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From the Editor

On behalf the Editorial Board, I am pleased to present Volume Six of *Musicological Explorations*, a journal published by the graduate students in musicology of the University of Victoria. Last spring, we re-launched the journal, changing its name from the former title of *Fermata* in order to reflect our new mandate that encourages a broad spectrum of musicological research and interdisciplinary work relating to musicology. We continue to provide a forum for the work of graduate students and emerging scholars. I am confident that the transition has been a successful one.

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Board for their work and dedication over the past two years. I would also like to thank Jennifer McRae, this year's Managing Editor, for her invaluable assistance in preparing this issue, and wish her luck as she takes over the proverbial reins for the seventh volume. Furthermore, I gratefully acknowledge the Faculty of Fine Arts and the School of Music at the University of Victoria for their continuing generous support of this journal. As this issue of *ME* marks the end of my editorial association with the journal, I would like to say what a pleasure it has been to serve as Senior Managing Editor for Volumes Five and Six. I look forward to seeing future issues and hope that you will continue to support the journal through your subscriptions and submissions.

Susan Elizabeth Dalby
Senior Managing Editor

You Are My Sunshine: The Recorded Pedigree of an American Folk Song

Ryan Raul Banagale

It is challenging to find a person who is not familiar with *You Are My Sunshine*. This song is known by individuals independent of their racial, socioeconomic, or geographic background. As one of the most recognized songs in the world, it has been officially translated into thirty different languages and is even said to be as recognizable as *Happy Birthday*.¹ Unlike the traditional accompaniment to mark the passing of another year, however, *You Are My Sunshine* has been a hit record; not just in one genre, but across the board. In 1940, Jimmie Davis, the supposed composer of the song, sold a million copies of his country record.² The following year Bing Crosby took his recording to #19 on the pop charts.³ For three straight weeks in 1962, Ray Charles held the #1 position on the R&B charts and at the same time reached #7 on the pop charts.⁴ That *You Are My*

¹ Richard Severo, "Jimmie Davis, Louisiana's Singing Governor, Is Dead," *The New York Times*, 6 November 2000, A37.

² This is according to the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame. A precise figure is not available due to the fact that Davis's recording was released before "hillbilly" record sales were officially tracked. From, *The Nashville Songwriters Foundation*, (Accessed: 3 May, 2003) <<http://www.nashvillesongwritersfoundation.com/fame/davis.html>>

³ Joel Whitburn, *Pop Memories, 1890-1954: The History of American Popular Music* (Menomonee Falls: Record Research, 1986), 108.

⁴ Joel Whitburn, *The Billboard Book of Top 40 Hits* (New York: Billboard Books, 2000), 120.

Sunshine has demonstrated the ability to be successful as a country, pop, and R&B record is a direct result of its diverse and until now, little acknowledged origins.

Starting with a brief examination of the song's supposed composition in 1940 and working backwards, the present study assembles a series of related songs that form a recorded pedigree for *You Are My Sunshine*. Each of these earlier recordings contribute not only lyric and melodic elements to the standard version of the song, but also intrinsic *musical moments*. By moment, I mean specific elements of style, texture, and composition, which are introduced at a particular instant, or moment, in the recorded pedigree of the song. With Jimmie Davis's 1940 version, these moments become locked in a recorded model that provides a basis for all versions to follow.⁵ As will be shown, the accentuation of different specific musical moments allows for the variety of subsequent cover-recordings of *You Are My Sunshine*.

One reason *You Are My Sunshine* is so familiar is that it is highly accessible. It deals with commonly shared emotions of love and loss within simple melodic and harmonic structures making it easy to both remember and perform. As a strophic song, each of its three eight-bar verses as well as the familiar refrain employs the same musical material. With the exception of a single note its vocal line uses the pentatonic scale, a hallmark of the American folk song, which relies heavily on the chord tones of the underlying harmony. This harmonic motion alternates primarily between the tonic and the

⁵ For the purposes of this analysis the "document" for this song will be Jimmie Davis's 1940 Decca Recording, #67157.

subdominant, moving to the dominant only at the final cadence.

Just because *You Are My Sunshine* is simple, however, does not mean that it is simplistic. The vocal pickup line occurring with each verse/chorus is three eighth notes long and begins on the dominant. It then moves up through the tonic and the supertonic landing on the mediant at the downbeat. The melody does not settle on the tonic until the end of the first phrase. This unsettled vocal line reflects the unsettled tone of the lyrics. (See Example 1)

Example 1. Refrain from *You Are My Sunshine*, Decca #67157.

The image shows two staves of musical notation for the refrain of 'You Are My Sunshine'. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of the refrain, and the second staff contains the melody for the second line. The lyrics are written below the notes. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C).

You are my sun - shine, my on - ly sun - shine. You make me hap - py when skies are
 gray. You'll ne - ver know dear how much I love you. Please don't take my sun - shine a - way.

The refrain is the part of the song that people know best. When taken on its own or paired with only the first verse, as is commonly done in recordings, it comes across as a song of endearment. On the other hand, when the refrain is coupled with the second verse a more threatening scenario arises. By the time the third and final verse occurs, it is clear that love has departed and the singer's world has been shattered. In the end, the refrain can be read as an expression of desperation: “*Please* don't take my sunshine away.” (See Example 2)

Given this ultimate interpretation, the *moderato* tempo of the song seems to be at odds with the overall tone of the lyrics. Such a contradiction

commonly appears in popular music, and here the faster tempo convincingly brightens the inherent darkness of the lyric, providing solace for what is otherwise a gloomy future: if you look on the sunny side, always on the sunny side, things will be better.

Example 2. Lyrics from the Jimmie Davis 1940 Recording of *You Are My Sunshine*, Decca #67157.

The other night, dear, as I lay sleeping,
I dreamed I held you in my arms.
But when I woke, dear, I was mistaken,
And I hung my head and cried.

You are my sunshine, my only sunshine.
You make me happy when skies are gray.
You'll never know dear how much I love you.
Please don't take my sunshine away.

I'll always love you and make you happy,
If you will only say the same.
But if you leave me to love another,
You'll regret it all some day.

Refrain

You told me once dear you really love me,
That no one else could come between.
But now you've left me and love another,
You have shattered all my dreams

Refrain

It is interesting to note that Jimmie Davis, who was the first to popularize *You Are My Sunshine*,

used the song in much the same way the lyrics use the music: as a distraction. The song was an indispensable component of his two successful bids for governor of Louisiana in 1944 and 1960.

According to his obituary in *The New York Times*, “during the campaign, if anybody asked Mr. Davis where he stood on a particularly contentious issue, he would sing one of his songs.”⁶ *You Are My Sunshine* was a regular favourite, which frequently had the audiences quite literally singing Davis’s praises. This behaviour was recently satirized in the popular motion picture *O Brother, Where Art Thou*.⁷

The fictional gubernatorial candidate in the movie, however, did not claim to have written the song; Jimmie Davis did. The true origins of *You Are My Sunshine* have long lay obscured by the legend that Davis and others built around it. There are a multitude of stories and they are full of contradictions.⁸ A typical account exists in the narrative introduction that Davis lends his 1998 remake of the song. (See Example 3)

Davis earned a master's degree in education and psychology from Louisiana State University. In the dozen years following this and his recording of

⁶ Severo, A37.

⁷ Norman Blake recorded a version of *You Are My Sunshine* much in the style of Jimmie Davis’s 1940 recording. The collection of “roots music” found on the *Oh Brother, Where Art Thou* soundtrack won five Grammys in 2002 and has sold more than five million copies.

⁸ Jimmie Davis was a renowned storyteller. For a study regarding the dubious composition of *You Are My Sunshine*, comparing several of Jimmie Davis’s recollections, see Toru Mitsui, “*You Are My Sunshine*: A Question of Authorship,” *Tradition Magazine* (November-December 1999): 43-46.

the song, he worked as a professor and then began his career as a public servant.⁹ He remained an active musician during this time but no evidence exists that he was drudgely touring the country. Additionally, the “little ditty” that Davis refers to was actually recorded in New York City on February 5, 1940 and features six musicians other than Davis.¹⁰

Example 3. Narrative introduction from the Jimmie Davis 1998 recording of *You Are My Sunshine*, PeerMusic/Digitalpressure.

It was with three other country musicians
quite a few years ago.
We were barnstorming the country trying
to make a little dough.
We made all the chili joints, eating hot
dogs and steamers.
And at night time, three deep in a four-bit
bed.

All singin' the hard time blues.

Hoping that someday we'd record a hit
and things would be sweet,
Then we'd settle down on that place
called easy street.
It so happened that on one July the sixth,
We recorded a little ditty, it went something
like this...

⁹ Severo, A37.

¹⁰ Cary Ginell, *The Decca Hillbilly Discography, 1927-1945* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), 238.

