Abstract

Contemporary musicological analysis of the musical languages and aesthetics of post-Soviet states has largely avoided the effect of independence, political and social integration into the EU, and the unanticipated preponderance of sonic information and exchange on composers working and living in the Baltic States. The diffusion of composers and musicians from the Baltic States in the 1990s and 2000s, the lack of a focal point of artistic contention and backlash after the collapse of the Soviet Union, as well as a social and intellectual realignment toward the EU and Western Europe have all distinctly affected Baltic nations' musical identities. This research examines the development of Estonian music over the period of twenty years, 1991-2011; initially, by comparing compositional processes, musical motives, scoring, harmony, and orchestration techniques of the post-Soviet to the Soviet eras; further, by defining aspects of the native Estonian musical identity as relevant to modern classical music and analysing its integration into concert music; next, by detailing the political effects of such integration, if any, during the Soviet period and their continued relevance since independence; the so-called exodus of Estonian composers into Scandinavia and further afield, the arrival of foreign composers; finally, the social effects of internationalism and the extent of Estonian composers' and audiences' focus on distinctly national versus international traditions within the realm of concert music.

Twenty Years of Independence

Modern Estonian Music, EU Integration, and Effects on Identity

Eugene Birman D.Phil, Music Composition
Christ Church Trinity Term, 2015

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1. Introduction

The truth was always whispered in Estonia - the words of Estonian composer and ethnographer Veljo Tormis, uttered in an interview conducted less than two years after the nation's re-independence[1], echo a reality endemic for more than just the forty-seven years of Soviet occupation. In 1993, the Soviet military had yet to leave the country.[2] They were a lasting, vivid manifestation of the memory of Estonia's forced integration into the Soviet Union after World War II, yet the first moments of re-independence allowed for a reappraisal – at least in the public sphere, if not musically – of what Estonian culture had become. Even before Estonia was caught in the yoke of the geopolitical moves of post-World War II Soviet Union, the notion of culture as vibrant yet somehow reserved or hidden – perhaps, more aptly characterized as concealed – was well apparent. In a document of limitless significance for this introduction, a speech dated 1923 to the Folklore Society in London, Estonian folklorist Oskar Kallas compared the Estonian spirit by way of a folk-song: "[m]y heart grieves, my eyes weep, my tongue singeth."[3] Indeed, before one even begins to consider the Singing Revolution as somehow indicative of the importance of music and, in turn, a bellwether for what Estonian music really is, there is a rich precedent which has unjustly received far less attention from both musicologists and sociologists. That Estonian music has, not just for decades, but for centuries, served as an insurance for Estonian culture and identity, has undoubtedly affected Estonian classical music as an aesthetic in the macro sphere, and individual decisions, in the micro sphere. After all, Veljo Tormis' quotation may be, of course, taken to stand for the entirety of the Estonian musical aesthetic, or at least for his. In fact, Tormis is referring to measures 16-29 of his 1982 choral composition, *Mõtisklusi Leniniga* [Reflections on Lenin], where the "dynamic level has come down from

[1] From a personal interview with the composer on 6 Nov. 1993, cited from Mimi S. Daitz, "Reflections on "Reflections": The Music and the Cultural/Political Context of Two Choral Works by Veljo Tormis," *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 79, No. 1 (Spring, 1995): 122.
[2] This would happen only in 1994. For a fascinating perspective into the remnants of the Soviet military presence on the cultural sphere in Estonia, see Jauhiainen (1997).
[3] Kallas, Oskar Th, "Estonian Folklore," *Folklore,* Vol. 34, No. 2 (Jun. 30, 1923): 101.

fortissimo…to subito piano[4]" as a cynical setting of the words, *upon completely voluntary consent*, referring to Estonia's integration into the Soviet Union.[5]

1.1 Definition of terminology: "Estonian composer"

It would be beyond the scope of this dissertation to ruminate upon what the definition of Estonia is, particularly in its historical context.[6] Yet, perhaps due to the close relationship between music and national identity in Estonia, some understanding of what might define an Estonian composer is essential to the subsequent analysis of what might define Estonian music itself. A particularly superficial answer might come from the Estonian Music Information Centre, which presents a list of Estonian composers, astonishingly well balanced between men and women, with the oldest and first being Johannes Kappel (1855-1907). Born in Rapla, Estonia, Kappel, from age seventeen and onward, was a resident of Saint Petersburg, Russia.[7] Conspicuous by his absence is a pastor "of German origin" by the name of Hoerschelmann, who was the "first to write airs to Estonian words." Hoerschelmann's books of religious music, published in 1854, a year before Kappel's birth, constitute the first printed example of music in Estonia.[8] Second, according to an article in the *Musical Times* by Graham Carritt, was a parish vicar by the name of Jansen, whose legacy consists primarily of choral music, but also the first Estonian newspaper, still active, by the name of *Postimees* [The Postman], and the society of *Vanemuine* in Tartu, Estonia's intellectual capital.[9] Perhaps of greater significance for my research is Jansen's involvement in founding the "first national festival of song in Tartu in 1869" which Carritt remarks "had a great influence in raising the

[4] Daitz, "Reflections on "Reflections"," 122.
[5] Ibid, 121-22.
[6] Toivo Miljan provides insight on this topic in *Historical Dictionary of Estonia* (Oxford: Scarecrow Press, 2004).
[7] At that time, both Tallinn and St Petersburg were under the territory of the vast Russian Empire. With Tallinn being considerably smaller and less important in the context of musical culture in Imperial Russia (it was only during the Soviet period that Tallinn truly became an urban center), the vast majority of Estonian composers and musicians traveled to St Petersburg for studies and employment.
[8] Graham Carritt, "Estonian Music," *The Musical Times*, Vol. 76, No. 1109 (Jul., 1935): 602
[9] Ibid. In addition, the *Vanemuine* is still active today under the auspices of the *Vanemuine Theater* in Tartu, Estonia, which organizes concerts, theatre performances, and other social events much like it did over a century ago.

national spirit of the people before the Estonians gained their independence."[10] Despite the aforementioned individuals' seemingly paramount importance for Estonian music, they are not listed on the Estonian Music Information Centre's (EMIC) website. In Kappel's biography, written by EMIC, he is characterized as "the very first Estonian professional musician – and author of many beloved choral songs;"[11] hence, EMIC presupposes a degree of professional education in its own definition.

