, but it opened in 1862 under the direction of J.N. Mayr. While it is true that Mayr did not have a repertoire of Czech opera from which to choose, he also did not attempt to cultivate the repertoire or promote local talent. Smetana was openly critical of Mayr and his programming practices in the Provisional Theater, publishing frequent editorials in the Young Czech newspaper, *Nardoni Listy*.

Unable to assume leadership of the Provisional Theater at this time, Smetana's ability to guide the creation of a Czech national opera might have been hampered. However, an opera composition contest sponsored by Count Harrach presented a tremendous opportunity for Smetana to make an impact on the Czech repertoire. In 1862, he began work on *The Brandenburgers in Bohemia* with a libretto by Karel

Sabina. This work is significant in that there was no real Czech opera to use as a model. The composition was awarded one of the contest prizes, although no prize was awarded for libretti. With Mayr refusing to conduct this composition, Smetana conducted the premier in January 1866 to German and Czech critical acclaim. Nonetheless, the fledgling opera did present its share of challenges, particularly regarding declamation. Smetana himself was not entirely comfortable with the Czech language, coming to it later in life, and disparities between leading scholars regarding formalities of the Czech language (also developing an identity at this time) presented additional linguistic barriers.

The question of how to create a characteristically national style also presented an array of challenges. What were the compositional practices that differentiated a nationalistic piece from one that was not? Smetana did not feel that directly quoting folk tunes necessarily made a composition nationalistic. Rather, he preferred to create "nationalistic lines based on the folk idiom."[10] These themes evoked the spirit of nationalism with melodies constructed to resemble folk tunes, although not actually quoting existing songs. Additionally, Smetana's treatment of orchestration lent itself to a nationalistic end. For example, his use of chorus was intended to allow the people to emerge as the protagonist with an actual dramatic function (rather than simply commenting on the actions of others). In *The Brandenburgers in Bohemia*, they "became the revolutionary rabble, fighting for freedom with full-throated vigor."[11] Subsequent operas that also evoked nationalist themes included *Dalibor*, *The*

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[10] Ibid., 153-4.

[11] Ibid., 154.

*Bartered Bride*, *The Kiss*, *The Two Widows*, and the most overtly nationalistic, *Libuse*.

In his symphonic work, *Ma Vlast*, Smetana broke with his own tradition by directly quoting the Hussite song "Ye Warriors of God" in the final two movements of the composition. The overt reference is a particularly poignant nationalistic statement in light of his aversion to directly quoting folk songs. By saving this technique for the closing movements of the composition written to celebrate his homeland, Smetana creates a musical canvas upon which to place the unmistakable image of the early Hussite warriors.

In *Music for Prague 1968*, Karel Husa continues where Smetana concluded in *Ma Vlast*, with an overt statement of the same Hussite folk song. Connecting Husa's use of "Ye Warriors of God" with Smetana's becomes a simple association, given that Husa mentions *Ma Vlast* in the Foreward to the score of *Music for Prague 1968*.[12] Later, Husa also paid tribute to Smetana in a more direct gesture with the composition of *Smetana Fanfare* (1984) for wind ensemble. Therefore, Karel Husa clearly associates himself with Bedrich Smetana and the Czech nationalist movement through his musical choices.

Although Husa's rhetoric does not make the explicit claim of nationalism, one finds the sentiment implicit in his musical decisions. This study not only takes Husa's use of "Ye Warriors of God" as a general symbol of hope for the Czech people, but also utilizes it as an interpretive lens for viewing Husa in the continuum of Czech nationalistic expression. In recognizing the past, we gain greater insight into this 20th century composer. Likewise, by evoking the past in his commentary on the 1968

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[12] Husa score, 2.

invasion, Husa seems to yearn for humanity to combine lessons from the past and present to work toward a more peaceful future.

# CHAPTER 6

## ANALYSIS OF MOVEMENT THREE

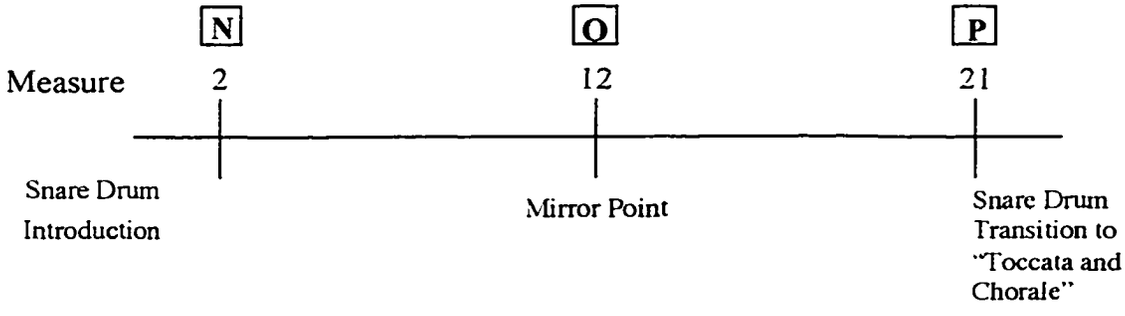
The third movement, "Interlude," is scored entirely for percussion instruments, and leads directly into the fourth without a break. While this movement may technically uphold its namesake with regard to orchestration and length, it occupies a more important role in the musical development of the composition than the title suggests. The pattern of increasing compositional constraint established in the first two movements reaching an extreme in the "Interlude," with strict serial structures applied to pitch/timbre, rhythm, and dynamics in three parts that are layered over two additional freely composed lines. While the timbral, rhythmic, and dynamic rows are interrelated, analysis reveals two separate prime timbral rows occurring in succession. They are layered over consecutive permutations of a single rhythmic row with corresponding dynamic levels.

Although brief, this movement heightens the musical tension with eerily soft sonorities and highly constrained compositional processes, propelling listeners into the "Toccata and Chorale" rather than providing some sort of respite, as the title implies. While Husa does not address this issue in his own analysis of *Music for Prague 1968*, the title "Interlude" could be considered ironic in that it acts as a musical springboard, rather than a resting point. The tension created by increased constraint through the first three movements is eventually released in the opening measures of the "Toccata and Chorale."

Instrumentation of the "Interlude" is:

Snare Drum
Percussion I - Small Antique Cymbal (preferably B"), Small Triangle, Small Suspended Cymbal, and Small Tam-tam
Percussion II - Medium Antique Cymbal (preferably E"), Medium Triangle, Medium Suspended Cymbal, and Medium Tam-tam
Percussion III - Large Antique Cymbal (preferably C"), Large Triangle, Large Suspended Cymbal, and Large Tam-tam
Vibraphone

As with the "Aria," the "Interlude" relies on serial constructions to define the formal structure of the movement. Husa states: "Letter O divides the part with cymbals, triangles, and tam-tam (percussion 1, 2, and 3) in half; from the last antique cymbal note the score reads exactly in retrograde inversion backwards to letter O; this is strict mirror rewriting."[1] Although Husa's comment refers specifically to timbre, the same concept also applies to the other serialized components of this movement. Snare drum provides an introduction at the beginning and a transition into the next movement at the end. With a mirror point at letter O, the "Interlude" is a two-part form.




**Example 33. Formal Diagram of "Interlude"**

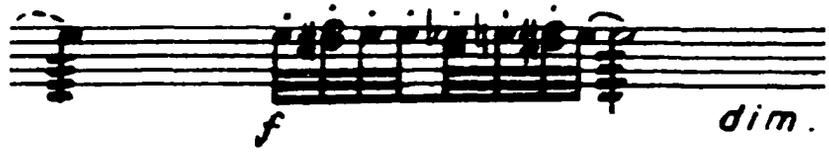
[1] Husa analysis, 264.

Following the snare drum introduction, multi-percussion and vibraphone enter at letter N. The three multi-percussion parts are serialized with regard to timbre, rhythm, and dynamics. The snare drum and vibraphone parts are independent from the other three parts, with the snare drum evoking militaristic images of the invading forces. The vibraphone, added at a later time, "has an independent, non repeating and non retrograde line"[2] It moves freely around the other musical events, alluding frequently to the pitch collection indicated in Chapter 2, Example 4, with similar sonorities to those utilized at rehearsal letter C in the first movement, as indicated in Chapter 2, Example 16.




**Example 34. "Interlude" Vibraphone at Letter O - Measure 12**

Other references occur in transposed form.




**Example 35. "Interlude" Vibraphone at Measure 17**

[2] Husa analysis, 264.

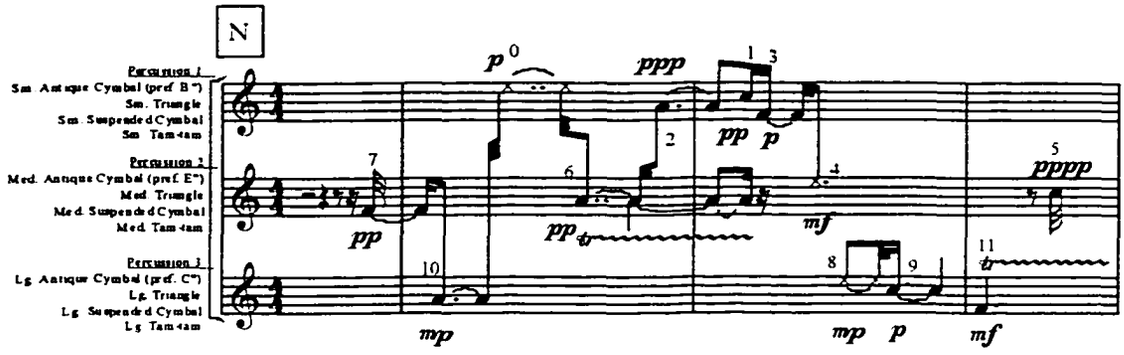
This example bears a striking resemblance to the musical example in Chapter 4, Example 21. In utilizing such similar musical structures, Husa connects the vibraphone line in the "Interlude" with both the Bell Motif and the Hussite song in the same manner as with the trumpets in the "Introduction and Fanfare" and the woodwinds in the "Aria."

Regarding the choice of antique cymbals, Husa calls for the pitches B and E because they are required to perform Debussy's *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*, and orchestras are likely to already own them. He adds the pitch C "to match the E and the B,"[3] although his analysis does not elaborate on how it matches. There is a connection to the other movements through the resultant minor second and major third intervals between the three antique cymbals, with a minor second between B and C, and a major third between C and E. Therefore, Husa's choice to add an antique cymbal pitched at C results in a relationship between the multi percussion parts in the "Interlude" and musical materials in the previous two movements, as demonstrated in Chapter 2, Example 17 and Chapter 4, Example 8.

While the composer specifies that the multi-percussion parts are totally serialized, analysis presents a unique problem in that the notes are not pitched, with the exception of the antique cymbals. There are, however, twelve possible sounds spread across the three multi-percussion parts. Therefore, the row may be considered a timbral row rather than a traditional tone row. The sounds are numbered straight down the score, with the small antique cymbal as 0, the small triangle 1, etc., all the

[3] Husa analysis, 265.

way to 11--the large tam-tam.[4] Therefore, the first entrance of the timbral row occurs in the first measure of letter N on timbre class (hereafter TC) 7. Following the succession of timbres yields a row of 12 tones without repetition.