The 1998 remake of *You Are My Sunshine* this fictional narrative account introduces has a distinct country sound to it; Davis's original 1940 recording, however, does not.

The diversity of sound present in the 1940 recording rings through immediately – this is not a standard “hillbilly” record. The instrumental introduction presents the song's melody on a trumpet above the expected foundation of a country string band. Added to this pairing is a clarinet, which weaves improvised, Dixieland-jazz inspired lines through the introduction and the first verse. The twang heard in Davis's voice is mild in comparison to contemporaries like Jimmie Rodgers and Gene Autry. The melody is even and flows smoothly from note to note with close attention given to the pitches.

One way to account for the stylistic incongruities found in this recording of *You Are My Sunshine* is to think of it as the resultant combination of a variety of musical moments. An examination of the recorded roots of *You Are My Sunshine* demonstrates how and when such stylistic, textural, and compositional elements present in Davis's recording entered the lineage of the song. First, however, it is time to debase a longstanding belief about this song: Jimmie Davis did not write *You Are My Sunshine*.

Davis claimed compositional credit for the song up until his death in November of 2000, yet the recorded roots of *You Are My Sunshine* can be traced back at least twelve years before he originally

recorded it.¹¹ One of the many claims that Davis made regarding *You Are My Sunshine* was that he wrote the song just prior to the recording session.¹² This statement would be more accurate, however, if he had said that he had *acquired* the song just prior to recording it. The *Shreveport Times* documents that Davis and his writing partner Charles Mitchell purchased the rights to this song from musician Paul Rice of the Rice Brothers Gang for the sum of thirty-five dollars.¹³ It is unclear exactly when Davis and Mitchell purchased this song, but it likely occurred in 1939. During that year, the Rice Brothers Gang relocated to Shreveport, Louisiana, where Davis was living and working as the commissioner of public safety.¹⁴ Paul Rice needed money and Jimmie Davis needed a song.

Further countering Davis's claim of authorship is a recording of *You Are My Sunshine* by the Rice Brothers Gang on July 13, 1939, a full seven months before the one by Jimmie Davis.¹⁵ The Rice Brothers Gang were also Decca Hillbilly Recording Artists and their recording had an obvious influence on Davis. Their version begins with the sounds of a traditional string band with an amplified steel guitar

¹¹ Regardless of authorship, the copyright remains in Davis's name and millions of southerners will forever connect the song with their beloved singing governor. In 1977, *You Are My Sunshine* was made the second official state song of Louisiana.

¹² Severo, A37.

¹³ Louise Hewitt, "Background of a \$17.50 Song and the 'Sunshine' it Spread," *Shreveport Times*, September 16, 1956: 3-F.

¹⁴ Severo, A37. Wayne W. Daniel, "The Rice Brothers," *The Journal of the American Academy for the Preservation of Old-Time Country Music* (October 1996): 19.

¹⁵ Decca #66432. Ginell, 238-239.

playing the melody. A clarinet and harmonica work their way though the piece improvising lines against the vocals and lead guitar. As the recording progresses, it clearly demonstrates the group's expressed desire to remain hillbillies, but not sound like them.¹⁶ For example, Hoke Rice's jazzy guitar solo, following the first chorus, sounds like it might be more at home in the dance halls of New York City.

Like Jimmie Davis, Paul Rice also told a number of stories regarding the inspiration for and composition of this song. According to Rice, *You Are My Sunshine* came about when "a girl over in South Carolina wrote me this long letter, about seventeen pages. And she was talking about I was her sunshine, and I got the idea for the song and put a tune to it."¹⁷ This is another nice story of origin for the song, but it too is doubtful. An earlier recorded model exists which is the more likely source of inspiration for *You Are My Sunshine*.

The Carter Family, one of the most famous country groups of all time, recorded a song titled *Little Darlin' Pal of Mine*. It reached the #14 position on the pop charts shortly after it was released at the end of 1928.¹⁸ As one of the group's "tried-and-true" hits, it was re-recorded in 1935, just two years before Paul Rice "wrote" *You Are My Sunshine*.¹⁹ The tune and the accompaniment of this song are remarkably similar to

¹⁶ Daniel, 19.

¹⁷ Daniel, 19.

¹⁸ Victor #21638. Whitburn, *Memories*, 78.

¹⁹ Mark Zwonitzer, *Will You Miss Me When I'm Gone? The Carter Family and Their Legacy in American Music* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 177.

that of *You Are My Sunshine*. (See Example 4) Equally striking is the clear topical relation found in a comparison of the two song's lyrics. Compare the identical placement of the words "night" and "sleeping" in the first line of each song, or the concurrent expression of happiness paired with departure found in the second verse. (See Example 5) Such musical and lyrical parallels form a convincing argument for this genealogical step.

Example 4. Refrain from *Little Darlin' Pal of Mine*, Victor #21638.

The image shows a musical score for the refrain of "Little Darlin' Pal of Mine". It consists of two staves of music in a 2/4 time signature with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is written on a treble clef staff, and the bass line is on a bass clef staff. The lyrics are written below the notes.

My lit - tle dar - lin', oh how, I love you. How I love you, none can
 tell. In your heart you love a - noth - er, Lit - tle dar - lin', pal of mine.

Going back even further, the musical inspiration for *Little Darlin' Pal of Mine* may well have been another song floating around the South during that time: *Rock of Ages*, as recorded by Blind Willie Davis.²⁰ This is not to be confused with the nineteenth-century hymn set by Thomas Hastings, although the two share the lyric "Rock of Ages, cleft for me." Davis accompanies himself on a solo guitar, complementing his vocal line with improvised, bottleneck-slide-guitar riffs. His lyrics are spiritual in theme and may have roots in the Baptist hymnal tradition. It has been documented that the Carter Family was familiar with the music of Blind Willie

²⁰ Herwin #93003. Recorded May 1928. Robert M.W. Dixon. *Blues and Gospel Records: 1890-1943* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997), 209.

Davis, a black Mississippi blues singer. Lesley “Elsey” Riddle, a friend of A.P. Carter, collected African-American music for the group.²¹ He brought a “cleaned up” version of Blind Willie Davis’s *Rock of Ages* to the Carter Family which they subsequently recorded under the title *When the World’s on Fire*.

Example 5. Comparison of lyrics from *You Are My Sunshine*, Decca #67157 and *Little Darlin’ Pal of Mine*, Victor #21638.

“You Are My Sunshine”

Verse 1

The other night, dear, as I lay sleeping,
I dreamed I held you in my arms.
But when I woke, dear, I was mistaken,
And I hung my head and cried.

Refrain

You are my sunshine, my only sunshine.
You make me happy when skies are gray.
You’ll never know dear how much I love you.
Please don’t take my sunshine away.

Verse 2

I’ll always love you and make you happy,
If you will only say the same.
But if you leave me to love another,
You’ll regret it all some day.

Refrain

Verse 3

You told me once dear you really love me,
That no one else could come between.
But now you’ve left me and love another,
You have shattered all my dreams.

Refrain

“Little Darlin’ Pal Of Mine”

Verse 1

Many a night, while you lay sleeping,
Dreaming of your amber skies,
Was a poor boy broken hearted,
Listening to the winds that sigh.

Refrain

My little Darlin’, oh how, I love you.
How I love you, none can tell .
In your heart you love another,
Little Darlin’, pal of mine.

Verse 2

Many a day, with you I’ve rambled,
Happiest hours, with you I’ve spent .
For I had your heart forever,
But I find it’s only lent.

Refrain

Verse 3

There is just three things I wish for.
That’s my casket, shroud and grave.
When I’m dead, don’t weep for me,
Just kiss those lips that you betrayed.

²¹ Zwonitzer, 137.

While the lyrical content is different, the tone, melody, and accompaniment of *When the World's on Fire* are nearly identical to *Little Darlin' Pal of Mine*. (See Example 6) In fact, when the Carter Family rerecorded *Little Darlin' Pal of Mine* in both 1935 and 1936, they significantly decreased the tempo, setting the two songs further apart. The influence of Blind Willie Davis, who accompanied himself with a bottleneck slide guitar, can be heard in Maybelle Carter's effort to play in a similar fashion on these recordings.

Example 6. Refrain from *When the World's On Fire*, Herwin #93003.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 2/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of the refrain, and the second staff contains the melody for the second line. The lyrics are written below the notes.

My lov - in' moth - er When the world's on fi - re Don't you want God's bos - om to be your
 pil - low? Oh tide me o - ver, in the Rock of A - ges. Rock of A - ges cleft for me.