Given that neither Kappel, nor many others of his time such as Schelmann and Tomson, spent the majority of their professional lives in Estonia proper, it is interesting to examine the remainder of the list[12], which includes composers of Estonian origin born abroad, native-born Estonians living abroad as well as domestically, and even a composer of Ukranian birth and ethnicity living in Estonia. Nevertheless, a comparison of the EMIC list with that of the Estonian Composers Union, a kindred though independent organization, presents a marked distinction. The Estonian Composers Union list distinguishes itself namely in the amount of foreign composer members, the majority of them born in the 1970s or 1980s, having moved to Estonia only in the past ten years.[13] The diversity and lack of concordance in the definition of "Estonian composer" – even between two organizations with complementary objectives – is in no small part due to Estonia's location and its political history. As Oskar Kallas describes in his 1923 speech to the Folklore Society,

> we belonged…to Denmark, Poland, Sweden, or Russia, but in fact during the last few centuries we were a German aristocratic republic with an Estonian population under Russian rule.[14]

Kallas prefaces this short yet illuminating overview of Estonian history with the caveat that Estonians'

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[10] Ibid. It is also worth noting the size of Estonian song festivals even in their early stages. Carritt writes that there were eight hundred performers in the first festival, and already three thousand two hundred in the fourth, organized in 1891.

[11] "Estonian Composers: Johannes Kappel," EMIC, last modified 2011, http://www.emic.ee/?sisu=heliloojad&mid=58&id=122&lang=eng&action=view&method=biograafia.

[12] In its entirety, found here: http://www.emic.ee/estonian-composers

[13] In its entirety, found here: http://www.helilooja.ee/liikmed/.

[14] Kallas, "Estonian Folklore," 104.

> civilization or lack of civilization was approximately the same level as that attained by the peoples living around us…In the thirteenth century, however, the German knights fell upon our country and with them began our decline.[15]

The relationship to occupying powers described by Kallas in the above quotation is indicative of a prevailing mind-set, not only in Estonia, but also in neighbouring Latvia and Lithuania too. In an article on minority demographics in the Baltic states after re-independence, Mežs, Bunkśe, and Rasa state that "[e]thnic problems in the Baltic States are a heritage of the Soviet Union" only. Mežs et al go on to say that prior to annexation, minorities were "not sufficient to be the cause of major internal political problems," with Estonia's minority population pre-occupation "about one-tenth of the [total] population."[16] The notion that foreign or non-local populations are in some way a hindrance to the development of Estonian national identity has its counterpart in Estonian music as well, much of which concerns itself with the preservation of local folk music by those whose ethnicity ties them to the Estonian nation. Hence, Veljo Tormis' "cycle of six further cycles," *Forgotten Peoples*, memorializes ethnic groups in danger of dying out like the Livonians, the Vepses, the Karelians, and others whose linguistic and ethnic ties ally them with the Estonian population.[17] As Martin Anderson admits with concise honesty, part of the reason for the inclusion of the Livonians, for example, is the fact that they have been "subsumed by Latvian culture."[18] Such self-protective instincts are prevalent in Estonian culture, undoubtedly a product of Russification during the Soviet Union but also of the precarious reality of the populations themselves. Fewer than a million described themselves as ethnic Estonians in the 1989 census – and far fewer would do so today, due to emigration after the fall of the Soviet Union.[19] Through

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[15] Ibid, 103.

[16] Ilmárs Mežs, Edmunds Bunkśe, and Kaspars Rasa, "The Ethno-Demographic Status of the Baltic States," *GeoJournal*, Vol. 33, No. 1, Baltic Peoples, Baltic Culture and Europe (May 1994): 11

[17] Martin Anderson and Veljo Tormis, "'We Should Know Who We Are': Veljo Tormis in Conversation," *Tempo*, New Series, No. 211 (Jan., 2000): 27

[18] Ibid.

[19] For a better overview of the demographic situation in Estonia, see Mežs et al, *The Ethno-Demographic Status of the Baltic States* as well as the website of Statistics Estonia: http://www.stat.ee/sdb-update?db_update_id=14101

this lens, the immense national participation in song festivals[20] and interest in folklore and Estonian music culture is completely logical as a function of that preservation. The role of foreign composers in Estonia, while acknowledged by the Estonian Composers Union and to a much lesser extent by the Estonian Music Information Centre, is tangential to this preservation, and only through nationalist, linguistic, or cultural affinities. One can conclude that the title of Estonian composer is reserved exclusively for an ethnic Estonian (or, perhaps, one who is of a closely related minority group) or that composer who considers the role of his music as somehow also preserving Estonian culture identity, even if the composer's background is not culturally or ethnically Estonian. Such a narrow definition nevertheless reflects the unique reality of the role of music in Estonia as more than simply an abstract medium of art, but far beyond that, as an innate function of national identity.

1.2 Definition of terminology: "Estonian Music"

1.2.1 Introductory Remarks

A conclusive definition of Estonian music is not nearly so facile, and my research concerns itself, firstly, with an analysis of what Estonian music has become. I approach this question not within a stylistic or motivic framework, nor even in terms of subject matter, but in its most basic, crystalline form. Of course, for the majority of the Western music world, Estonia is defined by the "holy minimalist" aesthetic of Arvo Pärt, whose "unfaltering rise to prominence, marked by the release of numerous CDs…international tours" and far more, as characterized by David Clarke in *The Musical Times*, has also had an outsize effect on Estonian music as a whole.[21] As I will discuss in greater detail in Sections 3, 5 and 6, this has not led to any marked impetus by young composers to follow in Pärt's aesthetic footsteps: quite the opposite. One would be hard-pressed to find

[20] Johnston and Snow's fascinating depiction of the mobilization of Estonian culture, particularly through the song festivals, is outlined in *Subcultures and the Emergence of the Estonian Nationalist Opposition 1945-1990*. Johnston and Snow state that during the unraveling of the Soviet Union, "over 20% of the population gathered at the Estonian Song Festival, a traditional affirmation of national consciousness." In his interview with Martin Anderson, Tormis claims that attendance has been as high as 300,000 people or roughly one-third of the population, and the number has surely risen since. (Anderson and Tormis, 26).