**Example 36. "Interlude" at Letter N - Measure 2**

Expanding this row into a matrix yields the following:

[4] In this specific instance, the numbering system differs from Casey, who numbers pitch/timbre classes in this series 1-12, rather than 0-11. The latter was chosen for this study to remain consistent with the numbering systems for the other tone rows.

| P→ | | | | | | | | | | | ←R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ↓I | 7 | 10 | 0 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 9 | 11 | 5 |
| | 4 | 7 | 9 | 3 | 11 | 10 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 2 |
| | 2 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 10 | 11 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 0 |
| | 8 | 11 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 10 | 0 | 6 |
| | 0 | 3 | 5 | 11 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 10 |
| | 1 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 11 |
| | 11 | 2 | 4 | 10 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 9 |
| | 10 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 11 | 0 | 2 | 8 |
| | 6 | 9 | 11 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 8 | 10 | 4 |
| | 5 | 8 | 10 | 4 | 0 | 11 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 3 |
| | 3 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 10 | 9 | 11 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 1 |
| ←RI | 9 | 0 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 10 | 11 | 1 | 7 |

**Table 2. Matrix of "Interlude" Initial Timbral Row**

The prime form can be read along the rows, the inversion by reading down the columns, the retrograde by reading the rows backwards, and the retrograde inversion by reading the columns from bottom to top.

The twelfth note of the first row actually doubles as the first note of the next row. Neither this row nor any of its transpositions are found in the original matrix, suggesting the existence of a second prime timbral row:

5 1 7 6 0 2 11 3 8 4 10 9

**Example 37. "Interlude" Second Timbral Row**

This row yields the following matrix:

| P→ | | | | | | | | | | | ←R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ↓I | 5 | 1 | 7 | 6 | 0 | 2 | 11 | 3 | 8 | 4 | 10 | 9 |
| | 9 | 5 | 11 | 10 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 0 | 8 | 2 | 1 |
| | 3 | 11 | 5 | 4 | 10 | 0 | 9 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 8 | 7 |
| | 4 | 0 | 6 | 5 | 11 | 1 | 10 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 9 | 8 |
| | 10 | 6 | 0 | 11 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 1 | 9 | 3 | 2 |
| | 8 | 4 | 10 | 9 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 11 | 7 | 1 | 0 |
| | 11 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 9 | 2 | 10 | 4 | 3 |
| | 7 | 3 | 9 | 8 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 10 | 6 | 0 | 11 |
| | 2 | 10 | 4 | 3 | 9 | 11 | 8 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 7 | 6 |
| | 6 | 2 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 9 | 5 | 11 | 10 |
| | 0 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 9 | 6 | 10 | 3 | 11 | 5 | 4 |
| ←RI | 1 | 9 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 10 | 7 | 11 | 4 | 0 | 6 | 5 |

**Table 3. Matrix of "Interlude" Second Timbral Row**

These two timbral rows will hereafter be referred to as x and y, respectively. Thus, to this point, one finds statements of Px and Py with the medium triangle note in the fourth measure of letter N serving as order number 12 of Px and order number 1 of Py.

The third statement begins with the large triangle timbre in the sixth measure of N. This note also acts as a pivot, concluding the statement of Py and beginning Ry. Then, three measures before letter O, the medium triangle note acts as yet another

pivot between Ry and a statement of Rx. This statement concludes with the last note before letter O, which ties across the bar line into letter O.

Graphing the timbral classes of the first four row statements from the first multi-percussion entrance at letter N to the mirror point indicated by Husa at letter O yields the following:

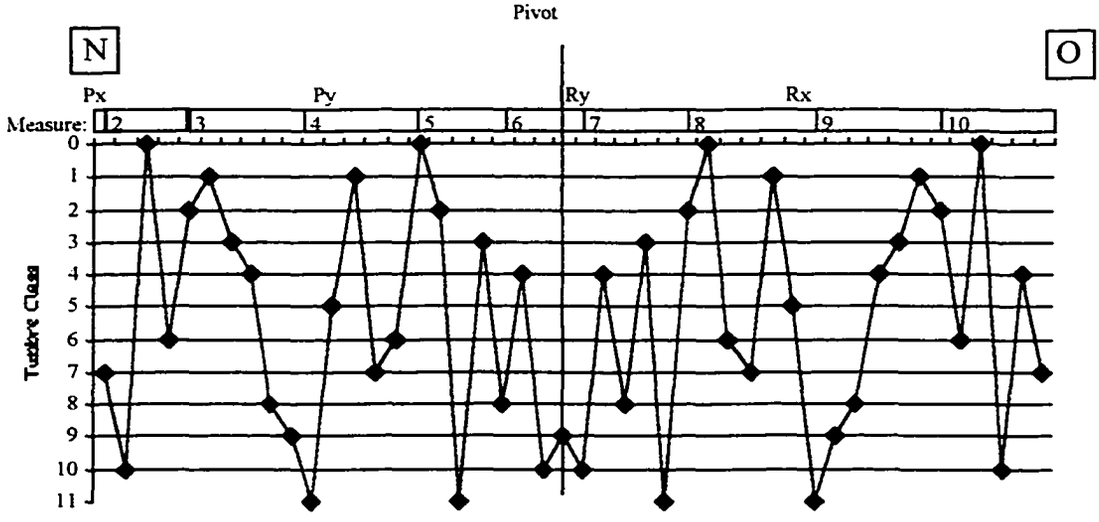



**Table 4. Graph of Timbral Row from Rehearsal Letters N to O**

The graph in Table 4 becomes extremely useful in the identification of symmetrical structures in the timbral row because it expresses the succession of timbres independently from rhythmic considerations. The structures identified in the table are not as readily identified in the musical score.

Using the large triangle note, TC 9 in measure 6, as a pivot point bisecting the music between N and O, one finds that the timbral series after the pivot is in retrograde to the one before it, with the exception of TC 4 inserted as the penultimate note before letter O. Therefore, the music from N to O is a palindrome with regard to

timbre, given the noted exception. The insertion of TC 4 is actually a function of overlapping row statements, as it belongs to the row statement that follows after letter O.

A graph of the section from Husa's mirror point at letter O to the end of the multi-percussion part at letter P looks exactly like a 180° rotation of Table 3, indicating a retrograde inversion relationship.

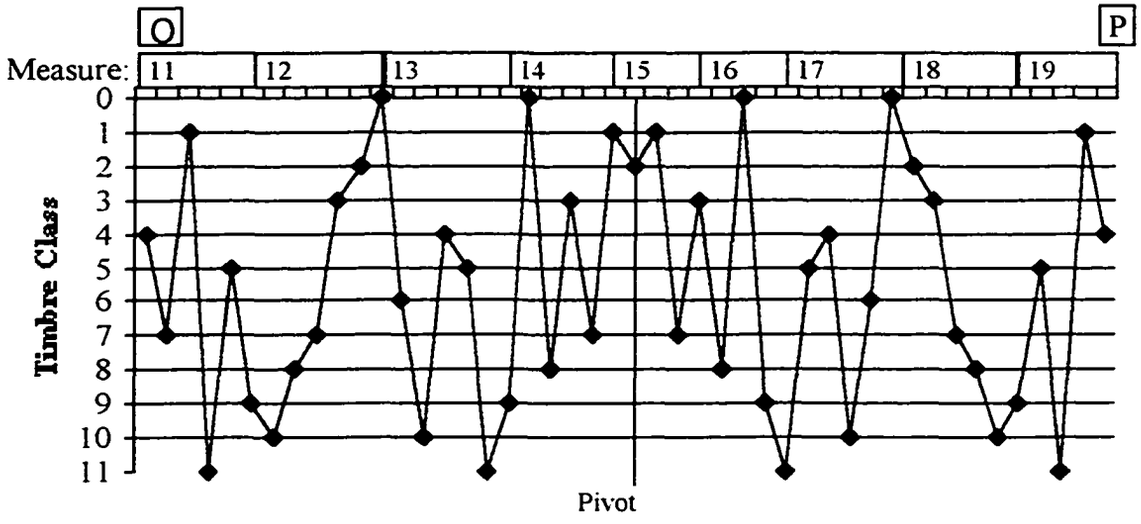



**Table 5. Graph of Timbral Row from Rehearsal Letters O to P**

Table 5 represents the timbres of Percussion 1, 2, and 3 from letter O to letter P, with the aforementioned anticipation of PC 4 included. This is also a palindrome, with the pivot point at the small suspended cymbal note in measure 15, indicated in Table 5.

Both the retrograde inversion writing between letters N and P and the nested retrograde row statements that bisect letters N to O and O to P provide examples of the Bell Motif discussed in previous chapters. Although this concept applies to more microscopic compositional elements in the first movement, it also reflects the

structure in the larger formal sections of the "Aria" and "Interlude." While both the "Aria" and "Interlude" rely on mirroring of serial rows for formal structure, the "Interlude" is far more complex in this respect. The "Aria" expresses a simple retrograde of the tone row during the second half of the movement, with the other musical elements operating independently of this symmetrical serial structure. However, in the "Interlude," the three multi-percussion parts display layers of symmetry with simultaneous timbral, rhythmic, and dynamic palindromes. Additionally, smaller sections of mirror writing occur within the two halves of the movement. This creation of multiple nested palindromes in the "Interlude" represents a higher degree of compositional constraint.

Analysis of the rhythmic aspects of this movement reveals more serialism, although with a slightly different approach than that of timbre. Counting the number of 32nd notes contained in each rhythmic value throughout the piece reveals numbers ranging from 1 to 12, with one exception in measure 5 in which the large tam-tam note is held for a length of 13.[5] The first 12 notes yield a durational row:

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 11 | 12 | 1 |

**Example 38. "Interlude" Durational Row**

As with the timbral rows described earlier, all durational rows overlap the last note of the first row with the first note of the next. As Casey points out, "the basic durational

[5] For the purpose of analysis, the rhythmic designation of this note is rotated around the dodecaphonic structure to 1, much in the same manner as pitches are transposed at the octave to yield a pitch class.

series appears in the following sequence of forms: P, RI, I, R, P, RI, I, R."[6] Unlike the treatment of timbre, all seven subsequent permutations relate back to the same initial row.

Graphing note durations from letters N to P in the same manner as timbre reveals patterns of self-similarity in the durational rows, as well. First, while the mirror point at letter O begins a retrograde inversion of the timbral rows, it begins a simple retrograde of the durational series continuing until letter P. This mirror point is indicated on Table 6 by line A in the center of the graph. Observing this symmetrical structure reveals where Husa has made small alterations in usage of the row. Additionally, lines B and C in Table 6 indicate axes of symmetry within each half. Both halves are bisected rhythmically and timbrally in the same places. The large triangle note in measure 6 bisects the first half, the small suspended cymbal note in measure 15 bisects the second half.

[6] Casey, 161.