In all likelihood, Blind Willie Davis did not write *Rock of Ages*. Further excavation would produce additional levels to the musical makeup of *You Are My Sunshine*. The information presented, however, is sufficient for the purposes of the present discussion. It is clear that rhythmic, melodic, and lyrical connections exist between these recordings. Along with such surface elements, these recordings also introduce individual *musical moments*. A number of these moments are present in Jimmie Davis's 1940 version of the song, each of which can be located on the branches of *You Are My Sunshine's* family tree: The

guitar based, country string band component comes out of the Carter Family recordings. A constant presence of a through improvised instrumental line is present as far back as Blind Willie Davis's record. The desire to preserve a sense of heritage while making a concerted effort to move musically beyond it, as heard in Jimmie Davis's attempt to sing in a more refined style, comes from the Rice Brother's Gang.

It is tempting to say the various recordings that contribute musical moments to the compositional fabric of *You Are My Sunshine* are connected only so far as the music and lyrics and that locating individual musical moments within this heritage demonstrates nothing more than shared points of style. However, musical moments form the genetic makeup this song. To this end, it only makes sense that subsequent versions of *You Are My Sunshine* would inherit this full potential. I would like to recall my initial observation regarding the later popular successes of this song in recorded form. *You Are My Sunshine* has successfully navigated diverse musical paths due to the presence of musical moments. Individual performers accentuate the specific combination of moments natural to their musical style. When such an interpretation comes across convincingly, the song can achieve popular success.

In October 1962, Ray Charles released his second foray into country music: *Modern Sounds in Country and Western Music Volume 2*. One month later, his recording of the "country" song *You Are My Sunshine* was released as a single and quickly ran up

both the pop and R&B charts.²² Interestingly enough, given the title of the album it came from, his rendition made no appearance on the country charts.

Unlike previous versions of *You Are My Sunshine* that offer an instrumental lead in, Charles gives the listener no preparation for what is to come. The only introduction is a IV-I, plagal cadence from the saxophone section. As he begins the first verse it is immediately clear that this is not going to be a standard performance. Charles allows the lyrics to take his voice where they see fit in his rendition and alters the vocal line with blue notes and the occasional “whoa!” Supporting him is a rhythm section playing a laidback, Latin-inspired groove that is lightly punctuated by the horn section. At the refrain, Charles continues to sing in the same manner and is echoed by his back-up singers, the Raeletts. Following this, as traditionally dictated, is the instrumental section. Instead of continuing with the established groove, the formerly reserved big band launches full tilt into a straight ahead swing.

As the accompaniment settles back into the original feel, we expect Charles’s voice to return for the second verse. Instead, we hear the voice of Margie Hendrix, one of Charles’s Raeletts. For the first time the vocals of *You Are My Sunshine* are split between a man and a woman adding an intriguing new level to the interpretation of the song. When put into the context of a male/female relationship, Charles has set it up such that the listener is sympathetic to his situation. In the second verse,

²² ABC-Paramount #10375.

Hendrix turns the table on Charles, causing the listener to wonder who in fact betrayed who first.²³

Ray Charles delivers a presentation of *You Are My Sunshine* that is new and unexpected through the accentuation of musical moments. This includes previously established moments as well as moments which have not been discussed, yet are still fully present in Jimmie Davis's 1940 recording. Perhaps the most obvious and important element that Charles relies on is the harmonic progression of the song. *You Are My Sunshine* alternates between the tonic and subdominant harmonies, moving to the dominant only at the end of each section. Since this is the same basic motion of the 12-bar blues progression, it is a natural moment for Charles, working primarily in the R&B genre, to accent. Additionally, the instrumental "amen" cadence at the introduction, is a moment that runs all the way back to the sacred performance tradition of *Rock of Ages* and here helps to play up the theme of betrayal.²⁴ Preceding successful versions of this song, including Bing Crosby's in 1941, hold very much to the composed melody. Instead, Charles's vocal style echoes that of Blind Willie Davis. The blue notes he employs are based on a moment inherent in *You Are My Sunshine*'s original melody: a chromatic neighbour-tone attached to the first syllable of the word "only" in the refrain. (See Example 1)

²³ Charles and Hendrix were involved in a long-term affair, the tumultuous undercurrents of which can be heard in both this recording and *Hit the Road Jack* from 1961.

²⁴ It may in fact be this specific moment that Aretha Franklin picks up on in her 1967 recording of *You Are My Sunshine*. Instead of a simple two-chord invocation, the "Queen of Soul" testifies for nearly two minutes before beginning the first verse.

Picking up on these specific moments, Charles brings the song into his own musical world and scores a hit record in the process.

Such recordings document the diverse musical possibilities bound to *You Are My Sunshine*. It is ultimately not a big deal that Jimmie Davis did not write *You Are My Sunshine*. When he made his recording in 1940, he locked moments into a standard (and copyrighted) model that allow the song to remain an active part of popular music.²⁵ Whether conscious of it or not, all subsequent popular recordings stem from this version.

Forming a pedigree for *You Are My Sunshine* is one way to demonstrate the path of musical influence in the reinterpreted versions that follow. The lineage of recordings presented is just one part of a family tree with roots extending before Blind Willie Davis and branches that continue to grow today.²⁶ By linking songs together through the use of musical moments, lines of influence can be established. This allows popular music studies as a whole to more precisely trace the development of different genres and styles. They are all related and we have the records to prove it.

²⁵ This past fall, Brian Wilson released a new and complete recording of his long lost masterpiece *Smile*. Towards the end of the first suite, following a cello solo called “Old Master Painter” is an appearance of *You Are My Sunshine*. Accompanied by a string quartet, Wilson casts the familiar refrain in both past tense and a minor key conceding, “How could you take my sunshine away?”

²⁶ The only other published study of *You Are My Sunshine* by Mistui offers a different genealogical branch that suggests among other things, Hawaiian origins.

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Abstract

Just about everyone knows the song *You Are My Sunshine* in one form or another. For many it was first heard during childhood as a lullaby or campfire sing-along. Beyond such oral transmission, this song's presence is also maintained in our culture through recorded form. With a release rate of more than five new recordings per year, artists have created their own renditions ranging from folk to funk to reggae to punk. Of these, Jimmie Davis sold a million copies of the song as a country record, Bing Crosby took his recording to #20 on the pop charts, and Ray Charles hit #1 on the R&B charts. The various recordings of *You Are My Sunshine* demonstrate not only the commercial viability of the song, but also its widespread appeal to both artists and their listeners regardless of racial, sociological, or geographic background.

What is it about *You Are My Sunshine* that allows it to successfully navigate such diverse musical paths? The answer lies in the compositional makeup of its diverse and little acknowledged origins. Starting with its supposed composition in the 1940s and working backwards, this paper examines a series of songs that form a recorded pedigree for *You Are My Sunshine*. Each song contributes musical components, or moments, from various folk traditions to what becomes the standard (and copyrighted) version of *You Are My Sunshine*. This paper will then demonstrate how the accentuation of different key musical moments allows an artist to create a popular version of *You Are My Sunshine* through the examination of Ray Charles's charting rendition.

Schubert's *Ganymed* and the Transfiguration of Self in Poem and Music

Kristina Baron-Woods

Franz Schubert's Lied *Ganymed* D. 544 (1817) evokes the rapture of a young man about to embark on his first deeply loving, sensually and spiritually encompassing relationship. The myth of Ganymede has been a symbol of male homoerotic love for millennia. The story of Zeus swooping down in the form of an eagle to take the handsome young shepherd he so desired back to Mount Olympus with him is certainly the most famous and enduring of all the myths that treat homoerotic subject matter. It has inspired countless representations in the visual arts, literature, and music. Scholars have interpreted the myth in numerous ways: as a pantheistic celebration of Man's unity with Nature and, therefore, God; as an allegory representing sexual and mental submission; and as a validation of pederastic relationships. Indeed, many scholars believe that the myth was born of necessity for Greek culture; the supreme god's participation in the common practice of pederasty could be seen as divine sanction. In Goethe's poem *Ganymed* (1774) and Schubert's setting of it, the myth functions on both intellectual and sensual levels, representing the ideal balance in ancient Greek pederastic relationships between love and tutelage. This paper explores Goethe and Schubert's understanding of the original Greek myth through an analysis of both poetic images and musical content. Poet and composer approach the

theme of pederasty while composing artworks that resonate within the context of German Romanticism.¹

Since Greco-Roman antiquity, the love story of Ganymede and Zeus has assumed a narrative of passive love-object desired by mature aggressor. This passiveness is suggested in the early myths by Ovid (*Metamorphoses* 10: 152-161), and Virgil (*Aeneid* 5: 252-257) in which Ganymede is portrayed as frightened, flailing boy being snatched up by a large eagle, and in later derivations of Ganymede's name, which as a common noun in colloquial Middle English, derisively meant a "sexually submissive or kept boy."² However, in the ancient Greek culture and language from which the original myth was born, Ganymede's name, *Ganymedes*, means "the joyful stirring of youthful sexual desire." This definition which emphasizes the emergence of active sensual awareness inspires both Goethe and Schubert's portrayals of the Ganymede figure within their respective works. There is no hint of passiveness in their depictions of the mutual love and attraction

¹ Pederasty is the relationship between a man and a post-pubertal boy, generally under the age of eighteen. In antiquity, these relationships were seen as educative, with the man preparing the boy to assume the offices of adulthood. Lawrence Kramer writes that in Schubert's time most authorities argue that Greek pederasty was nonsexual; however, by 1837, M.H.E. Meier wrote in his *Paederastia* that "the spiritual elements of affection were always mixed with a highly sensual element. Lawrence Kramer, "The Ganymede Complex: Schubert's Songs and the Homoerotic Imagination" *Franz Schubert: Sexuality, Subjectivity, Song* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), 118.