[21] David Clarke and Arvo Pärt, "Parting Glances: David Clarke Reappraises the Music and the Aesthetics of Arvo Pärt," *The Musical Times*, Vol. 134, No. 1810 (Dec., 1993): 680

today any young composer in Estonia who consciously treads the path of holy minimalist music. On the contrary, it has led to Estonian composers, not simply of younger generations but concurrent with Pärt's, defining themselves in apposition to the nation's most famous cultural export.

In what terms can Estonian music today be defined, if not by its *tintinnabuli* and religious aura? Perhaps the central question of this research, or at least its prerequisite, can be solved with such expedience as to render its entire discussion moot. Compare for example the above characterization of Pärt's music by David Clarke with a more recent article, written ten years on, by Martin Anderson describing Estonian Music Days in 2003, the nation's preeminent festival for new music:

> [This piece] could only be by an Estonian: archaizing string lines, modal melodic lines bent into jazzy rhythms, chugging minimalist patterns driving the music on.[22]

Compare, once again, with the characterization of an analogous festival held in 1935: Graham Carritt described Estonian music simply as

> made of unison and octaves, and often the music ends on a bare chord without the third. Considerable use is made of imitation, but…much more straightforward than in [British] madrigals; the longer phrases and greater subtleties of rhythm would not be difficult for Estonians to appreciate in singing, but such features are certainly not characteristic of their own emphatic style…Whether this actually represents the Estonian spirit, it is difficult to say, because even now it cannot be easy for the Estonian composer to rid himself entirely of outside influences.[23]

Given Carritt's candour, and especially the final admission that whether his impressions actually constitute a national Estonian style or simply an Estonian reaction to greater musical trends in Europe, the process of defining Estonian music becomes far more nuanced and, arguably, far more interesting.

In this case, reappraisal of a figure who seems to loom over this discussion in earnest, Veljo Tormis, is necessary not only because he acts as a sort of intermediary between the world of Estonian folk song and concert music, but because his ethnographic contributions to the understanding of Estonian

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[22] Anderson, "Estonian Music Days.,"*Tempo*, Vol. 57, No. 226 (Oct., 2003): 66

[23] Carritt, "Estonian Music," 603

music suggest something far more abstract and pervasive than any quick assessment after a concert series could ever produce. Admittedly, Tormis was not the first to document and systematize folk music in Estonia. The achievements of Jansen, for example, in organizing the first Estonian song festivals, along with Kunilaid, Tomson, Kappel, the female composer Miina Härma, and Türnpu all contributed to assembling the body of Estonian folk music as a notable cultural monument. That this occurred relatively recently is vital. As Kallas explains in his speech to the Folklore Society,

> [t]he progress of the Teutonic peoples towards civilization was more rapid than ours, with the result that they have forgotten the greatest part of this heritage of their ancestors. Historic reasons prevented us from keeping pace with them; we preserved much longer not only our heritage…but also the material borrowed from our Teutonic neighbours.[24]

Estonian folklore and folk traditions are, hence, more closely relevant and related to modern Estonian culture, if one can call it that. In return, they are more present in the minds of Estonian composers, such as Tormis, but not only him. As mentioned before, the inclusion and integration of Estonia's folk heritage is not simply for thematic or programmatic purposes but for

> [s]elf-apprehension and self-cognition…for maintaining balance and viability. We should know who we are and where our roots lie. Then it is easier to set up goals for the future.[25]

What Tormis terms *regilaul*, or runo-song primitivism, can more appropriately and universally stand for the greater unwritten musical tradition in general from which the Estonian musical aesthetic arises, whether composers wish to admit it, or not.

> While Tormis' music itself can be summarized aesthetically as imitation, parallel chords in gradual, step-by-step motion, rhythmic variations with respect to the rhythm of the text, and monotonous repetitions around certain motifs,[26]

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[24] Kallas, "Estonian Folklore," 116.

[25] Anderson and Tormis, "'We Should Know Who We Are'," 26

[26] Ibid, 24, but excerpted from Tallinn: Perioodika, 1980, p. 148-49, as originally cited in the text.

I would like, first, to present a more universal characterization of the basis for Tormis' style, and what it represents. Due to the relatively late import of Christianity to the nation, Estonia's folk music rarely deals with religious topics. As Kallas comically relates from a conversation he once had with a Setu[27]:

> The priests and we are as the pigs and the sheep, the priests grunt and we bleat, we cannot understand each other.[28]

It is because of such spiritual isolation that Kallas believes that Estonians "preserved the most wonderful old folk songs."[29] The songs themselves deal with "manifestations and happenings of peasant-life, and the revelations of the human heart."[30] Particular to the Setus are dirges, which "vary according to the manner of death, age, occupation, status or family of the deceased, varying also in meter." [31] Tormis characterizes the songs themselves as unified in "melody…words…[and] performance" and indeed, a quantitative review of Estonian folk song revealed that "the tonal structure of these songs is not similar to that of the Western traditional music," Most fascinatingly, Sundberg noted that "it seems unclear how Estonian singers can perform Estonian lyrics in songs composed in the Western classical tradition."[32] Can one then conclude that the peculiarity of Estonian music is somehow due to the linguistic, isolationist facets of the ethnicity itself? In that case, such a hasty conclusion disregards the effects of instrumental music, or even why such a genre should exist in the first place.[33]

1.2.2 Genesis of the Estonian Musical Aesthetic

Part of the difficulty of isolating the kernel of true Estonian music in earlier works is its dependence on the Russian tradition pre-Soviet occupation, and various other factors during the Soviet era to be discussed below. As Carritt

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[27] A separate ethnic group in southeastern Estonia, speaking its own dialect (or, arguably language), approximately totaling 10,000 people worldwide.