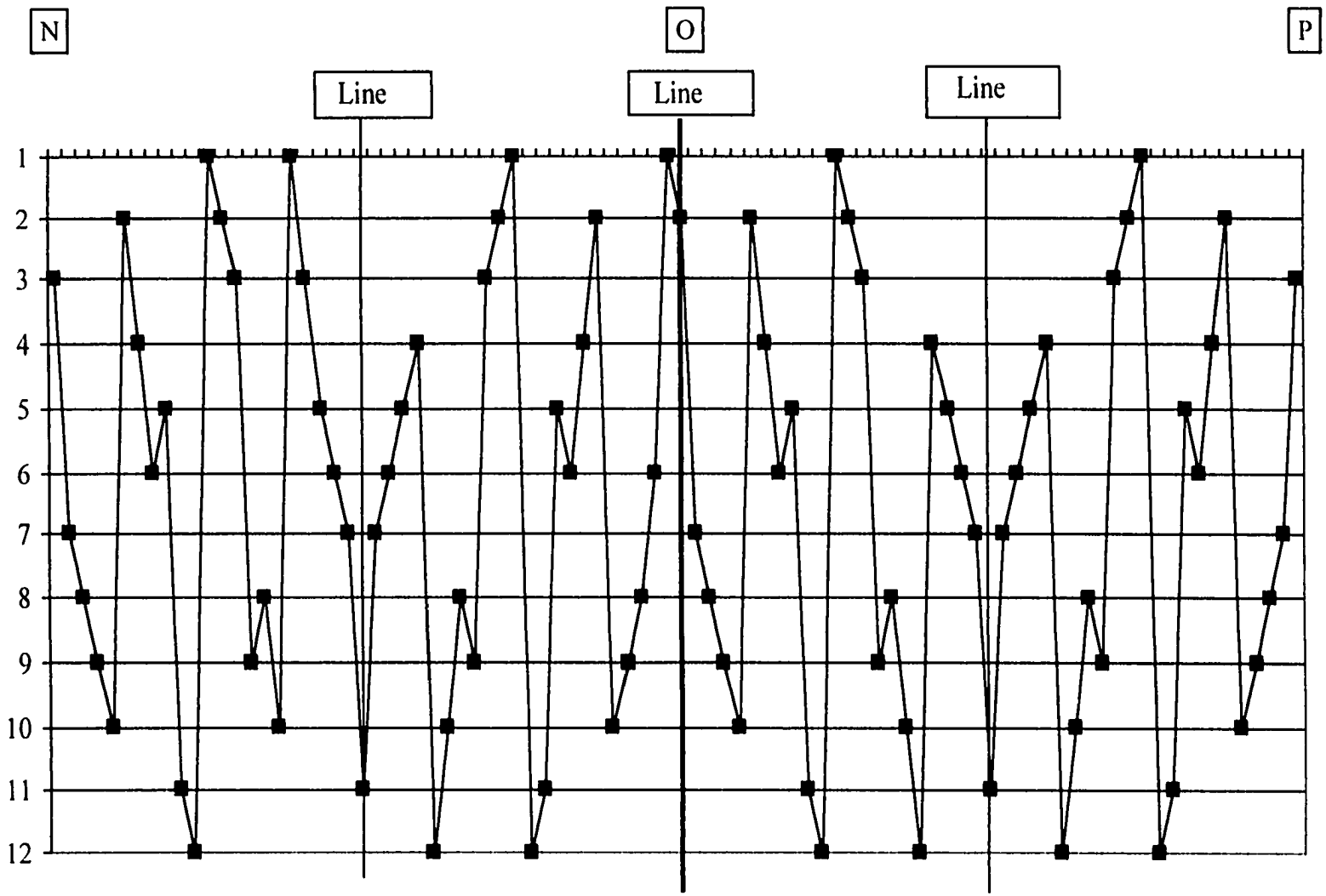
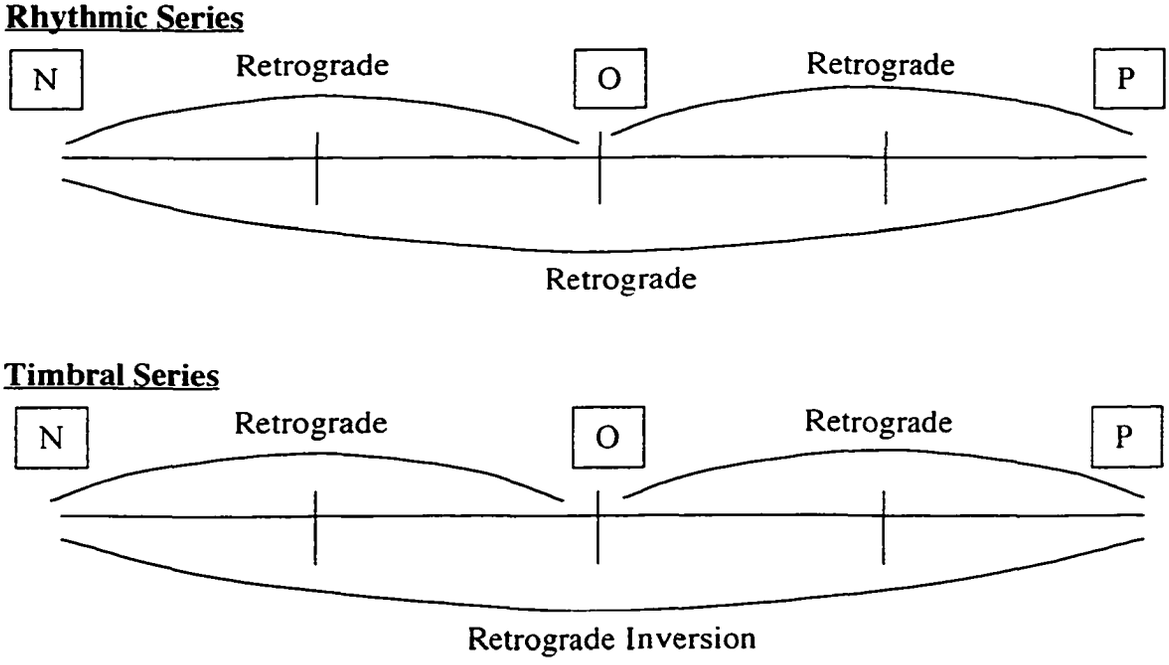



**Table 6. Rhythmic Series letters N - P**

Ironically, though the construction of the rhythmic series corresponds to that of the timbral series, and both elements display clear representations of the Bell Motif through the use of palindromes, these patterns manifest themselves in different ways. Both the timbral and rhythmic series are comprised of two bisected halves, from letter N to letter O and letter O to letter P. The rhythmic series halves are bisected into smaller sections related by retrograde, and the larger halves are also related by retrograde. However, while the individual halves of the timbral series are also bisected into sections with retrograde relationships, the halves themselves have a retrograde inversion relationship, as demonstrated in Example 39.




**Example 39. Comparison of Symmetrical Relationships**

This nesting of palindromes creates another more complex level of self-similarity, also evident in the layering of palindromes in the timbral series with simultaneously occurring palindromes in the rhythmic series. Czech novelist Ludvik Vaculik, speaking in June 1967 at the Fourth Congress of Czechoslovak Writers, expressed concern for the degree of self-similarity he saw developing in the political structure in his homeland. He claimed that power "becomes more and more homogeneous, purging everything foreign to it until each part is a replica of the whole, and all parts are mutually interchangeable."[7] His commentary reflects one artist's perspective on self-similar relationships within larger constructs, suggesting a danger in such relationships. While not musically interchangeable, the multi-level manifestations of the Bell Motif reflect the same spirit of self-similarity inherent in both the Communist regime and the invading military forces. In this, the increased incidences of such occurrences throughout the first three movements bears a conspicuous similarity to both the military buildup and the socio-political control upheld by the invasion.

Manifestations of the Bell Motif also contribute to a more literal bell tone effect in this movement. Were one standing in the center of Prague as the bells across the city began ringing, the sounds would all reach the listener at different times due to the varied distances from the listener and the different trajectories of each bell's swinging path. Focusing on the sound of one particular bell, one would also find that the sound changes slightly as the bell swings on its pendulum, thereby creating a Doppler effect. The undulating and varied instances of the Bell Motif allude to this

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[7] David Caute, *The Year of the Barricades: A Journey through 1968* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988),186.

same effect. Furthermore, to recreate this effect directly in performance, Husa suggests spreading the four multi-percussion parts out as far as possible ascross the rear of the ensemble "for the necessary space effect."[8]

Throughout his own analysis of *Music for Prague 1968*, Husa describes his musical symbolism, highlighting his tendency to use compositional devices to represent real events and ideas. Some are overt, such as the use of metallic instruments to represent the bells of Prague, or the use of snare drum to evoke a martial quality. Additionally, the potential for more subtle and possibly unintended representations of real events is also present. Such inferences drawn throughout this study do not rely on the intent of the composer for validity. Rather, they give performers and scholars a lens through which to view the compositional elements, ideally enabling them to more effectively create their own independent aural imagery based on a heightened degree of sensitivity to the elements.

There also seems to be a familiar sense of irony in selected symbolic musical gestures, as Casey points out, "somewhat paradoxically, the desired effect of random bell ringing is achieved in this movement through the employment of highly organized procedures."[9] The more organized or constrained the musical content, the more chaotic the actual sound is to the listener. One can reasonably argue for a societal parallel in that the more a totalitarian government constrains the lives of its citizens, the more disjunct any semblance of evolved society typically becomes. Glenn Watkins strikes at a similar issue in his discussion of Pierre Boulez's use of

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[8] Husa analysis, 264.

[9] Casey, 164-5.

integral serialism "Having promoted an all-encompassing order in *Structures*, Book I, Boulez realized that he had written something that was, as he put it, not only 'total,' but 'totalitarian.'"[10] The use of total serialism in *Music for Prague 1968* evokes the societal constraints felt by the Czech people via a compositional system that ultimately proved to be too uncomfortably constrained for Boulez.

Casey also points out the pattern of serialism with regard to dynamics. Each durational level (1-12 32nd notes) happens at specific dynamic levels:[11]

| Duration | Dynamic Levels[12] |
|---|---|
| 1 | pppp(4) or pp (1) |
| 2 | ppp (6), pp (2), or pppp (1) |
| 3 | pp (5), ppp (1), p (1) |
| 4 | p (7) |
| 5 | mp (8) |
| 6 | mf (8), mp(1) |
| 7 | mp (7) |
| 8 | p (7), f (1) |
| 9 | pp (7), f (1) |
| 10 | ppp (8) |
| 11 | pppp (4), ppp (1), p (1) |
| 12 | f (7), mf (1) |

**Table 7. Correlation of Rhythmic and Dynamic Series**[13]

In addition, the durational values of the most commonly associated dynamic levels add up to 12. For instance, the piano dynamic level occurs primarily at rhythmic values of 4 and 8, the mezzo piano dynamic at 5 and 7, and so forth. This relationship adds another layer of self-similarity to the composition.

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[10] Glenn Watkins, *Soundings: Music in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1988), 512.

[11] Casey, 163.

[12] Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of times that dynamic level occurs.

[13] Casey, 163

Therefore, the third movement represents an extension of many compositional practices employed in the first two movements. While significantly augmenting the level of compositional constraint in the "Interlude" through use of total serialism in the multi-percussion parts, Husa also maintains a high degree of similarity in the musical structures between this movement and the previous two. In doing so, he sets the stage for the following movement by exploring virtually every possible technique for controlling the compositional product. The compositional tension reaches a breaking point in the "Interlude," leading to a group of snare drums playing a martial cadence in unison. This evolves into a drum roll leading all the way to the downbeat of the fourth movement, with instructions for the drummers to "crescendo until sound is nearly unbearable."[14] At the beginning of the fourth movement, Husa provides a musical model for his oppressed brethren in Prague. He breaks free.

[14] Husa score, 48.

# CHAPTER 7

## THE 1968 INVASION

In his musical response to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, Karel Husa created an impassioned nationalistic gesture in *Music for Prague 1968*. Composed in the immediate aftermath of the invasion, its imagery is based primarily on the bells of Prague and the Hussite hymn "Ye Warriors of God." Additionally, dissonant harmonies and the prominent use of martial drum cadences convey an overriding sense of militarism. In this, *Music for Prague 1968* can be understood as a work not based purely on the events of the invasion, but also as: (1) an emotional response to the general concept of militaristic aggression against one's homeland, and (2) a commentary on the broad pattern of tyrannical oppression of the Czech people over the course of hundreds of years.

Examining the history of this oppression helps convey the depth of emotion surrounding the 1968 invasion, not based upon one specific event, but upon the history of a people in the centuries-long struggle for solidarity in the face of oppression from the Catholic Church, the Hapsburg Empire, and the Nazis. Narrative of the actual events, while not directly connected to Karel Husa or his compositional process in *Music for Prague 1968*, supports this document by presenting historical context for musical analysis and interpretation.