² *Webster's Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: Lexicon Publications, 1988), 657.

between boy and god. The concept of this idealized *griechische Liebe* [Greek love] is not confined entirely to eroticism, however. Ganymede's bond with the "all-loving Father" moves beyond sensual pleasure to culminate in spiritual union with Zeus and personal enlightenment. Schubert's movement through various rhythmic and melodic motives and ever-shifting tonalities serves as an allegory for the journey and transfiguration of the youth, from a shepherd enjoying the sumptuous pleasures of earthly morning to the embraced and embracing lover of a god.

From the time of its composition in the early nineteenth century, the scholarly reception of Schubert's Lied has varied widely. Many critics do not discuss the homoerotic implications of the work at all, finding a number of alternative readings for both Goethe's poem and Schubert's music. John Reed called Goethe's poem "pantheistic" because of Ganymede's willing surrender to the winds and the clouds rather than to God in person. "Mankind's wanting to be one with nature" is how he interprets the song, writing that the poem "expresses in its purest form the pantheism of Goethe's early nature poetry."³ Reed describes the scene in a completely non-erotic manner, stating simply that Ganymede is carried up to heaven to become the cup-bearer to the gods. He regards Goethe's text as an embodiment of the poet's belief in the unity and goodness of nature, and of its power to draw man to itself. However, in Schubert's music, particularly in the frequent changes of tonality, Reed admits that the passion is clear,

³ John Reed, *The Schubert Song Companion* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 245.

writing that the song seems to “move upwards as the pulse quickens...very Schubertian procedures [that] reflect the movement of thought in the poem from sensuous delight to a kind of mystical rapture.” The early twentieth-century scholar Richard Capell also notes sensual elements in the piece, using such terms as “melodious rapture” and “rich and almost amorous contentment” to describe the opening statement in A-flat. This rapture, however, is contained in a piece that is a “paean to the beauty of nature.”⁴

By the late eighteenth century, when Johann Wolfgang von Goethe wrote his poem *Ganymed* celebrating the mythical youth’s stirring of passion, the story of Zeus’s desire for the young shepherd was widely known through its many incarnations from antiquity, the Renaissance, and more recent times. Johann Winckelmann (1717-68), the German archaeologist and art historian, had laid the foundations for Goethe and indeed the whole German Hellenism movement through his writings on the concept of the “noble simplicity and quiet greatness” [*edle Einfalt und stille Grosse*] of classical Greek art.⁵ His best-known work, *The History of the Art of Antiquity* (1764), was a seminal text in the neoclassical movement and widely influential in

⁴ Richard Capell, *Schubert’s Songs* (New York: Macmillan, 1928), 132.

⁵ Kramer, “The Ganymede Complex,” 117. Winckelmann believed that the cultural supremacy of ancient Greece was linked to its idealization of the beautiful virile youth, identifying the highest beauty in art as that of sculptures of the male body, and suggesting that the Greeks’ sensitivity to beauty derived from the frequent sight of naked young men.

popularizing the art and culture of ancient Greece. Goethe's *Ganymed* comes from a period during which Goethe was writing other poems on similar subjects such as *Prometheus*; evidently Goethe was experiencing a surge of inspiration from the classical sources he greatly admired.

In Goethe's poem, there is no surprise attack on the young Ganymede, the rapacious eagle is not present, and Ganymede's mode of transport is infinitely more benign; here, Zeus sends a cloud to carry the youth who eagerly awaits his fate. It is clear in this poem that the love and attraction between mortal boy and god is entirely mutual. Ganymede chooses to be loved by his admirer as equally as the admirer chooses him. In fact, Ganymede himself calls for the cloud to carry him to the heavens. Goethe's Ganymede is given the choice of who will be the recipient of his love, and he consciously chooses Zeus. *This* Ganymede will not be the passive *eromenos* of Ovid and Virgil's renditions of the story, but a thoroughly modern young man satisfying his desire for erotic friendship. Nicholas Boyle writes that "[Goethe's] Ganymede remains throughout the poem an independent individual whose strength of soul is always equal to that of the surrounding world, never subordinate."⁶

By the time he began work on his Lied *Ganymed*, Schubert had already set a number of Goethe's poems in the period from 1814 to 1816, including *Gretchen am Spinnrade*, *An Mignon*, *Erlkönig*, *Heidenröslein*, and *Jägers Abendlied*. It seemed, in fact,

⁶ Graham Johnson, liner notes, *A Goethe Schubertiad* (Hyperion, 1995), 8.

that Schubert's interest in the poet's work may have been waning somewhat. In late 1816, a friend of Schubert's had attempted to make Goethe aware of the young composer's Goethelieder by sending him a set of them. Goethe did not acknowledge or even open the package of music.⁷ Schubert was presumably quite upset by this, having thought of Goethe almost as a surrogate artistic father, and he must have felt Goethe's rejection and disdain of his work palpably. While 1817 is the year in which he began to turn away from Goethe, it is also the year in which he found himself warming to the classically-inspired work of his Viennese friend, Mayrhofer. Johann Mayrhofer (1787-1836) was a student of the Greek classics and is now thought to have been homosexual.⁸ Schubert had set a number of Mayrhofer's classical poems in 1817 (*Memnon*, *Antigone und Oedip*, and *Orest auf Tauris*) being very interested in antiquity at this time. Like Schubert, Mayrhofer venerated Goethe and may have brought the *Ganymed* poem to Schubert's attention; as Susan

⁷ In 1825, Schubert himself made an attempt at personal contact with Goethe, sending him printed songs, the work of an accomplished, published composer, not the handwritten copies of the first attempt. The music, published as Opus 19, consisted of *An Swager Kronos*, *An Mignon*, and *Ganymed*. It was printed on special paper with gold lettering, probably at the composer's own expense, and was dedicated to the poet. Goethe wrote down receiving it in his diary but never made further comment, or bothered to acknowledge its receipt to Schubert. From Johnson, *A Goethe Schubertiad*, 10.

⁸ Susan Youens, "Schubert and his Poets," *Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, Christopher Gibbs, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 107. Youens writes that Mayrhofer was likely homosexual, but does not elaborate or give sources for this supposition.

Youens writes, for Schubert, “personal resonances might well cluster about this song of a youth beloved by Zeus.”⁹

Schubert's portrayal of the myth emphasizes a feeling of dualism in its musical forces which could be read either as the duality of the Ganymede and Zeus relationship, in which the young hero's journey to heaven leads both to sexual fulfillment and educative enlightenment, or the contrast between two opposing forces. Lawrence Kramer, in *Sexuality, Subjectivity, Song* (1998), notes feeling a musical pull of forces between the feminine/earthly and the masculine/heavenly, writing that the song embodies the duality of Ganymede's emergence into awareness. Kramer calls these opposing forces the lower *Eros* of male-female love and the higher *Eros* of the male-male love, citing examples in the poem where German grammar, rather than musical elements, supports his claim. He writes that Ganymede has the choice of staying down with the earthy, sensual Beauty [*Schöne*], which in German is a feminine noun, or an upwards impulse towards the transcendent, masculine all-loving Father [*Alliebender Vater*]. He continues to find examples of the parallel opposing forces of nature, highlighting the masculine and feminine, stating that the “lovely morning breeze” [*lieblicher Morgenwind*] would traditionally be personified in the masculine form of a zephyr while the nightingale would mythographically be feminine.¹⁰

One could argue that while there is indeed a lower and higher *Eros* at work in the poem

⁹ Youens, “Schubert and his Poets,” 107.

¹⁰ Kramer, “The Ganymede Complex,” 121.

exemplified by the earthly and heavenly, these two levels manifest themselves not as feminine and masculine but as the sensual and spiritual. The earthly images represent Ganymede's first level of awakening awareness, that of physical desire; the heavenly images are his transcendent move to spiritual enlightenment. Ganymede recognizes this desire early on in the poem, personifying Spring as his beloved [*Geliebter*], before realizing that he is called by a higher power than the earthly "Infinite Beauty" [*Unendliche Schöne*]. One might also consider the nightingale [*Die Nachtigall*] as representing Zeus seductively calling the boy, taking a bird form, albeit a less threatening one than the eagle of Ovid and Virgil's versions.