[28] Kallas, "Estonian Folklore," 106.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid, 111.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Johan Sundberg, "Review of "The Temporal Structure of Estonian Runic Music" by Jaan Ross & Ilse Lehiste," *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Fall 2004): 161.

[33] It is nevertheless interesting to note that the first composers considered to be Estonian, at least by historical standards and not by the EMIC or Estonian Composers Union lists, all wrote choral music or music for the church organ, primarily in St Petersburg. Symphony and instrumental music, in general, developed later – and differently.

writes, with regard to Estonian instrumental and choir music in the first part of the Twentieth century, "[i]t has not been easy for Estonians to free themselves from the Russian influence." [34] The first generation of Estonian concert composers were all educated in St Petersburg, and many spent the majority of their lives there, for example, Johannes Kappel.[35] As Carritt goes on to describe, the next generation of Estonian composers were educated in Germany, with one, Rudolf Tobias, the author of Estonia's first "great religious work" (and probably the last until Arvo Pärt turned to holy minimalism), eventually replacing Humperdinck in his post in Berlin.[36] Carritt points out Mart Saar, a generation further removed from the aforementioned composers, as perhaps the first to develop something uniquely Estonian in his choral music, meaning that the influence of German and Russian pedagogy had not been foremost in his music. Or, in the context of the Sundberg review described in the previous paragraph, he may have been the first not to try to adapt Western European classical methods to Estonian words and folk melodies. This nevertheless conveniently circumvents the nagging question of the relationship between folk music and concert music when words are not involved, if there, indeed, is one. For if Estonian choral music is inherently indebted to its folk antecedent, culturally and in practice, as well, then it seems that, even during Estonia's independence, there had been no occasion for a composer, professional or otherwise, to compose a work of similar national aesthetic distinction.

1.2.3 Eduard Tubin in the Context of Defining Estonian Music

In the music of Eduard Tubin, frequently characterized as Estonia's foremost symphonic composer[37], there is a far more conscious attempt to render Estonian folk song melodies in neo-Romantic terms. He has been compared to Prokofiev as a result, "one of the most potent influences on his style," according

[34] Carritt, "Estonian Music," 602.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] And, indeed, Tubin completed ten symphonies in addition to myriad other works for the symphony orchestra and copious works for the stage as well, all of which required significant orchestral forces.

to Martin Anderson.[38] However, the singular position of Tubin in Estonian musical history lends the comparison more aptly to Jean Sibelius in Finland, with which Estonia shares considerable cultural and nationalist affinity. Sibelius' status as the symphonist of Finland and Tubin's as that of Estonia, despite the imbalance of their international significance[39], is also borne out in the subject matter of Tubin's music. The bulk of Tubin's opus is comprised of war requiems, an unfinished opera on the subject of an Estonian lake, a Sinfonietta on "Estonian Motifs," a suite on "Estonian Dances," even an incongruous concerto for balalaika, an instrument one may find in an Estonian home on no occasion.[40] But one great distinction between Sibelius and Tubin is that Tubin spent the majority of his life as a *väliseestlane,* meaning an Estonian living abroad, a term that itself carries significant cultural weight. Despite having a musicological reputation in Estonia analogous to that of Sibelius in Finland, "[p]erformances of Eduard Tubin's music happen far less often – even in Estonia – than his status…would suggest."[41] Why this may be so is addressed in Section 2 through analysis of Tubin's *Fifth Symphony*. However, I claim already that Tubin's method, whether it is affected by his emigration to Sweden during the occupation of Estonia in World War II or not, is inherently different. Instead, it is comparable once again to Sundberg's description of the compromise of setting Estonian words in the Western classical tradition. Ironically, one must re-examine the iconic role of Arvo Pärt in Estonian music, both for domestic and foreign audiences, to see a comprehensive ideological shift that also acts to unify the previously ideologically disparate strands of choral and instrumental concert music.

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[38] Martin Anderson. "Tallinn: First International Tubin Festival," *Tempo*, New Series, No. 218, Swiss Music Issue (Oct., 2001): 42.

[39] While the musical outputs of Tubin and Sibelius are comparable, their respective rate of appearances on the catalogs of major CD labels and programs of professional orchestras could not be more different. Despite renewed interest in Tubin's work post-1991, the total amount of commercially released CDs of Tubin's music, according to the Eduard Tubin society, is roughly equal to that of Sibelius releases just over the period of 2012-2014.

[40] Tubin's entire list of works, including free excerpts from recordings by Estonian orchestras (his entire oeuvre, by this point, has been recorded in Estonia) can be found digitally on the website of EMIC:
http://www.emic.ee/?sisu=heliloojad&mid=58&id=99&lang=eng&action=view&method=teosed

[41] Martin Anderson, "Tallinn: First International Tubin Festival," 42.

1.2.4 Patterns of Protest and Nationalism in the Music of Arvo Pärt

Most musicological analysis of Arvo Pärt's music has focused on identifying him as a "solitary genius" – this is, in fact, the title of an article.[42] Or, as Paul Hillier describes Arvo Pärt's aesthetic for an article in *The Musical Times*, repeatedly using the word "phenomenon," his is "a new musical language."[43] It is predominant in characterizing Pärt that his supporters unfailingly use terms that seek to separate him not only from his contemporaries, but from the material world itself. For example, much is made of the sacred aspect of Pärt the composer and Pärt the man. The distinction is often made because his religious affiliation is to the moderately exotic Eastern Orthodox faith, particularly uncommon in Estonia, where the few who still identify themselves as church-going belong to the Lutheran or Russian Orthodox strands of Christianity.[44] Yet, this may have little practical effect on Pärt's music, given that his style, defined by himself as *tintinnabuli*, is based simply on "the sound of the triad."[45] Pärt's process of composing, characterized as being of

> limited rhythmic vocabulary, homophonic texture, confined compass, highly regulated selection from the total vocal and instrumental forces available, and undeviating tonal centre,[46]

not to mention the predominant use of silence in his works, has no precedent in Eastern Orthodox music. Expectedly, Pärt's aesthetic is no more limited to Eastern Orthodoxy than it is to any other personal or external appellation. As a result, its distinctiveness should not preclude one from analysing it in the context of Pärt's society and culture. No different from any composer of his time in Estonia, Pärt studied with an established composer (Heino Eller[47]) and wrote music in myriad styles before settling on *tintinnabuli*. Much to the chagrin of those who seek to brand Pärt as a solitary genius, he was often considered to be

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[42] Lyn Henderson, "A Solitary Genius: The Establishment of Pärt's Technique (1958-68)," *The Musical Times*, Vol. 149, No. 1904 (Autumn, 2008): 81-88

[43] Paul Hillier, "Arvo Pärt: Magister Ludi," *The Musical Times*, Vol. 130, No. 1753 (Mar., 1989): 134.