Having left for Paris in 1946 to study with Honnegger and not returned to Prague for any substantial length of time, Karel Husa had spent nearly half his life outside Czechoslovakia by the time the Soviet invasion occurred. Nonetheless, he

was no stranger to the oppressive practices of totalitarian regimes. Living in Prague during the Nazi occupation in 1939, he witnessed the process of conscious disinformation via the burning of books, confiscation of radios, and closing of schools.[1] Later in 1949, the Czech Communist government sought to force Husa's return from Paris by demanding that he come home or be stripped of his citizenship. Husa opted to remain in Paris as a refugee, and later, as a French citizen.[2]

By 1968, Husa had moved to the United States, to teach at Cornell University. He also spent much of his free time at his cottage on Lake Cayuga. The area reminded him of home, as he indicates in his description of moving there in 1954:

> The lake [Cayuga] and town with the beautiful hills reminded me of Holoubkov...where we lived all summer at grandmother's cottage on the lake, when I was a child.[3]

Ironically, Husa learned of the 1968 invasion while listening to the radio at the cottage that so reminded him of home. Within days, he purchased a small television to watch news footage of the events in his homeland.[4] Although Husa could hardly have been more removed from Prague geographically, chronologically, or with regard to the governmental system in which he lived, televised reports of the invasion brought a startling sense of reality to all in the United States. It was "the first European crisis to have occurred since the universal spread of mass communications, notably television,

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[1] McLaurin, 14.

[2] Ibid., 31-2.

[3] Ibid., 44.

[4] Ibid., 100.

and it took place in a glare of publicity."[5] Footage of Soviet tanks rolling into Wenceslas Square put the West on notice that Moscow was highly committed to maintaining the integrity of the Soviet Bloc.

The contemporary climate of social unrest in the United States, driven primarily by student civil rights and anti-war protests, resulted in a shared aesthetic between American counter-culture and Husa's use of "Ye Warriors of God" in *Music for Prague 1968*, as the 1960's brought a return to popular interest in folk music in the United States:

> Folk music had been the bridge between the populist Old and the New Lefts; the guitar was the sound of existential humanism, of peace through persuasion...The gentle radicalism of Bob Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind," the sardonic thrust of Joan Baez's rendition of Dylan's "With God on Our Side," the serene message of Dylan's "Do What the Spirit Say Do"—this was the voice of the early sixties, the civil rights campaigns, the new sense of community.[6]

This rekindled interest in folk music highlights the timeless quality of the genre, amplifying its ability to reach the hearts of a population in a way no other music can. For this reason, periods of social strife in any society may compel resurgences in the folk idiom. For Karel Husa, the hymn of the Hussite warriors provided an entirely logical choice in composing *Music for Prague 1968*. Just as Bedrich Smetana and Bob Dylan chose to do, Husa returned to the folk roots of his national musical culture. Physically separated from his homeland and free from Communist control, he was able to oppose the Soviet action in a bold artistic gesture of defiance.

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[5] Windsor, Philip and Adam Roberts, *Czechoslovakia 1968: Reform, Repression, and Resistance*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), vi.

[6] Caute, 51.

Reports of the Czech response to the invasion detail one of passive resistance, in part due to a sense of practicality, "The impossibility of defending ourselves militarily...was discussed, but it was hardly a debate."[7] While unattributable anecdotes tell of local citizens removing all road signs with the exception of those indicating the way back to Moscow, pictures and stories also detail more serious incidents of unarmed people blocking the progress of the incoming tanks with their own bodies and heckling the invading soldiers. Notably absent from the published history is evidence of violent conflicts or substantial casualties. According to a report completed by the Czechoslovak Interior Ministry in late 1968, but only made public in 1990 after the fall of the Soviet Union, "82 Czechoslovak citizens were killed, 300 were severely wounded, and 500 suffered minor wounds at the hands of the occupiers between 21 August and 28 September 1968."[8] While certainly not insignificant from a humanitarian perspective, fewer than 100 deaths in this armed invasion pales in comparison with the still memorable Nazi atrocities of World War II. Of course, Karel Husa had no way of knowing the actual scope of the invasion by watching it on television, and the composition makes a clear commentary on the brutality of war. However, the reality of the 1968 invasion was not as brutal as one might assume from listening to the composition. Through a modern interpretive lens, *Music for Prague 1968* still evokes the tragedy of Communist aggression against the Czechs, but

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[7] Caute, 328.

[8] Mark Kramer, "The Prague Spring and the Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia: New Interpretations, Second of Two Parts" [article on-line] (Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, accessed November 16, 2001); available from http://cwihp.si.edu/cwihplib.nsf/e4f990baac880f69852564a400078ef6/24eb6a4a526a0a0a852564bf0067858c?OpenDocument; Internet.

perhaps fits more aptly as an indictment of the larger moral and political stances that led to the invasion. The rage heard in the dissonant sonorities fits equally well on a macrocosmic level in considering that the 1968 invasion was yet another attack on Czech solidarity by an oppressive state.

Fundamentally, the invasion was a response to the developing program of reform, the Prague Spring, led by Alexander Dubcek in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (hereafter, CPC). Dubcek succeeded Antonin Novotny as First Secretary of the CPC in January 1968. Novotny, who had held both the positions of First Secretary and President at the same time, came under fire for national economic decline and his prejudice against Slovak elements in the country.[9] In January 1968, Alexander Dubcek led a successful campaign against Novotny's practice of occupying multiple functions within the national leadership, and was elected by the Presidium to take his place as First Secretary.

Novotny's resignation marks the first of three phases of the Prague Spring. The second phase came with his subsequent resignation as President and marks the period of most aggressive reform. The third period occurred from July through the invasion on August 20-21, and is characterized by the Dubcek administration's attempts to strike a balance between liberalization and Soviet pressures to remain loyal to Moscow.[10] Under Dubcek's leadership, the goal was not to sever ties with the Soviet Union, but rather to achieve "socialism with a human face." Ideally, the free

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[9] Matthew Frost, "Czech Republic: A Chronology of Events Leading to the 1968 Invasion" [article on-line] (Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty, accessed November 16, 2001); available from http://www.rferl.org/nca/features/1998/08/F.RU.980820113706.html; Internet.

[10] Caute, 185.

exchange of ideas by intellegentsia and a multi-party system were to exist within the socialist framework.

In April 1968, the CPC released the Action Program, which was essentially a blueprint for reform. Suggested reforms included: (1) acceptance of other political parties as legitimate components of the National Front, rather than the branding of them as opposition factions, (2) freedom of assembly, (3) freedom of speech, and (4) freedom to travel abroad. Additionally, the document claimed a degree of autonomy from Moscow.

> Taking, as a point of departure, the existing relationship of international forces and our awareness that Czechoslovakia is an active component of the revolutionary process in the world, the CSSR will formulate its own position toward the fundamental problems of world politics...We will actively pursue a policy of peaceful coexistence vis-à-vis the advanced capitalist countries. [11]

The document also calls for a new Czechoslovak Constitution to outline these and other shifts in social policy, "to be submitted to the National Assembly shortly after the [September 9] party congress."[12] In the spirit of the Action Program, censorship was officially abolished in late June.

Although such moves were cause for concern on the part of conservative elements within the Czech government and in Moscow, many throughout Czech society were quick to embrace the thaw of the Prague Spring. Previously during the Novotny regime, the periodical *Literarni Noviny* had been transferred from the Writers' Union to the Ministry of Culture. This occurred after the 1967 Writers'

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[11] Jaromir Navratil,"Excerpts from the CPCz CC Action Program, April 1968" in *The Prague Spring 1968*, trans. Mark Kramer, Joy Moss, and Ruth Tosek [excerpt on-line] (Hungary: Central European Press, 1988, accessed December 13, 2000); available from http://library.thinkquest.org/C001155/documents/doc13.htm; Internet.

[12] Ibid.

Congress, and publication stopped in October 1967, despite a circulation of approximately 160,000 copies. Under Dubcek, the journal reopened in the hands of the Writers' Union under the name *Literarni Listy*, and publication jumped to 260,000 copies per issue.[13] The active publishing of articles that addressed social issues exemplifies the reawakening of interest in such subjects throughout the populace.

The developing liberalist fervor put Dubcek in a delicate position of fostering reforms while keeping the pace of reform under control. The "2000 Words" manifesto provides an example of the existing aggressive societal inertia. The document, written by Czech writer Ludvik Vaculik and published in late June in the *Literarni Listy*, was a "more radical alternative to the Communist Party's April Action Program" and called for "democratization, the re-establishment of the Social Democratic Party, and the setting up of citizens' committees." [14] Although Dubcek and the CPC rejected the document, it represented a pattern of growing liberalism.

Such events caused concern in Moscow for a number of reasons. The statements regarding autonomous decision-making on the part of the Czechoslovakian government in international affairs and the thaw towards capitalist countries undermined the centralist control demanded by Moscow. Additionally, the reforms could eventually lead to democratization, and ultimately, counterrevolution. While Dubcek was immensely popular, there was also concern that he could not control the reformist movement. Allowing it to spin out of control could have disastrous results not only in Czechoslovakia, but also in the other Soviet republics.

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[13] Caute, 193.

[14] Frost.

In some respects, the political climate allowed the Soviets to address the larger issue of a military presence in Czechoslovakia, as Kramer explains:

> Well before the 1968 crisis, Soviet military commanders had believed that the lack of permanent Soviet troop presence in Czechoslovakia (in contrast to the large deployments in East Germany, Poland, and Hungary) seriously impeded the Warsaw Pact's military preparations against NATO. Soviet requests to station a Group of Forces in Czechoslovakia had been turned down on numerous occasions in the 1950s and 1960s by Gottwald and Novotny, but Soviet leaders had not given up their hopes of gaining a permanent presence on Czechoslovak territory, as the events of 1968 revealed.[15]

Therefore, while the spirit of liberal reform may have been cause for concern in Moscow, it is entirely possible that the August invasion was imminent in any case, and Dubcek's agenda simply gave the Soviets an excuse to meet their own large-scale strategic goals.

Nonetheless, there were attempts to bring Dubcek and his government back into line with the other republics. On July 14-15, leaders of the Communist parties of the Soviet Union, Hungary, Poland, East Germany, and Bulgaria met in Warsaw to discuss Czechoslovakia. The resulting Warsaw Letter addressed a number of directives to the Central Committee, maintaining: "firm resistance to anti-Communist forces and a decisive battle for the preservation of the Socialist system in Czechoslovakia are not only your duty but ours as well."[16] The demands outlined included:

> a decisive and bold stand against right-wing and anti-socialist forces, and the mobilization of all means of defense created by the socialist state;

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[15] Kramer.

[16] Jaromir Navratil, "The Warsaw Letter, July 14-15, 1968" in *The Prague Spring 1968*, trans. Mark Kramer, Joy Moss, and Ruth Tosek [excerpt on-line] (Hungary: Central European Press, 1988, accessed December 13, 2000); available from http://library.thinkquest.org/C001155/documents/doc33.htm; Internet.

> an end to the activities of all political organizations acting against socialism;
>
> a reassertion of control by the party over the mass media-the press, radio, and television – so that they will be used in the interests of the working class, of all working people, and of socialism, [and]
>
> a closing of the ranks of the party on the foundations of the principles of Marxism- Leninism, unflinching adherence to the principles of democratic centralism, and a struggle against those whose activity aids hostile forces.[17]

The message was clear: Immediately and completely reverse the course of liberalization or face invasion by the other Warsaw Pact nations.

In response, President Svoboda reaffirmed Czechoslovakian loyalty to the Warsaw Pact on July 19. Shortly thereafter, Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev attempted to persuade Dubcek to postpone the Party Congress scheduled for September 9, where the Communist party was certain to lose a great deal of power.[18] At the end of July, meetings between the Soviet and Czechoslovakian Communist parties were held in Ciema-nad-Tisou, where the factions disagreed sharply about the danger the reforms presented to the party. While Dubcek argued that they actually built public support for the party, the Soviets disagreed and threatened an invasion.[19]

Additional tension built around articles in the now uncensored Czech newspapers that criticized the Soviets. In a Politburo message to Dubcek on August 13, the Soviets complained,

> Over the past few days several press outlets have carried fresh materials that are unambiguously anti-Soviet and anti-socialist... These are not merely a few articles but an organized campaign. An especially inflammatory role is being played by *Literární listy, Mladá fronta, Reportér, and* Práce, which stubbornly

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[17] Ibid.