Schubert highlights this duality of earth and heaven, sensual and spiritual, from the first bar of the piano introduction. The bass notes could be interpreted as representing the earth; although marked staccato and played lightly, the bass remains a solid, reliable pattern of fifths and octaves, outlining diatonic tonal progressions (Example 1-A). The treble notes represent the pull to heaven, moving in a lyrical and upward sweeping arpeggio figure (Example 1-B). Graham Johnson describes these graceful upward moving phrases as the "sensuous melody of the right hand [underpinned by] the piano's left-hand staccato...there is a spring in the youth's step from the very beginning."¹¹ Schubert's introduction, while eight bars long and dividing evenly into two four-bar hyper-measures, gives the impression of having missed a bar, so that the pattern

¹¹ Johnson, *A Goethe Schubertiad*, 11.

of the ascending A-flat major arpeggio motive comes in a bar before the singer. This gives the impression that the voice is creeping in, not wanting to upset the perfection of the radiant morning.

Example 1: *Ganymed* D. 544 (1817) mm 1-18.¹²

The image shows a page of a musical score for Franz Schubert's "Ganymed" (D. 544). The score is in A-flat major and 3/4 time, marked "Etwas langsam." and "pp". It features a piano accompaniment with a prominent ascending arpeggio motive in the right hand, and a vocal line with German lyrics: "Wie im Mor - gen - glan - ze du rings mich an - glühst, Früh - ling, Ge - lieb - ter!". The score is divided into three systems, with measure numbers 9 and 13 indicated. The piano part consists of a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand and a more complex arpeggiated figure in the right hand.

¹² Franz Schubert, "Ganymed." *Lieder für eine Singstimme mit Pianofortebegleitung, Band 1*, (Frankfurt: C.F. Peters, 1953), 244.

Harmonically, one sees from the outset that the higher, spiritual *Eros* will prevail for Ganymede in the constant pull to distant tonalities. The various tonal images recreate the fresh beauty of the morning and the impulse of desire, ending in the holy sound of the final benediction.¹³ At first, the beloved Spring [*Frühling, Geliebter*] keeps Ganymede in the earthly safety of his home key of A-flat, while Infinite Beauty [*Unendliche Schöne*] begins to direct him away, taking him to the distant but related key of C-flat, the first of many harmonic changes that occur on Ganymede's voyage to self-discovery and fulfillment.¹⁴ Ganymede's initial inability to define his yearning and identify its source sends him reeling through a number of tonalities before finally resting in the pastoral calmness of F major for the last third of the piece.

The harmony moves through these tonal centres, never turning back on itself, from A-flat to C-flat to G-flat (which functions enharmonically as F-sharp, the dominant of B which is itself the dominant of E) to the new key signature of E major, and finally modulating to the key of F Major for Ganymede's acceptance in heaven. Johnson writes that in the first page of the song, concealed in the midst of "a bright-eyed hymn to nature, there is a sultry languor

¹³ Matthew Head, "Schubert, Kramer, and Musical Meaning," *Music and Letters* 83 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 431-34. Head describes the harmonic movement of the song as a metaphor for the passage to enlightenment that Ganymede must follow: "Particularly relevant to *Ganymed* is the idea of the transfigured self, for which tonal migration in the course [of the song] serves as an allegory."

¹⁴ Refer to Appendix A for a chart of the harmonic analysis.

suggested by the opulence of the rich [flat] keys,” noting the particular effectiveness of the sinuous melody on the words “*lieg ich und schmachte*” deep in the midst of the move to G-flat before the sudden melodic, motivic and harmonic change about to come. (Example 2). The sumptuous flat keys give way to the brighter, more urgent-sounding sharps of E and A major, as Ganymede seeks relief for the burning thirst within his breast [*den brennenden durst meines Busens*].

Example 2: *Ganymed* D. 544, mm 32-46.¹⁵

The image shows a musical score for Schubert's "Ganymed" D. 544, measures 32-46. The score is presented in three systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature changes from two flats (B-flat and E-flat) to one flat (B-flat) and then to one sharp (F-sharp). The lyrics are: "Daß ich dich far - der mächt in die-ser Arm! Ach an dei-ner Bi - sen lieg ich und schmach - te, und der - in Bu - sen, dein Gras zäh - gen sich an - dein Herz." The piano accompaniment features a prominent, sinuous melody in the right hand and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand.

¹⁵ Schubert, “Ganymed,” 245.

Then symbolically, all accidentals clear as he poses his question, “Ach, wohin? Wohin?” [Where, where?]. The sudden lucidity of C major gives the listener the feeling that they have just been witness to the active revealing of Ganymede’s sexuality and his acceptance of loving and being the beloved. Finally, Schubert adds a B-flat and transforms the C chord into the dominant-seventh of F major, creating a forward thrust as it propels the listener and Ganymede to the holiness of the final key of F major. (Example 3).

Example 3: *Ganymed* D. 544, mm 69-76.¹⁶

The image shows a musical score for Schubert's "Ganymed" D. 544, measures 69-76. It consists of two systems of music. The first system (measures 69-72) shows a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The key signature is D major. The piano part has dynamic markings: *cresc.* at measure 70, *f* at measure 71, and *decresc.* at measure 72. The vocal line has lyrics: "komm! ich kom-me! ach! wo-hin? wo-hin?". The second system (measures 73-76) shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The key signature changes to C major at measure 73. The piano part has dynamic markings: *p* at measure 73 and *cresc.* at measure 74. The vocal line has lyrics: "hin? Hin-auf strebt's, hin-auf! hin-".

The chorale texture at the end of the song on *Alliebender Vater* (bars 92-94 and 106-110 in Example 4) when Ganymed has been swept up moves through a traditional hymn-like harmonic progression, and we hear that harmonically and transcendently,

¹⁶ Schubert, “Ganymede,” 246.

Ganymede's journey is complete. As in the original Greek myth where Zeus so loves the mortal Ganymede that he immortalizes him as a constellation so that the two will be together forever, so Schubert's holy sounds reveal the final transfiguration of Ganymede into the spiritual, and not only sensual, partner of the god.

Example 4: *Ganymed* D. 544, mm 90-95.¹⁷

Example 4: *Ganymed* D. 544, mm 90-95.¹⁷

mm 105-121.

Example 4: *Ganymed* D. 544, mm 90-95.¹⁷

mm 105-121.

¹⁷ Schubert, "Ganymed," 247.

Scholars such as Lawrence Kramer and Matthew Head agree that the tonal migrations in the Lied serve as an allegory for the journey and transfiguration of the youth from shepherd enjoying the sumptuous pleasures of earthly morning to the embraced and embracing [*Umfangend umfangen*] lover of a god. Head borrows phrases from musicologist Annette Richards as he writes of the young man's "journey into knowledge" as the "initiate/apprentice coming out of ignorance into self-awareness."¹⁸ While Richards is describing the harmonic movement in Beethoven's Choral Fantasy Opus 80, the quote is particularly relevant to Schubert's *Ganymed*. A key change, of course, marks the arrival of Ganymede in heaven to the bosom of the all-loving father, and there is no return to the original key because Ganymede has ascended. A recapitulation back to the original key or a reference to the original melodic motif would be impossible; the transfigured Ganymede cannot possibly return to earth at this point.

One should note just how *right* Schubert's original key feels, and the voice type it necessitates, especially at the beginning of the piece. A brighter and more energetic picture emerges in the original key of A-flat intended for tenor voice than in the key transposed for baritone. Schubert's choice of key for this Lied not only indicates the voice range but also suggests the vocal character needed to portray the emotions. One might argue that Schubert tended to

¹⁸ Annette Richards, "The Free Fantasia and the Musical Picturesque," *New Perspectives in Music History and Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 226. In Head, "Schubert, Kramer, and Musical Meaning," 434.

write songs in high ranges because of his own small tenor voice, and also because so many of his songs were originally sung by his friend Johann Michael Vogl, a baritone blessed with a large range. However, the range in this song specifically governs the character required to perform it. Clearly, Schubert intended a bright, youthful, and angelic quality from the voice portraying his amorous and anticipatory young man.