[44] Refer to Statistics Estonia for specific numbers, or see note 18.

[45] Hillier, "Arvo Pärt: Magister Ludi," 134.

[46] Clarke and Pärt, "Parting Glances: David Clarke Reappraises the Music and the Aesthetics of Arvo Pärt," 680.

[47] Through his position at the Tallinn Conservatoire, Heino Eller was, in fact, the teacher for several generations of Estonian composers, including national icons like Lepo Sumera and Jaan Rääts in addition to Arvo Pärt.

among a group of post-Stalin era composers, referred to in the Soviet press as *molodiye kompozitori*, or simply, derogatively, as "young composers."[48] Uniting this group, which consisted of Sofia Gubaidulina, Alfred Schnittke, Edison Denisov, Andrey Volkonsky, in addition to Arvo Pärt, was an early affinity for twelve-tone music. This aesthetic interest proves to be of far greater importance for understanding Pärt as a composer than any poetic *hosannas* such as, "Arvo Pärt's music accepts silence and death, and thus reaffirms the basic truth of life."[49] Indeed, Pärt's "dabblings" prior to his emergence as a "solitary genius" are significant in the context of the Soviet period during which he came of age, his early music having under-appreciated influence on the aesthetic that was still to emerge.

After exhibiting "Hindemithian and baroque-style influences" in his earliest work, Pärt moved on to serialism.[50] Why? At that time, serial music had not taken a foothold in Estonia as an aesthetic, nor was Heino Eller, Pärt's teacher, at all a composer with serial leanings. As Lyn Henderson writes,

> the political 'thaw' of the late 1950s and early 1960s enabled composers of the Soviet block to hear previously banned music, including 12-note works, from the European mainstream...The Russian composer Andrey Volkonsky (b. 1933) [and Arvo Pärt's contemporary]…led the way with his Musica Stricta (1956).[51]

Pärt – and others – followed, observing what Henderson notes was a

> stringent application of 12-note technique…considerably more extensive than what would be the case with Shostakovich, for whom the tone-row would remain essentially a melodic entity.[52]

If serialism was a form of protest, it was surely aimed not only at the Academies populated by tonal, neo-Romantic or classicist composers, but at the regime as well. As Schmelz writes,

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[48] Peter J Schmelz, "Andrey Volkonsky and the Beginnings of Unofficial Music in the Soviet Union," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 58, No. 1 (Spring 2005): 140.

[49] Hillier, "Arvo Pärt: Magister Ludi.," 134.

[50] Henderson, "A Solitary Genius: The Establishment of Pärt's Technique (1958-68)," 81.

[51] Ibid, 82.

[52] Ibid, 83.

> serialism signified a reaction against communism, a communism signalled musically by tonality, an emphasis on melody, and overall accessibility.[53]

The connection between Pärt's serialist period and Tormis' assertion that the truth in Estonia was whispered begins to take shape, particularly in the audiences' reception of serial music, which Schmelz claims "became an unexpected crowd-pleaser in the Soviet Union."[54] Despite its apparent popularity as a form of high-art protest music, serialism "simultaneously represented both embrace and withdrawal, seduction and silence."[55]

As is now apparent, Arvo Pärt withdrew from serialism, though he did not withdraw the music itself. Even in the works of Pärt's transition period from serialism to *tintinnabuli* – and indeed, despite marketing to the contrary, there was one – serialism reigned supreme, forcing tonality to "cohabit with it, in a free association of styles."[56] His later determination to set prohibited religious texts, spurred by his discovery and consequent study of plainsong, fits the developing pattern of musical disobedience, a sort of not-so-silent protest. Interestingly, Pärt's first religious work, *Credo*, is also his last strictly dodecaphonic one. The piece is based not in any Estonian folk tradition, which, as mentioned before, had no religious component to speak of, but on Bach's C major prelude.[57] Moving from that point to *tintinnabuli* assumes only a stylistic shift, not a complete separation. Pärt's religious conversion, though a significant factor in his adoption of religious materials for his music, and surely of great importance personally, should nevertheless be regarded as a link in the chain. Religion and sacred music, much like serialism, were all of notable affront to the occupying Soviet regime.

1.2.5 Philosophical and Social Implications of Estonian Folk Music on Arvo Pärt

It is in this context that I return to the topic of folk music and choral singing in Estonia outside the concert hall. Though seemingly distanced from Pärt's *tintinnabuli* in every way, in subject matter, aesthetic, even language, there

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[53] Peter J. Schmelz, "Andrey Volkonsky and the Beginnings of Unofficial Music in the Soviet Union, " 143.
[54] Ibid, 144.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Henderson, "A Solitary Genius: The Establishment of Pärt's Technique (1958-68)," 85.
[57] Ibid, 87, referencing the C major prelude from the 48 Preludes and Fugues book.

is nevertheless a connection between the two that secures Pärt's position as the first exponent of a unique, Estonian aesthetic in concert music. Though briefly mentioned before, the song festivals in Estonia are of singular cultural relevance even beyond their role in securing Estonian independence, and therefore, worthy of brief analysis. Described as the "[p]illar of Estonian heritage,"[58] the song festivals have always served as a nationalist response to cultural dilution. The choral style developed was such that could support up to 25,000 people[59]; the songs, as Veljo Tormis states, "did not lend themselves to harmonization" but were more readily composed using "parallel [motion], chords, [and] clusters."[60] The Soviet government in Estonia was complicit in the effectiveness of the song festivals, letting them take place throughout the occupation period as a kind of "propaganda tool to impose local control and to trumpet the Soviet's acceptance of quaint, traditional indigenous culture."[61] Waren goes on to state that