[18] Catue, 207.

[19] Frost.

> continue to publish slanderous fabrications about the Soviet Union and the other fraternal countries. These periodicals are the mouthpiece of the right-wing, anti-socialist forces. Issue number 24 (8 August) of *Literární listy* carried an article entitled "From Warsaw to Bratislava," in which – incredible as it may seem – the policy of the fraternal socialist countries is compared to Hitler's policy and the press of the fraternal socialist countries is equated with the Goebbels propaganda machine.[20]

In this, it seems that the Czechoslovakian press felt free to characterize the political climate with honesty and candor, qualities not entirely conducive to maintaining a totalitarian state.

Clearly, claims of loyalty by Dubcek and Svoboda were inadequate to appease the Soviets. Just after midnight on August 21, 1968, Warsaw Pact nations led by the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia. The national leaders were arrested and taken to Moscow, and attempts were made to silence the media. While the Soviet press claimed that the CPC requested assistance to quell an uprising, the Czechoslovakian Presidium denounced the invasion as "contrary to the fundamental principles of relations between socialist states and a denial of the basic norms of international law."[21] Nonetheless, the invasion ultimately led to the installation of pro-Soviet leadership.

The post-Dubcek era represented a return to a climate of oppression, as exemplified by Ludvik Vaculik, author of the inflamatory "2000 Words," spending

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[20] Jaromir Navratil, "CPSU CC Politburo Message to Alexander Dubcek, August 13, 1968" in *The Prague Spring 1968*, trans. Mark Kramer, Joy Moss, and Ruth Tosek [excerpt on-line] (Hungary: Central European Press, 1988, accessed December 13, 2000); available from http://library.thinkquest.org/C001155/documents/doc46.htm; Internet.

[21] Caute, 328.

the next twenty years in prison.[22] Despite his personal experience, Vaculik maintains "The whole process and all of 1968 had greater significance for Europe than for us. The leftist intellegentsia in Europe learned what the USSR was all about—what kind of power it was—and that Socialism in the Soviet mold was unreformable."[23] In light of the Cold War, this statement applies to nations throughout the West, highlighting the USSR as an aggressor in Europe and bolstering suspicion of the Soviet regime throughout the United States and Europe.

While the actual casualties cannot be discounted in this conflict, there were additional harms of a broader nature. The invasion marked a turning point in the relations between the Soviets and the West. Furthermore, with news coverage having evolved to a point that Karel Husa could watch the events unfold from his summer cottage on Lake Cayuga, this clearly presented Westerners with a new perspective on international conflict. Although similar accounts of the conflict in Viet Nam also flooded the airwaves, a European conflict most certainly held a different shock value.

For the Czech people, the events of August 1968 presented a frustrating revisitation of previous eras of oppression. With prior incursions at the hands of the Catholic Church, Hapsburg Empire, or the Nazis, this proud nation was again forced to face outside aggression. Internally, the nation responded with the passive resistance that had served their ancestors for hundreds of years. Outside Czechoslovakia, Karel Husa also made his own powerful statement of resistance. Alluding to the proud

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[22] Jeremy Brantsen, "Czech Republic: The 1968 Invasion and its Meaning to Today's Czechs" [article on-line] (Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty, accessed November 16, 2001); available at http://www.rferl.org/ncaa/features/1998/08/F.RU.980820112145.html; Internet.

[23] Ibid.

musical heritage of his people by quoting "Ye Warriors of God," he made a boldly defiant artistic statement in *Music for Prague 1968*. The power of his artistic endeavor rests not in the response to an isolated incident, but in a gesture that evokes the ancient roots of Czech nationalism. By doing so, Karel Husa points to the repeated attacks against his people throughout their history. He compels us to mourn not only for the casualties of the 1968 invasion, but also for the Warriors of God throughout the generations who stood in their defense of their beloved homeland.

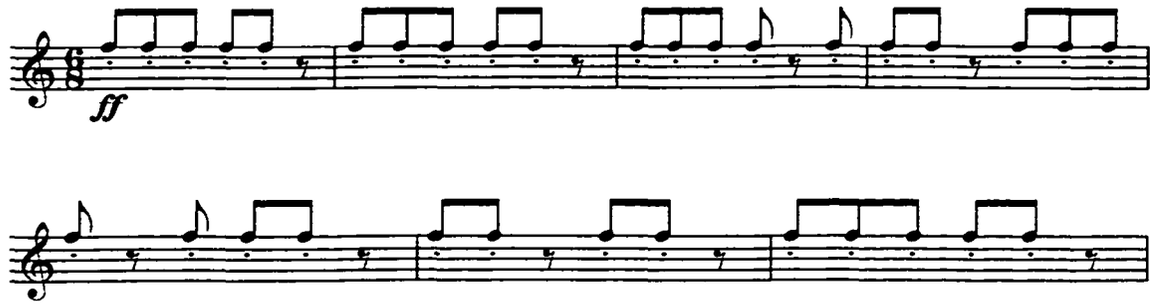
# CHAPTER 8

## ANALYSIS OF MOVEMENT FOUR

Movement four, "Toccata and Chorale," grows directly out of the long snare drum roll at the end of the "Interlude." Having reached extremes in both compositional constraint and absence of melodic clarity in the previous movement, the composer brings the listener back to more easily understood musical material in a sudden bold unison gesture. This movement constitutes an abandonment of serial constraint, with all melodic development based on motivic rotation. The reliance on motivic constructions creates a duality in that (a) it represents the virtual antithesis of serialism, but (b) it still alludes to the abundance of small motivic patterns inherent in the serial constructions of the previous three movements. Therefore, the "Toccata and Chorale" provides musical and philosophical reaction to the preceding musical material while still preserving musical cohesion throughout the entire composition. This reactionary nature supports *Music for Prague 1968* as a metaphorical gesture of defiance in that the release of serial constraint, evolving into a unison statement of "Ye Warriors of God" at the end of the composition, directly mirrors the desire for the Czech nation to achieve freedom from the oppressive constraints of totalitarianism.

At the peak of the opening snare drum crescendo, nearly the entire complement of winds enters with a unison dance-like rhythm that repeats the pitch F for seven consecutive measures. The rhythmic pattern is comprised of groupings of five, four, three and two notes, with the first note of each group emphasized by

contrabassoon, tuba, and string bass. Husa suggests that this statement "may very well remind one of Czech folk dance music."[1]




**Example 40. "Toccata and Chorale" Measures 1-7**

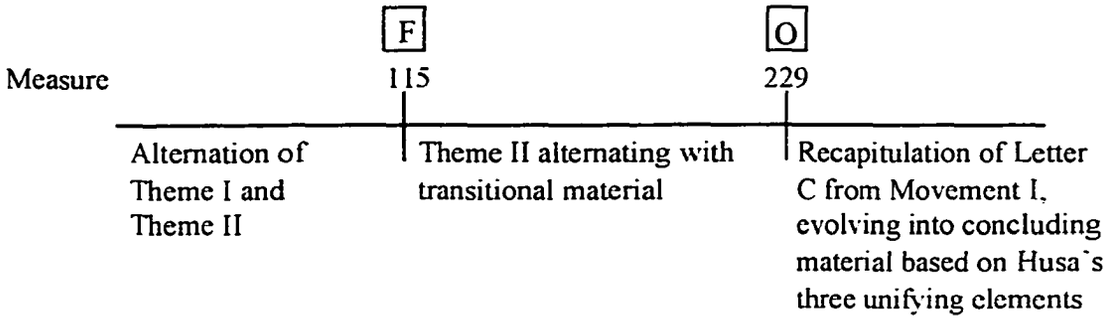
This initial statement creates a "slingshot effect," propelling the listener from almost complete tonal ambiguity of the totalitarian "Interlude" to tonality by assertion. Through this effect, the "Toccata and Chorale" demonstrates a reactionary spirit, possibly evocative of either (a) the unified Soviet military machine acting upon the Czechs, or given the rhythmic similarity to Czech folksong, (b) the collective resolve of the Czech people in the face of tyranny.

This movement contains three primary sections. The first 114 measures, to rehearsal letter F, alternate between two primary thematic components, labeled Theme I and Theme II. From letters F to O, measures 115-228, Theme II alternates with different types of transitional materials. At rehearsal letter O, measure 229, a recapitulation of the trumpet fanfare from letter C of the first movement occurs, lending thematic cohesion to the entire composition. The recapitulation evolves into

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[1] Husa analysis, 265.

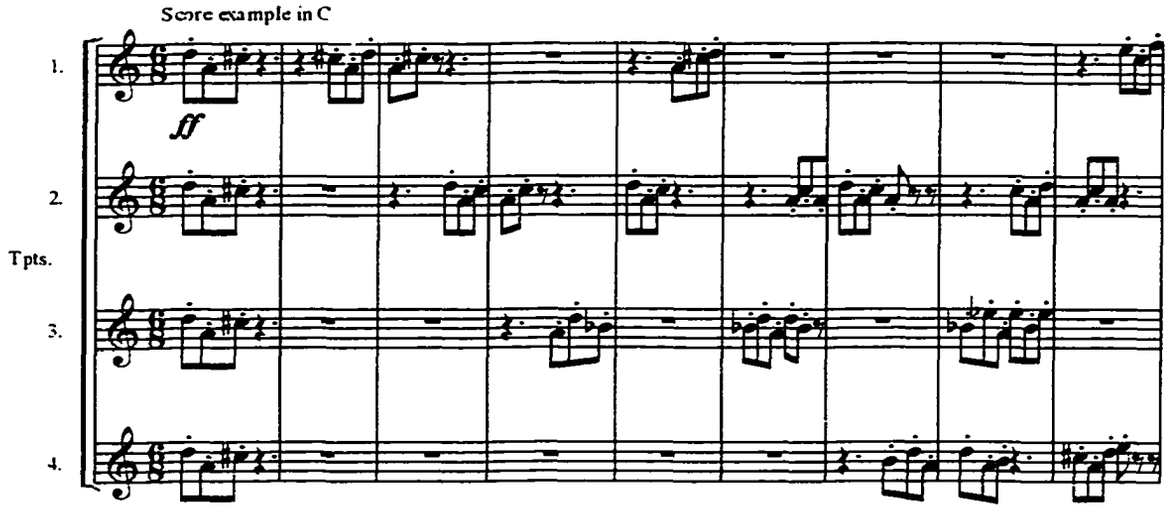
concluding material based on the juxtaposition of elements from movement four and examples of the three unifying elements described in Chapter 2. After a brief aleatoric episode in measure 323, the composition concludes with a bold unison statement of the Hussite song.




**Example 41. Formal Diagram of Movement 4 "Toccata and Chorale"**

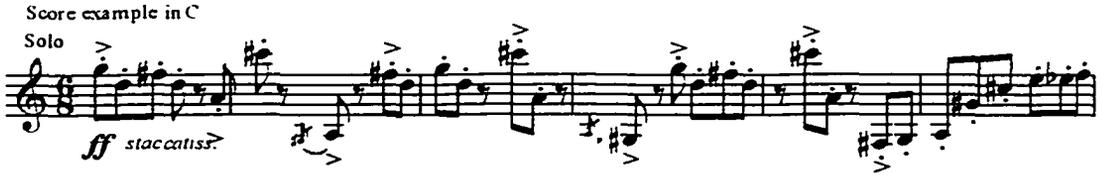
Although starkly contrasting to the serial constraints of the previous musical material, the "Toccata and Chorale" is not without its own examples of symmetry. For example, a long timpani roll on Eb accompanies the opening tonal assertion of F, resulting in an interval bisected by the pitch E. While the E does not actually sound, the resulting axis of symmetry creates a negative representation of this pitch, thereby foretelling the eventual resolution on E at the end of the composition, the significance of which is discussed in Chapter 2.