As delightful as Schubert's setting is in its portrayal of youthful emerging desire, comparisons to Hugo Wolf's more openly sensual setting are inevitable. Wolf is often counted as having understood the poem better because his setting is more openly sensual; his *Ganymede* passively languishes, a subordinate to the extraordinary musical forces Wolf creates. In his biography of Wolf from 1907, Ernest Newman writes that Wolf normally avoided setting Goethe poems that had already been set by Schubert if he felt that Schubert had already done so effectively. The *Wilhelm Meister* songs are an exception along with *Prometheus*, *Ganymed*, and *Grenzen der Menschheit*, the three songs that Lawrence Kramer calls the "trilogy of songs about mortal limits."¹⁹ Newman seems to envision Schubert as a merry savant who composed by scribbling down bits of music on menus in Viennese coffeehouses and who failed to understand the subtlety of Goethe's psychopathology. Newman is not alone in setting up a Schubert versus Wolf rivalry: many Wolf scholars believe that Wolf understood Goethe better than

¹⁹ Lawrence Kramer, "Desire and Decadence: the Wilhelm Meister Songs of Wolf and Schubert," *Nineteenth Century Music* 10 (Berkeley: University of California, 1987), 229.

Schubert, and set his texts with a psychological penetration and intensity that Schubert's versions lack. However, Wolf's mature-sounding Ganymede is already aware of what awaits him and passively surrenders to it; the piece starts and ends in the same key, and there is no transformation for Ganymede as he resignedly accepts his fate. Schubert's youthful version is energetic and bravely open to the discovering the new world to which Zeus brings him. In Schubert, we witness the transformation of the youth's sexuality as a process of change unfolding before our eyes. The lack of highly-charged sensuousness in Schubert's setting has often been counted as a fault, but his Ganymede seems to have been the self-determining boy that Goethe himself envisioned. The two composers chose to approach Goethe's words differently, but it would be preposterous to believe that Schubert was less aware than Wolf of the sensual homoerotic implications of the poem.

Schubert's setting emphasizes the emerging strength of a young man who is beloved by another man and is transfigured by that love. Was Schubert wishing to hide the homoerotic elements of the song, when it had been well known for centuries as a metaphor for homosexual desire? While a discussion of Schubert's sexual preference is not the intention here, having been discussed at length by several notable scholars, I believe that the composer's acuity in casting Ganymede as his own man rather than as a plaything of the gods attests to his clear understanding of the intention of the original myth with its celebration of reciprocal desire. Although scholars may never be able to ascertain whether

Schubert identified with the Ganymede story as he and Goethe portrayed it, his interpretation of the ennobling power of the consummation of homoerotic desire would at least suggest a sympathy with the type of love depicted.

Table: Text Translation and Harmonic Analysis

Ganymed	Ganymede	Tonal Centres
Wie im Morgenglanze Du rings mich anglühst Frühling, Geliebter! Mit tausendfacher Liebeswonne Sich an mein Herze drängt Deiner ewigen Wärme Heilig Gefühl, unendliche Schöne!	How your glow envelops me in the morning radiance, Spring, my beloved! With love's thousandfold joy the hallowed sensation of your eternal warmth floods my heart, infinite beauty!	I V
Dass ich dich fassen möcht' In diesen Arm!	O that I might clasp you in my arms!	V-I
Ach, an deinem Busen Lieg' ich und schmachte, Und deine Blumen, dein Gras Drängen sich an mein Herz.	Ah, on your breast I lie languishing and your flowers, your grass press close to my heart.	V-I V/V
Du kühlst den brennenden Durst meines Busens,	You cool the burning thirst within my breast,	I/V

Lieblicher Morgenwind! Ruft d'rein die Nachtigall, Liebend nach mir aus dem Nebeltal.	sweet morning breeze, as the nightingale calls tenderly to me from the misty valley.	V-I V I-i
Ich komm', ich komme! Ach, wohin? Wohin?	I come, I come! But whither? Whither?	V F major:
Hinauf! Strebt's hinauf! Es schweben die Wolken Abwärts, Die Wolken Neigen sich der sehrenden Liebe. Mir! Mir! In eurem Schosse Aufwärts! Umfangend umfassen! Aufwärts an deinen Busen, Alliebender Vater!	Upwards! Strive upwards! The clouds drift down, yielding to yearning love, to me, to me! In your lap. Upwards, embracing and embraced! Upwards to your bosom, all-loving Father!	I V-I

²⁰ Translation: John Reed. *A Schubert Song Companion*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press), 245.

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Abstract

Schubert's Lied Ganymed D. 544 evokes the rapture of a young man about to embark on his first deeply loving, sensually and spiritually encompassing relationship. The myth of Ganymede has been seen as a symbol of male homoerotic love for millennia, inspiring countless representations in the visual arts, literature, and music. Scholars have read the myth in numerous ways: as a pantheistic celebration of Man's unity with Nature and, therefore, God; as an allegory representing sexual and mental submission; and as a validation of pederastic relationships. Indeed, many scholars believe that the myth was borne of necessity for Greek culture; the supreme god's participation in the common practice of pederasty could be seen as a divine sanction. In Goethe's poem Ganymed of 1774 and Schubert's Lied of 1817, the myth functions on both the intellectual and sensual levels, representing the ideal balance in ancient Greek pederastic relationships of love and tutelage. An analysis of both poetic images and musical content, this paper explores Goethe and Schubert's understanding of the original Greek myth with its theme of pederasty while composing artworks that resonate within the context of German Romanticism. Schubert's movement through the various rhythmic and melodic motives and ever-shifting tonalities serve as an allegory of the journey and transfiguration of the youth, from the shepherd enjoying the sumptuous pleasures of earthly morning to the embraced and embracing lover of a god.

Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis and the evolution of the serial compositional technique in Lithuania

Darius Kušinskas

The music of the twentieth century was marked by the search for new methods and techniques of composition. Undoubtedly, Arnold Schoenberg's dodecaphonic system stands out as one of the most significant inventions of the time. But other composers, such as Josef Hauer, were experimenting in the field of micro-elemental construction. In this article, the author surveys the emergence and development of serial technique in one European country – Lithuania. It is most remarkable that, before Schoenberg came up with his invention, Lithuanian artist and composer Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis (1875-1911) had been experimenting with serial technique between 1904 and 1909. Working on the fringes of the European cultural hub, Čiurlionis was on the brink of the most significant musical discovery of the twentieth century, but his aesthetic considerations pulled him in a different direction.

The three phases of the spread of compositional serial techniques in Lithuania in the twentieth century could be marked as follows:

- 1) Early twentieth century: the first experiments of the serial compositional technique (in the works written between 1904 and 1909 by M. K. Čiurlionis)

- 2) The 1960s: the clear turn from the aesthetic of post-romanticism to “contemporary music” and the mastering of serial technique (E. Balsys, V. Barkauskas, B. Kutavičius, O. Balakauskas)
- 3) The 1990s: the development of new methods of of serialism in the works of young composers (S. Dikčiūtė, A. Jasenka, A. Kučinskas).

The first examples of the usage of serial compositional technique are ascribed to Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis, the famous Lithuanian painter and composer, specifically his piano works of 1904-1909. His artistic self-expression did not fit within the frame of a single artistic media. According to Eero Tarasti, “it is possible that Čiurlionis has achieved something that is common between painting and music, which is not possible to express neither in painting nor in music alone.”¹ Having in mind that most artists attempted to achieve synthesis between music and painting, or music and poetry, Čiurlionis, who was able to unite music, painting, poetry and photography for realization of a single artistic idea, stands as a unique creator.

At first, Čiurlionis was interested in uncovering a unifying origin of all the artistic media. “The new” or “universal” language, so often referred to in his letters, later found artistic expression in his development of a unique serial technique incorporating the structural unification of all artistic media in his works. This demonstrates that Čiurlionis

¹ Eero Tarasti. "Mikalojus Konstantinas Ciurlionis and the Interrelationships of Arts". *Semionordica*, vols. 1-2, Odense, Imatra: Nordic Association for Semiotic Studies/International Semiotics Institute at Imatra, 1993: 125-145.

unconsciously integrated into his work the goal of creating a “perfect” artistic language, which became more intense in the collision of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and which was described in detail by Umberto Eco in his book “The Search for the Perfect Language (The Making of Europe)”.²

The search for a “new” language, which brought Čiurlionis to the discovery of the serial compositional technique, had began in 1896, while he was working on refining musical notation. Signs that were used by Čiurlionis until 1904 could be divided into three groups:

- 1) Signs to improve the writing of music
- 2) Signs functioning as symbols
- 3) Signs employed as monograms

Signs in the first group are unique and were not previously used by any other composer. The introduction of such signs into traditional notation shows that Čiurlionis felt the narrowness of traditional notation and its inadequacy in comparison to the imagined and textualized music of earlier eras. His development of such signs may be observed in several different cases. For instance, at the beginning of his career, Čiurlionis, notated the double-flat was written by in the following way³:

bb = b̄

² Umberto Eco. *The Search for the Perfect Language (The Making of Europe)*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1995.

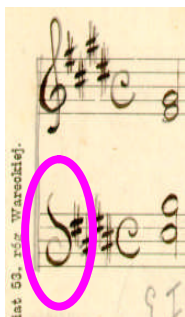
³ Double-flat of Čiurlionis found in manuscript Čm 37 , p. 19.