> [u]sing the difficulty of the language as cover, composers often hid their nationalist agenda from non-Estonian speakers,[62]

and, indeed, the relaxation of control over song festivals during the *perestroika*, from the years 1988-1991, allowed for more and more Estonians to gather on the Song Festival Grounds, up to over twenty percent of the Estonian population at one time. At that point, Waren claims that "the groundswell of popular unity could support more direct political action."[63] Yet, even in the years prior, during the darker days of the occupation, the song festivals were nevertheless one of the few examples of public displays of Estonian ethnic nationalism that were allowed to take place. And, in turn, the song festivals cemented the role of folk song and music in the Estonian psyche as a method of protest and ensuring cultural survival.

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58 Warren Waren, "Theories of the Singing Revolution: An Historical Analysis of the Role of Music in the Estonian Independence Movement," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music,* Vol. 43, No. 2 (DECEMBER 2012): 443.

59 Ibid. Though there were frequently more singing, as the entire audience knew the words and, hence, could sing the music.

60 Anderson and Tormis, "'We Should Know Who We Are,'" 26.

61 Waren, "Theories of the Singing Revolution: An Historical Analysis of the Role of Music in the Estonian Independence Movement," 444.

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid, 445.

Given that the arrangement of folk songs called not on Western harmonic practices but on some assemblage of parallel motion, chords, and clusters, and that the song festival served, as an analogue of other protest methods during the Soviet occupation, to perpetuate Estonian culture during a time of Soviet hegemony, I offer some conclusions on Arvo Pärt's *tintinnabuli* style in the context of this introduction. As David Clarke notes, Arvo Pärt's techniques contain

> a high level of pre-compositional decision-making typical of the rationalizing impetus…[serving] to defamiliarise [sic] the well known domain of the diatonic.[64]

In pieces such as the *tintinnabuli*-era *Dies Irae*, Pärt continues to write strikingly dissonant music, but clothed in the rhetoric of a purist, post-tonal system. The music itself, though centred around a triad, does not contain any further tonal syntax. It is a "renunciation"[65] of those systems, much like serialism was for Pärt's generation of *molodiye kompozitori*. It is peculiar, arguably very original, in its re-adaptation of the materials of sacred choral music to a modern practice, as well as in its attractiveness for audiences. I disagree with Clarke's claim that the *tintinnabuli* style is somehow a "reinstatement of tonality,"[66] because tonality is not the end goal in any of Pärt's characteristic works. It is merely a canvas for the effective transmission of musical ideas, as I will describe further in Section 3.

1.2.6 Arvo Pärt in the Context of Defining Estonian Music

Moreover, as alluded to earlier, I believe that Pärt is the first composer of non-folk music in Estonian history who can truly be defined as unique and representative of Estonian music – a claim that is, after all, the resolution of the lengthy preceding discussion. In this case, the reasoning is essentially non-musical, though it is important to note that Pärt's style calls exactly for the materials Veljo Tormis describes in arranging folk music for choirs: parallel motion, chords, and clusters. These are defining characteristics of Pärt's music as

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[64] Clarke and Pärt, "Parting Glances: David Clarke Reappraises the Music and the Aesthetics of Arvo Pärt.," 682.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Then again, Clarke wishes to present the theory that Pärt's music is upheld not by internal rhetoric but far more by philosophy; hence, the music, to him, is an example of compositional sophistry.

well, even if the subject matter of the *tintinnabuli* period has generally nothing to do with Estonian folk music. The predominant feature in Pärt's music, beyond his unofficial membership in the cabal of young, serialist composers in the Soviet Union, was that he was able to move beyond the serial aesthetic and its associated techniques into one that protested against the Soviet occupation of Estonia[67] far more effectively than serialism could ever serve. As Hillier describes it, Pärt's music "must live…fervently, not overtly…but from an inner state of heedfulness."[68] It is a double, a partner, to the role of national music in Estonia as it seeks to undermine the political as well as cultural authorities. It does so by its reliance on plainchant-like thematic material[69], sacred text, and incorporation of techniques native both to Estonian folk music and to the "politically charged symbol of resistance" that was serial music in the post-Stalin era.[70] That Pärt's music is effectively equivalent to Estonian music for the vast majority of non-specialist audiences is, as a result, no surprise. His enduring popularity in Estonia has not arisen as a reaction to any kind of "solitary genius" or out of a spiritual or intellectual vacuum, but because of the identification of Pärt's music as indistinguishable from Estonian music, internally as well. It is of no surprise that the techniques of Pärt's mensuration canons, of one syllable per note, is entirely analogous to the practice of writing Estonian folk music. One can simply replace the Latin syllables with Estonian ones, and maintain the syntax of the music perfectly, if slightly bereft of context. By doing so, Pärt has somehow written neither folk music nor music by Western classical standards, as it has already been demonstrated by Sundberg that the Western classical approach is incompatible with Estonian folk music.

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[67] I do not believe, however, that the focus of Pärt's aesthetic, consciously, is to protest the Soviet Union as an end. As Oskar Kallas described in his speech to the Folklore Society, it is not particularly important for the Estonians who the occupying power is, merely that the future survival of Estonian language, culture, and identity is at stake. After all, the song festivals were formed not during Soviet times but during Imperial Russia, out of necessity just the same.

[68] Hillier, "Arvo Pärt: Magister Ludi.," 137.

[69] It is worth stating also that the allusion to early music may just as well represent, temporally speaking, a time when Estonia was not, in fact, subordinate to any foreign power. Though Estonian folk music and plainchant are not closely related, and there is little evidence of plainchant being in use in Estonia prior to the arrival of the Danes, it is nevertheless interesting to consider why Pärt thought to go so far back in time, and why precisely to that period which distinctly parallels the nascent moment in the history of the Estonian people.