This movement also contains numerous instances of rotational motivic treatments of small pitch groups. The transitional material in measures 9-17 provides an example of this practice. In measure 9, trumpets state a three-note motive built upon the familiar intervals of major third and minor second.




**Example 42. "Toccata and Chorale" Trumpets Measures 9-17**

In the subsequent eight measures, slight changes are made to this motive as it passes between the four trumpet parts. With the exception of third trumpet in measure 16, all permutations of the motive are built on intervals of either major third and minor second, or major second and minor third. This treatment connects the "Toccata and Chorale" on the motivic level with the other movements of *Music for Prague 1968*, as exemplified in Chapter 4, Example 28. In a similar gesture, solo clarinet introduces Theme I at rehearsal letter A, measures 20-25.

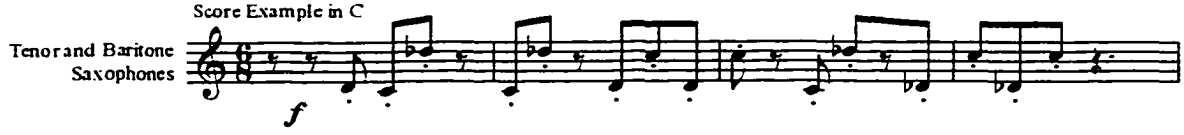



**Example 43. "Toccata and Chorale" Measures 20-25: Theme I**

With pitches transposed at the octave, the simple intervals in this melody are also primarily minor seconds and major thirds. Additionally, this theme is rhythmically

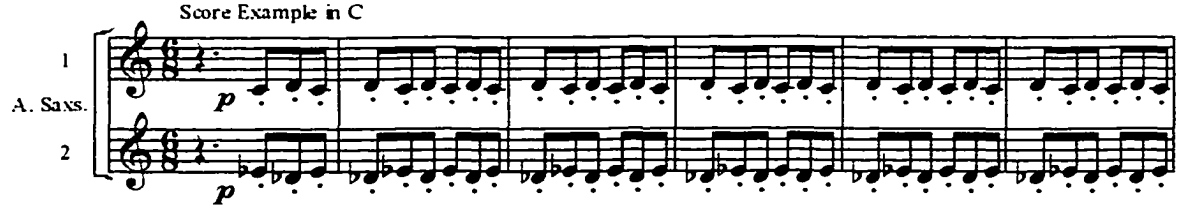
similar to the dance-rhythm motives that opened the movement. While the motives are not symmetrical, the repeated return to the pitch D implies the Bell Motive through the alternation between D (one state of being) and other pitches (other states of being).

Of the different transitional materials in this movement, the rotational type occurs between letters B and C. In measures 41-44, tenor saxophone and baritone saxophone rotate between tones of a three-note motive.




**Example 44. "Toccata and Chorale" Measures 41-44: Rotational Transitional Material**

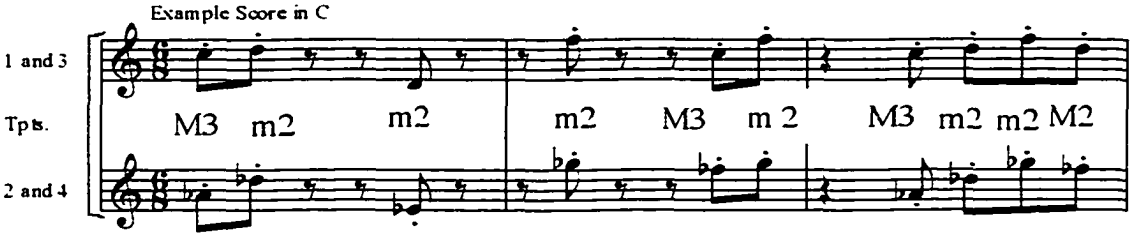
In measures 49-54, alto saxophones layer a rotation of a two-note motive beneath a rhythmically displaced restatement of Theme I in xylophone.




**Example 45. "Toccata and Chorale" Measures 49-54: Rotational Transitional Material**

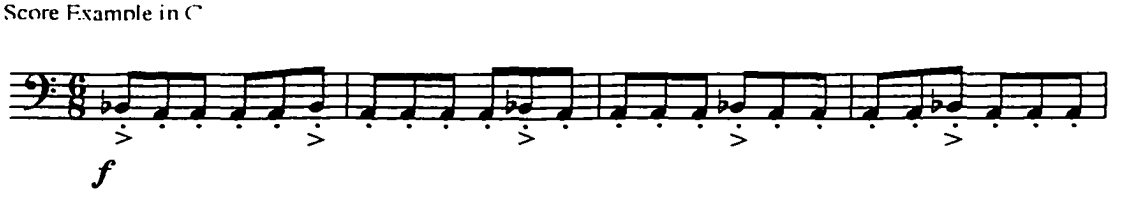
Letter C at measure 55 brings the initial statement of Theme II in the trumpets. Disjunct and rhythmically difficult, this melody resembles Theme I in the

reliance on minor second and major third intervals. In this case, the intervals occur vertically rather than horizontally with four trumpet parts actually playing two lines that rotate between the two indicated harmonic intervals.




**Example 46. "Toccata and Chorale" Letter C - Measures 55-57: Theme II**

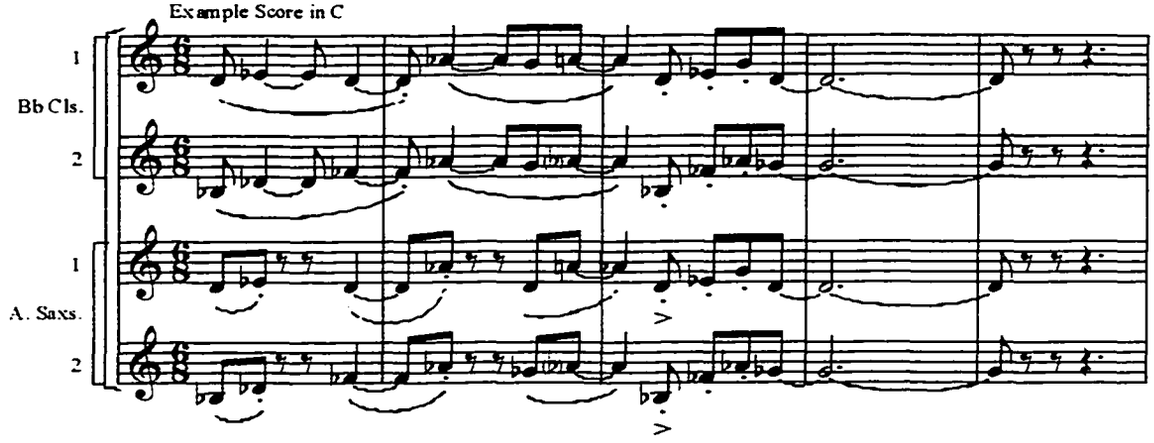
Fragments of this melody occur in the trumpets through measure 71, although a rotational episode in oboes interrupts in measures 58-60. Later in measures 64-67, a second type of transitional material occurs in English horn, bassoon I, Eb clarinet, alto clarinet, and bass clarinet.




**Example 47. "Toccata and Chorale" Measures 64-67: Driving Transitional Material**

The driving character of this excerpt, with the emphasis on rhythmic steadiness and repeated tones, is reminiscent of the unison statement that opened this movement. From this point through letter F, the music revolves around restatements of Theme I, alternating with intermittent examples of driving and rotational transitional material.

At letter F, measure 15, clarinets and saxophones present a variation of Theme II, with sustained tones moving in the same rhythm as the trumpets at letter C. Alto clarinet, bass clarinet, contra bass clarinet, baritone saxophone, and bass saxophone double these parts at the octave.

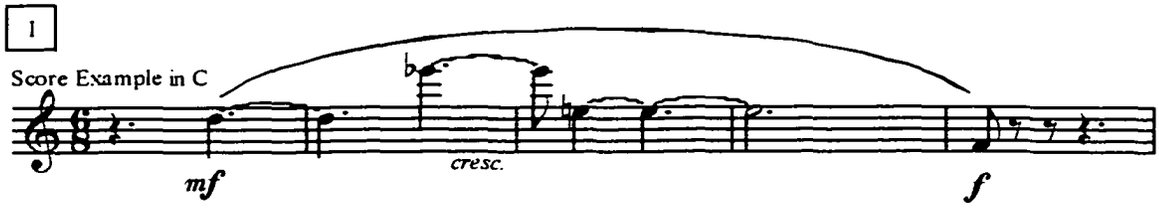



**Example 48. "Toccata and Chorale" Letter F - Measures 115-119**

The variation resembles the original trumpet statement in that it exploits the rotation of harmonic intervals, although in this case, the rotation is primarily between major seconds and major thirds. As with the alternations of Theme I and Theme II from the beginning to letter F, Theme II occurs between letters F and O in a variety of ways, alternating with episodes of driving and rotating transitional material. It builds into a frenzy leading to letter O.

While the opening of the movement foretells later musical events with subtle symbolism, other more overt references throughout the "Toccata and Chorale" also inform the listener of eminent musical material. For example, flutes, oboes, and Eb

clarinet perform a unison line at letter I that is rhythmically reminiscent of Husa's Chorale Motif.




**Example 49. "Toccata and Chorale" Measures 154-158**

In this instance, the motive connects the final movement with the other three, and also foretells future stronger occurrences of the motive.

Six measures before letter L, in measure 183, another unifying element becomes conspicuous in the horns.

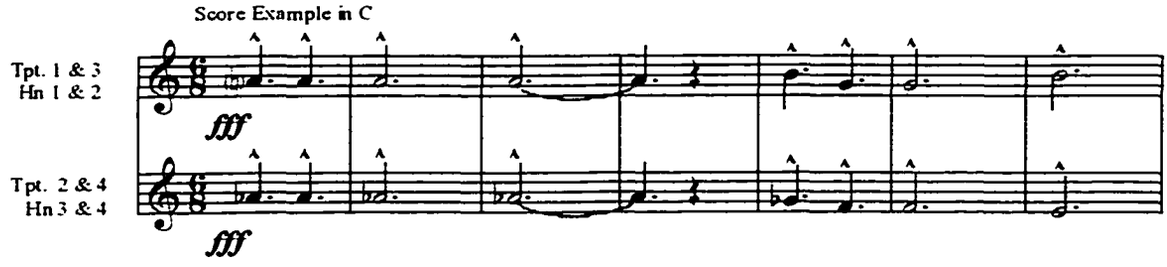



**Example 50. "Toccata and Chorale" Measures 183-188**

This example bears a striking resemblance to the material presented in the "Toccata and Chorale" at letter E.[2] It is a variation on the Hussite song, and represents the first quote, either direct or indirect, of the hymn tune in the final movement. As intensity

[2] See Chapter 2, Example 19.

begins to build towards letter O, trumpets and horns present another more overt dissonant statement of the Hussite song.




**Example 51. "Toccata and Chorale" Measures 211-217**

This statement occurs against a scrim of short motives traded with increasing fervor between members of the ensemble. The dissonance results initially from the trumpet and horn parts scored a half step apart, although the intervals become more open and slightly less dissonant in the latter half of the phrase. Given Husa's predilection for direct symbolism, one may infer this moment as conveying the strife of the Czech population in the resistance to the invading forces.

Letter N begins the final push toward the recapitulation at letter O. Dissonant half-step trills in the woodwinds are joined in measure 221 by a restatement of the rhythmic motive introduced in measure 1. Repetitions of this one-measure motive occur at the minor second interval in saxophones, oboes, English horn, and contrabass clarinet through measure 228, with horns 3 and 4 adding the same rhythmic figure in major thirds.