Later, in 1904–1905, the sign began to transform into the symbol of the planet Saturn used in encoded correspondence with his brother Povilas, who lived in the United States. This sign no longer meant double-flat but the letter *u* in the encoded correspondence⁴:

bb = b̄ → ſ = u

In such a way, an element of musical writing became an element of language writing via the intermediary plane of graphic expression⁵.

The second group of signs, those that function as symbols, expand the meaning of a usual musical sign and reflect the world in a transformative way. One example is the transformed bass clef:



1896



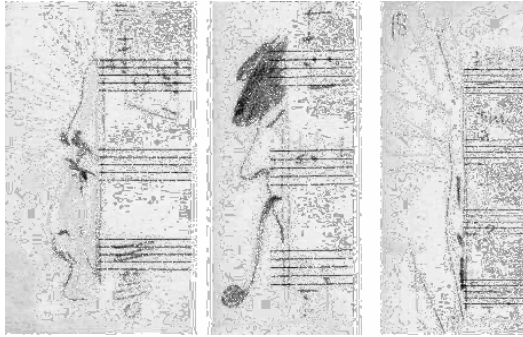
1896



1908

⁴ Transformation of double-flat sign into the symbol of Saturn.

⁵ Darius Kučinskas. *M. K. Čiurlionio kūriniai fortepijonui: rankraščiai ir redakcijos* [Piano works of M. K. Čiurlionis: manuscripts and editions]. Vilnius: Lietuvos muzikos akademija, 1999: 10.



The third group of signs are employed by the composer as monograms. It is obvious that Čiurlionis was well acquainted with analogous samples of encoded messages in works of composers such as J. S. Bach and Robert Schumann. Čiurlionis was consciously trying to hide proof of his authorship in his art works. Čiurlionis integrated his initials into “Allegro” of his *Sonata No. 4* (Sonata of the Summer) and in the “Finale” of *Sonata No. 5* (Sonata of the Sea). Such samples are found in his musical manuscripts as well. For instance, the following example that demonstrates his efforts to transform the natural sign into the letter *K*, (the first letter of his name, Konstantinas) found in his notebook from 1895⁶:



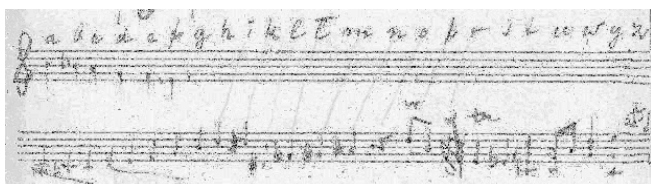
The letter *K* was also used by Čiurlionis without any modifications as a figured accolade.⁷ It remains to be

⁶ Manuscript Čm 38, p. 32.

⁷ Manuscript Čm 17, p. 00677.

determined why he did not use more these discoveries in his compositions.

The most striking example of a monogram symbol appears in his composition of music that is in accordance with a previously created "musical alphabet". This musical alphabet and a musical fragment written in accordance with this alphabet are contained in different books of his manuscripts. His use of a musical alphabet as a compositional structure is why these three fragments seem to be an unprecedented case in the context of music of the nascent twentieth century. Every measure is of a different metre (although not indicated in these fragments), the melody is atonal and what remains of the left hand part is left is totally unpredictable⁸:



However, if one has access to his musical alphabet it is not at all difficult to read Čiurlionis monogram in

⁸ Manuscripts Čm 21, p. 260 and Čm 6, p. 00411.

this fragment: *Mikołaj Konstanty Czurlanis*⁹. Čiurlionis's placement of lines between measures becomes also clear: these lines divide words. However, musical result still did not satisfy the author as there were no more analogous samples observed in Čiurlionis' manuscripts.



M i k o ł a j K o n s t a n t y C z u r l a n i s

In the manuscripts from 1904-1906, there exist two cycles of variations, *Sefaa Esec* and *Besaca*, that are based upon the series of 7 to 9 notes. The principle governing the organisation of the musical material in these works is nearly identical to that employed in Čiurlionis's monogram. These cycles, however, are much more developed and complete from artistic point of view. Prof. V. Landsbergis supposes that the titles were derived from the names of Čiurlionis's colleagues, including only the letters that have no equivalents in notes (i.e. A, B, C, etc.). Thus, SEFAA ESEC is a musical transcription of the name Stefania Leskiewicz (StEFAniA lESkiEWiCz) and BESACAS of Boleslaw Czarkowski (BoLESIAw CzArkowSki)¹⁰:

⁹ Darius Kučinskas. "M. K. Čiurlionio muzikinis alfabetas" [The Musical Alphabet of M. K. Čiurlionis]. *Kultūros barai*, Nr. 3. 1992: 75.

¹⁰ Vytautas Landsbergis. *Vainikas Čiurlioniui* [The Wreath for Čiurlionis]. Vilnius: Vaga, 1980: 176.

B	E	Es	A	C	A	Es
E	B	A	Es	Ges	Es	A
Es	A	Gis	D	F	D	Gis
A	Es	D	Gis	H	Gis	D
C	Ges	F	H	D	H	F
A	Es	D	Gis	H	Gis	D
Es	A	As	D	F	D	Gis

This square is created by repeating the series in a rotating manner beginning each time with the next pitch in the series. The variation ends with the restatement of the series starting with its final pitch.

Beside a desire to create a universal alphabet of arts, as well as the way of composing according to the literal themes, Lithuanian folk music was among the most important contributions to the origins of Čiurlionis' serial technique. Folk music modes of most countries are comprised of not more than 5 to 7 degrees, while rhythmic values usually do not exceed four different length classes – the shortest, short, long and the longest¹¹. This is tightly connected to basic human psychology. To transfer information humans naturally use rather limited codifying systems which include no more than 5 to 9 categories, which is referred to as “the magic Miller’s number” (7 plus/minus 2) or operational unit¹². Čiurlionis’s series

¹¹ Rytis Ambrazevičius. *Etninės muzikos notacija ir transkripcija* [Notation and transcription of Ethnic music]. Vilnius: Lietuvos muzikos akademija, 1997: 7.

¹² George Miller. „The magical number seven plus or minus two: Some limits on our capacity for processing information“. *Psychological Review* 63, 1956, p. 81–97.

are also built from 7 and 9 pitches, not exceeding the previously parameters. Thus, the serial techniques employed by Čiurlionis function within the natural axioms of human perception and categorization. These axioms – the natural declaration of a harmonious relationship between the subject (human) and object (nature) – have their most genuine expression in various folk traditions. Therefore, subconsciously sensing the boundaries of human perception, Čiurlionis did not overstep them.

The ostinato principle that is characteristic of Lithuanian folk music is also proper to Čiurlionis' oeuvre. The constant repetition of a rhythmic formula and the employment of a stable melodic compound evidently brought about the invention of compositional serial techniques. On the other side, Čiurlionis made himself master polyphonic composition techniques. His series might be associated with the principle of *cantus firmus*. For instance, the theme of variations *Sefaa Esec* migrates from one part to another, from one voice to another in the manner of *cantus firmus*.

Despite the fact that Čiurlionis did not develop a complete system of serial composition, his works written between 1904-1909 are among the first examples of the use of serial techniques in composition in the history of music. After Čiurlionis' death, serial music was long forgotten in Lithuania, with composers working in different musical styles. For instance, Jeronimas Kačinskas (who now lives in the USA and is the only surviving pupil of Alois Hába) was developing the microtonal system, while Vytautas Bacevičius (who died in New York in 1970) was writing expressionist special music.

The serial compositional technique was used in Lithuania again only in the mid-1960s, during the so-called period of political-détente in the former USSR. The composers Eduardas Balsys, Vytautas Barkauskas, Bronius Kutavičius, and Osvaldas Balakauskas took active part in applying and the “new” technique. Eduardas Balsys was one of the first among this new generation of Lithuanian composers to do so, stating the following:

Seeking the clear expression of my thought I usually drive through the rules. I base upon the principles of free dodecaphony. Why should I keep the broken series? It should derive from the emotional need.¹³

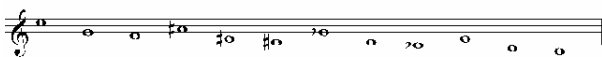
A Romantic aesthetic is evident in this quotation, an aesthetic that both Čiurlionis and Balsys adhered to while composing music using serial techniques. Even in his opera “Kelionė į Tilžę” [*A Journey to Tilsit*] (1980) he did not renounce these principles, the opera remains more expressionist rather than dodecaphonic one.