[70] Schmelz, "Andrey Volkonsky and the Beginnings of Unofficial Music in the Soviet Union," 144.

On the other hand, Pärt's own hegemony in the Estonian classical music scene does not preclude others from creating equally "Estonian" music. At this point, after much historical and social analysis, it is useful to define what the features of Estonian music actually are, in philosophical terms as well as musical. Philosophically speaking, I propose the definition that Estonian music is music written by an Estonian composer[71] which exists in apposition to some aspect of the Western classical music tradition and, concurrently, acts as a subtle or non-overt expression of Estonian national identity. While such a definition seems remarkably narrow, it is also a direct consequence of Estonia's precarious position in European geopolitics, the enormous resulting influence on Estonian composers from Russia and Germany, and the social importance of music – particularly folk music – in the preservation of ethnic identity. On the contrary, this definition lends itself to myriad applications for subsequent generations of Estonian composers. Identification as being apart from the Western classical tradition has become a constant feature of younger generations of Estonian composers, which I will examine in Sections 5 and 6, whether it is warranted or, in some cases, not. In the latter *scenarie*, there occurs an irreconcilable difference between the philosophical and musical definitions. Of the musical definition, I propose only that Estonian music is defined by, consciously or otherwise, an affirmation or rejection of some aspect of folk music or a construction/destruction of a relationship with the socially active role of folk music and singing in Estonia. Whether it be, in Pärt's case, the integration of horizontal, dissonant, sometimes parallel movement and one-syllable-per-note text setting, or, in the case of someone like Toivo Tulev, a wholesale rejection of the folk music method on principled grounds, it is impossible for an Estonian composer to construct an aesthetic pleading ignorance of the folk music tradition.

1.3 Conclusions on Terminology; Implications for Younger Generations

Arvo Pärt is a controversial choice for someone directly representative of a unique Estonian musical mindset. He is too close in time to be a father figure;

[71] See Section 1.1, page 5 for definition.

he is, after all, still alive. And after the "discovery" of the *tintinnabuli* style, and subsequent pieces like *Fratres* and *Missa sillabica*, there have been fewer than fifty years during which to form an appraisal of Estonian music. During this period, the social and political context of writing music in Estonia has changed dramatically: 1991 brought re-independence, 1994, the final departure of Soviet troops, and accession into the EU and NATO in 2004. I mention these specific milestones because of their importance in the cultural context of Estonia as well. For example, Pärt's fourth, and latest, symphony was dedicated to imprisoned Russian dissident Mikhail Khodorkovsky, and an entire year of compositions, in 2006, was given to the memory of Anna Politkovskaya, another Russian dissident.[72] Pärt is, in essence, the only living Estonian composer who has chosen to speak out so overtly, to perpetuate the precedent set by the song festivals and other musical manifestations of Estonian cultural identity. In almost all cases, this has meant a social and political turning away from Russia and one toward Western Europe, toward those nations to which Estonians have always felt ideologically, if not ethnically, bound. Even in 1923, Oskar Kallas offered to the Folklore Society in London

> to place at your disposal what is common to us both…to add by this means our humble mite to the great international capitol of civilization, the use of which was in great measure opened up to us by the representatives of these same Teutonic nations.[73]

The identification and analysis of Estonian music's definition is, in reality, only the prerequisite of this dissertation, necessary as it is to understand what has happened and what will happen to Estonian music now that there is no oppressive state and no clear threat to cultural identity. The ensuing generations of Estonian composers, whose professional lives have been defined by both the Soviet occupation period and re-independence, have offered diverse and divergent reflections on the complex meanings of the terms, Estonian composer and Estonian music. Their musical opus is one that is both a reaction to such

[72] Interestingly, it is only in recent, post-EU/NATO accession years that Pärt has chosen a more overt political stance for his music, one that has come in concert with even greater international acceptance and a sort of firm political platform. It could very well be representative of further collusion of Estonian music and political end, that Pärt is articulating the political stance of the state against its former oppressor through increasingly less subtle means.

[73] Kallas, "Estonian Folklore," 116.

definitions, a product of Estonia's cultural isolation, and yet one indelibly affected by the nation's willing integration into Western Europe, the opening of borders, educational institutions, and even professional positions to Estonians choosing to travel and settle abroad.

The focus of my research is in the duality of isolation and integration, Estonia's nascent relationship with the world around it, as well as the lingering aspect of the Soviet presence in Estonia – all in musical terms. More specifically, this paper concerns itself with the effect of EU integration on Estonian music since 2004, or, essentially, ten years after the departure of Soviet troops and the effective removal of a threat oppressive to the cultural survival of the nation. The data set for this research includes music written during the Soviet occupation and, indeed, prior, starting with Eduard Tubin, whose *Fifth Symphony* (1946) I examine in context with the Estonian folk music tradition which informed Tubin's music so outwardly, and his eventual resettlement in Stockholm, in Section 2. A detailed analysis of one choral and one instrumental work, each, from Arvo Pärt's oeuvre follows in Section 3, specifically *Fratres* (1976) and *Miserere* (1989). Section 4 concerns itself with the music of Toivo Tulev, of the subsequent generation from Arvo Pärt, specifically the first movement of *Songs* (2005) for voices and instrumental ensemble, a piece informed both by Pärt-esque spiritual inflection and, concurrently, a conscious decision to forsake national and local influences. This, and following sections, are composed of both musical analysis as well as personal interviews with the composers on the chosen work samples as well as on their perceived relation to Estonian music and any personal definitions it may hold for them. In Section 5, I provide an analysis of Helena Tulve's *North Wind, South Wind* (2010), written for an Estonian ensemble that combines Western classical instruments and an Estonian folk instrument called the *kannel*, not coincidentally based on the same texts as the *Songs* of Toivo Tulev. Section 6 concludes.