**Example 52. "Toccata and Chorale" Measures 221-223**

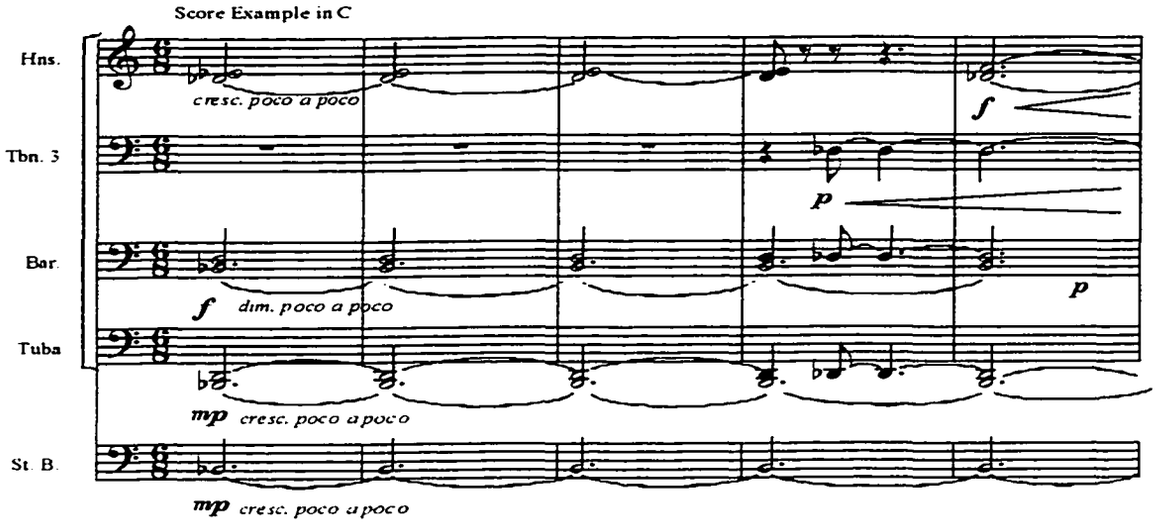
The layering of major third and minor second intervals becomes yet more distinct in measures 225-228 with horns 1 and 2 and trombones performing a glissando up to minor second intervals in upper ranges of the instruments. Combined with the repeating rhythmic figure and the continued woodwind trills, this effect is layered over major thirds sustained in the tubas and stated rhythmically in horns 3 and 4. The addition of the rhythmic tom-tom in measure 221, the accelerando beginning in measure 222, and the crescendo elevating all instruments to the fff dynamic level by the end of measure 228 contribute to a high degree of intensity leading into letter O.

The material at letter O is recapitulatory in many respects. Melodies occur in the same keys, and are scored in fundamentally the same manner. Rhythmically, adjustments are required to transform the duple figures of movement 1 into the triple meter of movement 4. The woodwind entrance in measure 232 provides contrast in this occurrence of the "Fanfare," as does the faster tempo marking of 132, as opposed to 108-112 in the first movement.

In his analysis, Husa indicates a series of recurrences of the three-chord Chorale Motif beginning in measure 276.[3] The first occurs in baritones, tubas, and

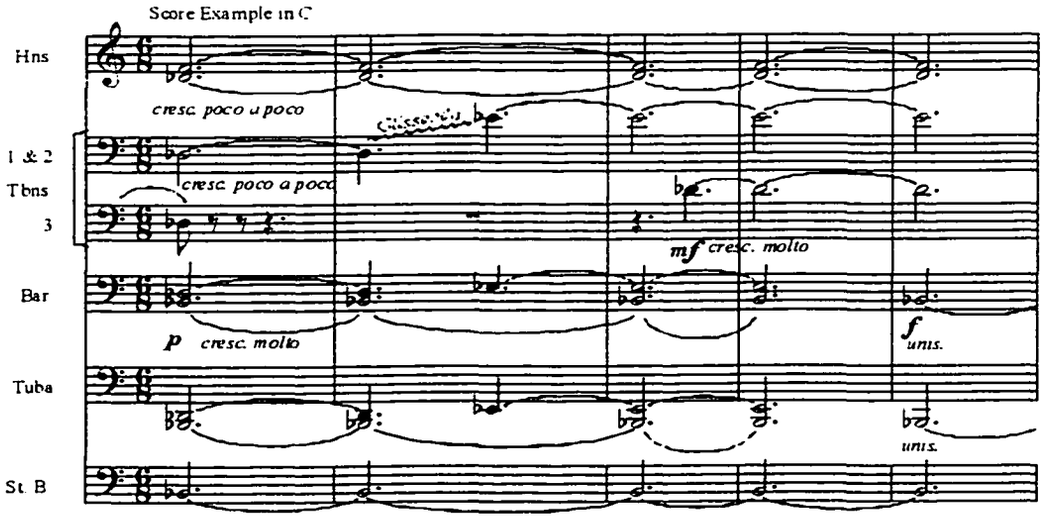
[3] Husa analysis, 261.

string bass, with trombone 3 joining the second chord in measure 279, and horns adding the third chord in measure 280.



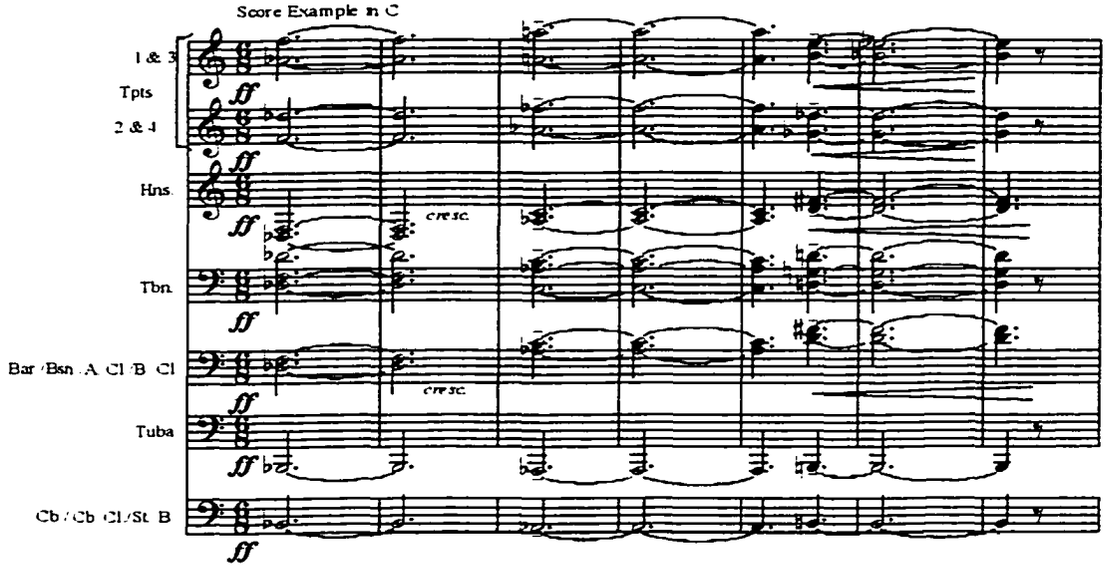

**Example 53. "Toccata and Chorale" Measures 276-280**

The blended tone qualities of the conical brass instruments and string bass and the accompanying orchestration make this instance difficult to hear. The second example follows in measures 281-286 in horns, trombones, baritones, tubas, and string bass.




**Example 54. "Toccata and Chorale" Measures 281-286**

This example is more noticeable with the addition of trombones and the louder dynamic levels. However, at letter R, the three-chord motive becomes the most prominent element with the addition of trumpets, low clarinets, bassoons, and contra bassoon.

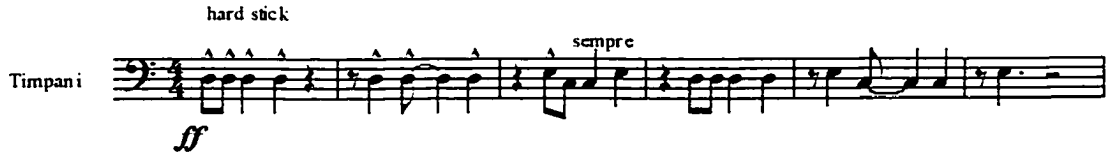



**Example 55. "Toccata and Chorale" Measures 287-293**

In measure 297, tonality by assertion returns with unison rhythmic statements on F derived from the rhythmic patterns used at the beginning of the movement. The abandonment of half steps in this figure brings a returning sense of unity, previously shaken, but now reunited. Though somewhat removed from the initial tonal center of D, the figure is presented boldly, ultimately dominating the divergent long tones presented in contrabassoon, trumpets, trombones, tuba, string bass, and vibraphone in measures 297-99. Saxophones, horns, tuba, and vibraphone help dispel the dissonance, with saxophones and horns exiting the texture on the downbeat of measure 303, the vibraphone D#-E trill in measure 304, and the Db in the tuba in

measure 305. The tuba releases clearly before the second note in a final triumphant duplet by the remainder of the ensemble, perhaps in a subtle gesture of "getting the last word." Also of potentially symbolic value is the fact that as each instrument relinquishes its dissonant voice between measures 297 and 305, it immediately joins the predominant unison articulated figure, thereby contributing to its ultimate success.

Regarding letter S, Husa makes his intent clear. "Why this pianissimo while the timpani is pounding some of the heaviest notes? The symbol was more and more people from afar joining a warrior on the drum and uniting in the song."[4] The instruments enter one part at a time from letters S to T, with timpani restating the Hussite song.




**Example 56. "Toccata and Chorale" Measures 308-313**

In contrast to the first movement, the Hussite song is now presented without the chromatically altered C and E, evoking the purity of the Czech national spirit, unfettered in its resolve to resist oppression. The remaining statements from letter T to the end also omit the chromatic alterations.

Before the final statement in measures 325-330, the ensemble delves into a brief aleatoric episode. While brass instruments sustain the pitch A at letter V, and

[4] Ibid., 265.

some woodwinds and percussion have approximated pitches notated, others have specifically notated figures that quote significant passages from earlier in the piece. Piccolo, English horn, Eb clarinet, and timpani restate the opening motive of the final movement. Flutes play the motivic alteration of the Hussite song from measure 33 of the "Aria" movement.[5] Oboes and bassoons play repetitive figures in reference to the rotational transitional material in the first half on movement 4. Alto saxophones play four note groupings that create chromatic pitch collections similar to the ones discussed in Chapter 2. Tenor saxophone simply plays a 32nd note version of the triplet-based motive played by piccolo, English horn, Eb clarinet, and timpani.

Layered beneath the aleatoric mayhem is an emerging marching cadence in the snare drum, seemingly the cadence of the resistance, rather than of the invading forces. At the culmination of the chaotic measure 323, an additional statement of the cadence creates a transition into a full ensemble statement of the Hussite song. As indicated by the composer and foretold from the opening moments of the "Toccata and Chorale," the piece does indeed end on the unison pitch E, which Husa reminds us "is a gesture of defiance and hope."[6]

Therefore, while the final movement of *Music for Prague 1968* refers to the previous three in numerous ways, it also represents a significant departure with regard to compositional process. Though not based on serial technique, the "Toccata and Chorale" exceeds this distinction by representing the virtual antithesis of compositional constraint. Husa achieves this through the extreme freedom of motivic

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[5] See Chapter 4, Example 21.

[6] Ibid., 261.

manipulation, with little evidence of a larger systematic plan to impose constraint. While varied adherence to a serial compositional system governs the emotional representation in increasingly strict fashion throughout the first three movements, the final movement displays how emotional content can subsequently govern compositional process. In the case of *Music for Prague 1968*, this relationship creates structure in the entire composition.

The cumulatve effect of this structural flow through three movements of increasing serial constraint to the reactionary "Toccata and Chorale" is one of tension and release. The release of serialism into frenetic, episodic treatments of nonserial thematic motives followed by the Hussite hymn evokes the spirit of freedom from political constraint and the ultimate victory over oppression. The concomitant flows of compositional process, musical experience, and emotional impact reflect a strong interrelatedness between the arts, society, and our sense of self as participants within larger artistic and social structures.