Osvaldas Balakauskas was another Lithuanian composer to begin composing using serial techniques around 1965. He later said: “I began to write according to dodecaphonic method without hearing any music by Schönberg or his pupils or any more

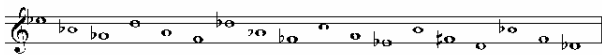
¹³ Jūrātė Vyliūtė. “Mano siela! Ar išausi tu svarbiausią mintį?” [“My soul! You are the one to develop the main idea”]. *Muzika* 2 (Vilnius), 1980: 42-50.

modern music”¹⁴. In the 1960s the only source Balakausdas’s could obtain that contained information on the dodecaphonic compositional technique (and the music composed using it) was the book *The Classics of Dodecaphony* by Polish musicologist Boguslaw Schäffer. However, this fact did not prevent him from creating an original system, which he presented in his study of 1997 *Dodekatonika*. Nearly all works by Balakauskas are based upon the three following symmetrical series:

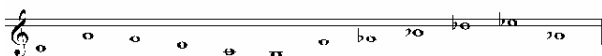
I



II



III



The first series consists of four even groups of notes made of pure fourth and major second intervals that are transposed into minor third. As distinct from the similar isomorphic series of Webern, the structural periodicity of those by Balakauskas is

¹⁴ Rūta Gaidamavičiūtė. “Už horizonto ir toliau” [“Beyond the horizon and further”. An interview with O. Balakauskas]. *Pergalė* (Vilnius) Nr. 7, 1986: 152.

‘direct’ one, that is, totally precise. The composer himself calls this series ‘a never-ending diatonic row’. The second series is formed from a minor sixth chord that is transposed twelve times by descending semitones. The characteristic feature of the third series is the so-called “syndrome of palindrome” – its spectacular symmetry.

The most important element of Balakauskas’s compositional technique is that he treats the serial method not as just a mere row of tones, but also as an idea and an order of transposition. According to that, how he names the element of the series, the latter could be brought into the following groups:¹⁵

- 1) Element of the series is one tone
- 2) A three-sound structure
- 3) A complex of sonorities
- 4) Element of the series becomes a stylistically identified musical fragment (a ‘specimen’)
- 5) Element of the series is a chosen mode
- 6) Element of the series becomes the rhythmic formula.¹⁶

For the element of the series, Balakauskas chooses the bigger and steady compound of sounds or the stable musical section. He also chooses both the theme and the thematic unit. Therefore, the serial

¹⁵ Gražina Daunoravičienė. “Kompozicinės technikos algoritmai: Antroji simfonija ir *Dada concerto*”. [“The algorithms of compositional technique: the Second symphony and *Dada concerto*”]. *Osvaldas Balakauskas: muzika ir mintys* [Osvaldas Balakauskas: music and ideas] (collected by Rūta Gaidamavičiūtė). Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2000, p.71-122. P. 79.

¹⁶ Ibid. P. 80.

element and the thematic unit, the structure of the entire series and that of the theme, and the disposition of the entire work or the series of its movement, in a particular composition by Balakauskas, are entirely identical¹⁷.

One of the most significant features of Balakauskas's serial compositional technique is his use of diatonic and rhythmic ostinato systems. An obvious connection may once more be made to Lithuanian folk music and the attempts towards serialism by Čiurlionis. It may also be that while using the serial technique, which is cosmopolitan in principle, Lithuanian composers continued to express the individuality of their nation's musical heritage. The influence of the latter might be traced by the means of in-depth relations (in this case, the diatonic and ostinato principle), although, sometimes this musical heritage is featured openly. One example is the oeuvre of Bronius Kutavičius, in particular his oratorio *The last Pagan Mass*.

The last decade of the twentieth century marks a certain renaissance of serial principles in Lithuania. The youngest generation of Lithuanian composers have expressed great interest in the avant-garde music of Western Europe. This situation was partially determined by political changes of the state (such as the collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent free flow of information) and was helped by the fact that the composer Osvaldas Balakauskas,

¹⁷ Rūta Mielkutė. "Osvaldo Balakausko serijinė technika ir harmonijos sistema". ["The serial technique and harmonic system of Osvaldas Balakauskas"]. *Osvaldas Balakauskas: muzika ir mintys* [Osvaldas Balakauskas: music and ideas] (collected by Rūta Gaidamavičiūtė). Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2000, p. 19-56. P. 42.

one of the most consistent representatives of the serial music in Lithuania, started teaching at the Lithuanian Music Academy. Nevertheless, the re-emergence of serialism to the compositional practise of the youngest composers was affected by the ever-changing avant-garde and post-modern concepts. Having given up the ideal of the continuous advancement of art, typical to modernism, they started to regard history and geography more freely, resulting in post-modern compositions often associated with “cocktails” of different eras and styles.¹⁸ For instance, the so-called strict avant-garde serialism of Snieguolė Dikčiūtė in its sonorous realisation is far from any allusions to the sound of most supposed classical serial compositions. Her “Mystery of Seven Bridges” (7 tiltų misterija) for choir, brass band, two organs and chamber orchestra (1991) was written employing a total serial technique, which was not frequently encountered in Lithuanian music. Another characteristic example of this post-modern serialism is “Ancient Songs” by Antanas Jansenka, written for carillon or electronic bells, which may be regarded as a “catalogue” of interactions between determinateness and non-determinateness. In this composition, not only are different sound parameters applied to the serial principle, but also to the degrees of precision and relativity of notation. As a last example, “Popludus” by Antanas Kučinskas may be seen as a hybrid of “mass” and “elite” music

¹⁸ Antanas Kučinskas. “Serial principle in the creation of the younger generation of Lithuanian composers”. *Composing Principles: Continuity and Innovation in Contemporary Music*. (Abstracts of the Third International Conference). Vilnius: Lietuvos kompozitorių sąjunga, 2002, p. 19-27. P . 21.

(the former represented by thematic material taken from a pop ballad and the latter represented by the composer's use of serial technique). A period theme employed in this composition, taken from pop music, is treated as a series and is transformed by way of rotation.

What inferences may be drawn from this discussion of the history of serialism in Lithuania? First of all, the invention and evolution of serial techniques in Lithuania were disconnected from similar processes that took place in Western Europe. This was partially due to the political situation of Lithuania, which was an independent state for only about three decades in last century. Another significant feature of the use of the serial compositional techniques in Lithuania is a clear national touch. The latter reveals itself through an inner as well as an openly declared relationship with the folk music of the region, especially the diatonic and ostinato principals that are most typical of Lithuanian folk music.

The earliest experiments of Čiurlionis in the field of serial compositional technique took place at the same time as the first in Europe. However, they remained unknown and thus undeveloped or absorbed by other composers. The next works by Lithuanian composers to use serial techniques appeared only in the mid-1960s, during the period of the so-called political *détente* in the former Soviet Union. Composer Osvaldas Balakauskas, who developed an individual compositional technique,

made the greatest impact in the field. Finally, the serialism became the dominant compositional technique in the late twentieth-century Lithuania. An especially significant feature of this post-modern serialism is the combination of different and often opposing compositional techniques. Consequently, such compositions usually remind the listener of hybrids of various epochs and styles.

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Abstract

This article discusses the history of research and development of serial compositional techniques in Lithuania. Musical experiments and discoveries of Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis (1875-1911) at the beginning of the twentieth century are very similar to the serial compositional technique produced later by composers of the Second Viennese School. However a new compositional technique was accepted by Lithuanian composers only in the 1960s when the only obtainable source of information on the dodecaphonic compositional technique reached Lithuania – the book *The Classics of Dodecaphonic* by Polish musicologist Bogusław Schäffer. The new methods of the development of the serial technique are found in Lithuania during the late twentieth century, where the serial technique became the dominant method of composition. An especially significant feature is the symbiosis of the different and often opposing compositional techniques. As such, compositions usually resemble hybrids of various epochs and styles.

Biographies

Ryan Raul Banagale received his master's degree in music history in June of 2004 from the University of Washington. His master's thesis examines Asian representation in the music of George Gershwin. Mr. Banagale's primary area of research is American musical theatre, with particular interest in the way in which these shows represent the people of America. Other interests include ethnomusicologically minded composers, the reconstruction of "lost" musicals, and the music of Ben Folds.

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Darius Kučinskas began studies at the Lithuanian Academy of Music in Vilnius before being conscripted into the Soviet Army in 1987. After two years service, he returned to his studies and graduated from the Academy in 1993. He was awarded a Master of Music in piano and pedagogy in 1996 and a Ph.D. in 1998 after completing his dissertation entitled, "Text of M. K. Čiurlionis' Piano Music (aspect of genesis)." Dr. Kučinskas has worked as a research associate at the National M. K. Čiurlionis in Kaunas, Lithuania, as well as being an editor and music engraver (with CodaFinale) at Jonas Petronis Publishing House. Currently, he is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Audiovisual Art Technologies at the Kaunas University of Technology.

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