# CHAPTER 9

# CONCLUSIONS

"The story of music is the story of the human race."
--John Paynter[1]

Paynter's claim leads logically to the subsequent assertion that individual human stories possess the potential for individual musical representations, as with *Music for Prague 1968*. By exploring the 1968 invasion of his homeland in a musical context, Karel Husa acknowledges not only the relationship between art and society, but also the tremendous power of artistic gesture to relay and comment on actual events. In this regard, Husa makes his intentions clear in *Music for Prague 1968* with his own writings. He identifies direct musical references to the bell towers of Prague, as well as such metaphorical implications as the progression from D to E at the end of the composition representing a gesture of hope and defiance. By opening this door, Husa invites interpretive extensions of his own commentary, compelling performers to seek additional connections between the composition and the related socio-historical elements.

The goal of this study is to explore musical and historical aspects of *Music for Prague 1968* in a manner that assists others in creating a personal musical imprint. Interpretive gestures necessarily flow through the emotional and intellectual filters of the interpreter. An expanded knowledge base influences these intellectual filters, and

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[1] John Paynter, "Music and People: the Import of Structure and Form" in *Companion to Contemporary Musical Thought* Volume 1, ed. John Paynter, Tim Howell, Richard Ortin, and Peter Seymour (New York: Routledgem Chapman, and Hall, Inc., 1992), 25.

transitively, through the interrelatedness of the varied aspects of the human psyche, the emotional filters as well. Therefore, new information regarding the technical and historical aspects of a composition has tremendous potential for creating texture in the interpretive process.

Paynter continues his discussion of structure and form, relating their importance to musical experience.

> Irrespective of the culture of period or place, the essence of musical experience is the perception of music's duration: how it is made to go on in time and – most significantly – how it is made to stop...this is not to suggest that more obvious elements of music – melodies, rhythmic patterns, timbres, associated words, gestures, and so on – are unimportant...In some respects they are the most important features because their characteristics are the content which determines the form. In isolation, however, they have less significance. The ultimate musical power is released only through the careful elaboration, extension, and development of these elements to make a form which completes itself within a duration which performers and listeners perceive as appropriate to the nature of the ideas. It is this model of time which gives true musical satisfaction.[2]

In this, Paynter relates musical experience to our understanding of the temporal parameters of a composition. Compositional process and the resulting formal structures provide the conduit for such understanding. The smaller musical elements combine to inform our musical expectations of this composition, thereby fulfilling our natural human need for clarity through structure.

*Music for Prague 1968* makes an ideal representation of this paradigm. In addition to standard distinctions of movement separations and melodic contrast, this composition demonstrates the degree to which the compositional elements, and in this case, the constraint placed upon the compositional system that produces these elements, can impact the formal structure of a composition. By varying the degree of

[2] Ibid., 26-7.

compositional constraint throughout the four movements of *Music for Prague 1968*, Husa creates structure in the work, with a resultant pattern of tension and release.

| | **Movement 1** "Introduction and Fanfare" | **Movement 2** "Aria" | **Movement 3** "Interlude" | **Movement 4** "Toccata and Chorale" |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Primary Melodic Content | Moderate Serialism<br><br>Primarily incomplete row statements | Extended Serialism<br><br>Complete row statements<br><br>Layering of Rows | Integral Serialism: Pitch (Timbre) Rhythm Dynamics | Nonserial motivic manipulation |
| Symmetry | Motivic | Motivic<br><br>Structural | Motivic<br><br>Structurally nested | Motivic |
| Degree of Serial Constraint | Moderate | Extended | Extreme | **Negative** |

**Table 8. Compositional Constraint in *Music for Prague 1968***

The increasingly constrained system of compositional process builds until the fourth movement, where it is released through abandonment of serial process. The composition comes full-circle at Letter O of the "Toccata and Chorale" with the recapitulation of the Fanfare from movement 1, letter C. This moment signifies that the end of the composition is near by presenting elements that refer to the opening movements of the composition. As the musical story recapitulates, it evokes a sense of the circle of life.

The large-scale pattern of tension and release combined with Husa's own penchant for musical representation of extramusical ideas compels metaphorical inference. Most overtly, the pattern reflects the very nature of the Soviet – Czechoslovak conflict. Just as musical constraint grows throughout the piece, so does representation of the political pressure placed on the Dubcek administration. Although the bird songs that open the composition evoke the concept of the Prague Spring, the use of mild serialism in the "Aria" also reflects the overriding political control placed on Czechoslovakia as a member of the Soviet Bloc.

Just as the composition grows from the bird song towards the militaristic snare drum transition from the "Interlude" to the "Toccata and Chorale," so did the evidence that the totalitarian state would impose its will with military might. In *Music for Prague 1968*, there is an inversely proportionate relationship between the degree of compositional constraint and the degree to which the listener can easily recognize the musical presentation. The more constrained the serial system, the more difficult it is to discern melodic or harmonic cohesion. Although the "Aria" is still rather melodic in nature, the layering of complex musical elements does make this movement more challenging for listeners than the "Introduction and Fanfare." The totally serialized "Interlude" is noticeably more challenging for the listener than either of the previous two movements. However, the "Toccata and Chorale," with no serial constraints, is far more accessible with its musical elements more easily perceived.

In this, one may draw a metaphorical inference about the degree of societal cohesion within a dictatorship. While control may be exercised over a population, the

degree to which a culture can manifest itself may also be seen as inversely proportional to the extent of totalitarian control. This has been proven many times over in Czech society, with Soviet oppression only echoing that of the Nazis and the Hapsburgs. From the Hussite era forward, the time of greatest cultural development came in the latter half of the nineteenth century, when the Patent of Toleration specifically removed constraints placed upon the Czechs. During the Prague Spring, this culture began to aggressively manifest itself again through the arts, only to be silenced again by the invasion.

There also seems to be a degree of metaphorical representation in the movement structure of *Music for Prague 1968*. A four-movement work, *Music for Prague 1968* bears a striking similarity to the Classical symphony. While the first movement is not technically in sonata form, it does bear some similarities with an introduction, clear statements of thematic materials, a developmental middle section, and a quasi-recapitulation. Although the analytical discussion of the "Aria" explores the ironies of the title of the second movement, a slow, contrasting second movement fits the Classical symphony mold. The third movement, typically a scherzo, represents everything contrary to the concept of a brisk, melodic, humorous song. In the process, the "Interlude" invokes the scherzo ideal through negative representation, ironically emphasizing it by displaying its complete musical and emotional opposite. The "Toccata and Chorale" reflects the Classical symphonic style, with a compound meter dance style typical of a fourth movement.

The similarities to the Classical symphonic style, while not displaying the characteristic sonata form, do speak to an interesting coincidence. Chapter 5 discusses

the importance of the year 1781 with the Patent of Toleration issued by Joseph II. This proclamation made possible a wide range of cultural developments for the Czech nation, and acted as a precursor to the period of the Renascence in the following century. While still under the auspices of Hapsburg control, the lifting of societal constraints allowed for cultural developments. Elsewhere in the Hapsburg lands at this time, the Esterhazy family enjoyed the music of Franz Joseph Haydn, their court composer. The connection between Haydn, a master of the early Classical style, and Husa rests both in the Classical structural elements in *Music for Prague 1968*, and in their respective cultural lineages that meet in the Hapsburg Empire. The historical snapshot identifying this connection supports the Czech nationalistic aesthetic by highlighting the degree to which Czech art and culture were underdeveloped with respect to their Germanic counterparts.

In relation to the experience of the listener, the Classical elements in *Music for Prague 1968* create a more direct and significant impact. Amidst the flow of evolving musical constraints, the multi-movement structure with recapitulatory moments at the end of the first and fourth movements informs the listener about the performance in progress. The clarity achieved through these structural elements gives one a sense of stability not afforded by other less audible symmetrical patterns manifested in the serial technique. With this sense of stability, listeners are then free to let their attention drift to the non-Classical musical elements, thereby enjoying the full range of aesthetic experience in the composition.

However, in engaging the process of interpretation through metaphorical inference, one becomes subject to questions of intent. While Husa makes his intent

known with regard to a number of overt references, connecting Husa with Haydn via the Esterhazy and Hapsburg families clearly require a rather adventurous interpretive attitude. Nonetheless, the metaphorical inferences drawn in this study do not depend on the composer affirming his intent, as they are more appropriately labeled as identifications of coincidence. The degree to which a performer incorporates the coincidental similarities between musical structure and extramusical manifestations into the interpretive process is a highly personal choice, and not one this study purports to define.

In exploring both compositional relationships and historical background, this study does endeavor to augment the existing scholarship on *Music for Prague 1968*. The process of investigating one specific composition for wind band provides balance to the collection of existing studies that explore multiple works by one composer, or other historical aspects of the wind band genre. Through exploring the compositional and historical elements of *Music for Prague 1968*, this study will ideally serve as a catalyst for interpretation, as well as further study of this important composition.

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# APPENDIX

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## SCHEDULE 'A'

Specific Material to be Quoted

*Note: All examples are transposed to the key of C*

**Movement 1 – "Introduction and Fanfare"**

| Measures | Instruments included in example |
|---|---|
| 3-4 | Flutes, Clarinets 1 - 2, Horns 1 & 3 |
| 15-16 | Clarinets 1 - 2 |
| 21-24 | Clarinets 1-3 |
| 29-30 | Horns, Trombones, Tubas |
| 35-38 | Trumpets |
| 57-59 | One-line reduction of Piccolo, Flutes, Oboes, English Horn, Bassoons, Eb Clarinet, Bb Clarinets, Alto Clarinet, Bass Clarinet |
| 65-66 | Trumpets |
| 60-62 | One-line reduction of Flute, Oboe, English Horn, Contrabassoon, Bb Clarinet, Trumpet, Baritone, Tuba, String Bass |

**Movement 2 – "Aria"**

| Measures | Instruments included in example |
|---|---|
| 33-34 | Flutes |
| 36-37 | Trumpets 1-3, Horns 3 & 4, Trombone 1, Baritone |
| 41-42 | Trumpets 1-3, Trombones 1 - 2 |
| 1-3 | Tuba, Marimba, Vibraphone |
| 38 | One-line reduction of Bassoon, Contrabassoon, Trombones 2-3, Tuba, String Bass |

**Movement 3 – "Interlude"**

| Measures | Instruments included in example |
|---|---|
| 12-13 | Vibraphone |
| 17 | Vibraphone |
| 2-5 | Percussion 1-3 |

Continued on next page...

## SCHEDULE 'A'

**Movement 4 – "Toccata and Chorale"**

| Measures | Instruments included in example |
|---|---|
| 1-7 | One-line reduction of unison ensemble statement |
| 9-17 | Trumpets 1-4 |
| 20-25 | Solo Clarinet |
| 41-44 | One-line reduction of Tenor Saxophone and Baritone Saxophone |
| 49-54 | Alto Saxophones 1 - 2 |
| 55-57 | Trumpets 1-4 |
| 64-67 | One-line reduction of English Horn, Bassoon 1, Eb Clarinet, Alto Clarinet, and Bass Clarinet |
| 115-119 | Bb Clarinets 1 - 2, Alto Saxophones |
| 154-158 | One-line reduction of Flutes, Oboes, Eb Clarinet |
| 183-188 | One-line reduction of Horns |
| 211-217 | Two-line reduction of Trumpets 1-4, Horns 1-4 |
| 221-223 | One-line reduction of Saxophones, Oboes, English Horn, Contrabass Clarinet |
| 276-280 | Horns, Trombone 3, Baritone, Tuba, String Bass |
| 281-286 | Horns, Trombones, Baritone, Tuba, String Bass |
| 287-293 | Alto Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, Contrabass Clarinet, Bassoon, Contrabassoon, Trumpets, Horns, Trombones, Baritone, Tuba, String Bass |
| 308-313 | Timpani |