2. Eduard Tubin: Sweden's Estonian Symphonist

To characterize the style of "one of Estonia's most eminent composers,"[74] and certainly its most productive symphonist, is to run into a series of paradoxes, of conflicting comparisons. Tubin is an unlikely personality, posthumously charged with the responsibility of representing Estonian nationalism during the period of Soviet occupation, yet one who spent the majority of his productive years in exile in Stockholm, Sweden, as an archive worker at the Drottningholm Royal Court Theater until his retirement in 1972.[75] He was either a man "at the peak of his career" whose "mastery [was]…recognised and respect[ed]" by his Swedish colleagues[76], or a man who "suffered prolonged obscurity and neglect until Neeme Järvi – a fellow Estonian – began to champion his cause."[77] His music is likened to an almost irreconcilable list of Twentieth century composers, including Stravinsky;

> "[Not] for nothing was Stravinsky a considerable influence on Tubin," writes Eric Roseberry in Vol. 133 of *The Musical Times*.[78]

Prokofiev;

> "One of the most potent influences on his style," according to Martin Anderson in *Tempo*, New Series, No. 218.[79]

Sibelius;

> "[The Fourth Symphony] clearly reflects the influence of Sibelius and this was to remain a continuing stylistic thread in Tubin's subsequent symphonic writing…[T]he Fifth and Seventh Symphonies ...[are] particularly Sibelian [sic]."[80]

and, incredibly, Vaughan Williams:

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[74] Margus Pärtlas, "Eduard Tubin: Current Research and Publishing Projects," *Fontes Artis Musicae,* Vol. 51, No. 3/4, Articles from IAML's conference in Tallinn, Estonia, 2003 (July-December 2004): 332

[75] "Biography," Eduard Tubina Ühing [Eduard Tubin Society], http://www.tubinsociety.com/index.php?id=36

[76] Pärtlas, "Eduard Tubin: Current Research and Publishing Projects," 333

[77] Roger Sutherland, "Tubin: Symphonies Nos. 1-10 by Tubin; Gothenberg Symphony; Swedish Radio Symphony; Bamberg Symphony & Bergen Philharmonic; Neeme Järvi," *Tempo*, Vol. 57, No. 226 (Oct., 2003): 53

[78] Eric Roseberry, "Barbara von tisenhusen by Eduard Tubin; Estonian Opera Company; Peeter Lilje," *The Musical Times*, Vol. 133, No. 1798 (Dec., 1992): 650

[79] Anderson, "Tallinn: First International Tubin Festival," 42.

[80] Sutherland, "Tubin: Symphonies Nos. 1-10 by Tubin; Gothenberg Symphony; Swedish Radio Symphony; Bamberg Symphony & Bergen Philharmonic; Neeme Järvi," 53.

> "The Ninth Symphony…has a spacious lyrical intensity which is hauntingly reminiscent of Vaughan Williams," writes Sutherland in the same article.[81]

One can make many further parallels between Tubin and his Scandinavian contemporaries; likewise, it is tempting to also relate Tubin to Estonian composers who remained in Estonia during the Soviet period. Yet, the overwhelming scholarship presented on Tubin, when it shies away from such grandiose statements as, "in his first symphonies…Tubin had reached the level of the best European symphonic composers[82]" by his more fervent supporters, only serves to characterize his music in relation to something – particularly something foreign, nationalist, and archetypal. The phenomenon is quite unlike that of Arvo Pärt, whose characterizations in scholarly materials omit any reference to composers and musicians altogether, seeking to place him not in history, but out of history, out of time completely.[83] Surely, Tubin's music and life deserve an exploration on their own merits, something that the following discussion approaches through the prism of the remarkable *Fifth Symphony* and its genesis in Tubin's compositional development in Estonia and his subsequent exile to Sweden. In my analysis of the *Fifth Symphony*, I intend to show that Tubin was capable of, and interested in, integrating references to Estonian folk music and cultural identity in his works, often directly. However, he consciously chose to follow a syncretic path informed by a professional career generally devoid of the isolation faced by his Estonian contemporaries and successive generations of composers in the then-Soviet republic.

2.1 Historical Context of the *Fifth Symphony*

Tubin's experience as one of Estonia's prime music-nationalist proponents had far-reaching effects for his music, his career – and, inevitably, his self-imposed exile to Sweden as the Iron Curtain drew around his country. Already in his Third Symphony, "the pounding *fortissimi* and the strident,

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[81] Ibid.

[82] Pärtlas, "Eduard Tubin: Current Research and Publishing Projects," 333.

[83] See Section 1.2.4 for a more complete discussion of Pärt and scholarly literature.

nationalistic optimism of its epic finale…registered…disapproval" [84] with Communist party ideologues. Indeed, as much as Tubin was fortunate to have come of age during Estonia's first independence, that fortune turned against him as he matured. Few of his pieces written in exile would ever again elicit such nationalist characterizations.

Tubin's Third Symphony was written as Stalin's tanks entered Estonia; "its premiere was staged [already] under Soviet occupation."[85] The work was, in fact, banned for performance for the next four decades. Tubin had learned: the Fourth Symphony evoked "idealized pastoral images rather than devastation or revolutionary upheaval." [86] Like his Soviet counterparts, Tubin could not altogether suppress or censor more radical musical impulses, but worked to integrate them into a work that seemed palatable to the Communist party. Sutherland goes on to write:

> [The radical musical impulses] are at times registered in dissonant eruptions and ominous harmonic undercurrents which disturb but do not quite rupture the music's lyrical flow.[87]

The bombing of the "Estonia" theatre during the premiere of Tubin's ballet *Kratt* had symbolic repercussions for Tubin himself, beyond the destruction of the historic structure. Tubin and his wife, who were in the audience at the time,

> had to run for shelter together with the actors and audience. The score of the ballet was destroyed. The only score of his Symphony No. 4 survived with burned edges in a safe.[88]

The dream of an independent Estonia, and a national consciousness through music, in disarray and seemingly permanently doomed, Tubin, his wife, and his sons – along with approximately "70,000 other Estonians"[89] – left Estonia in September 1944.

Accounts of the initial period of Tubin's life in Sweden once again differ. Pärtlas writes that

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[84] Roger Sutherland, "Tubin: Symphonies Nos. 1-10 by Tubin; Gothenberg Symphony; Swedish Radio Symphony; Bamberg Symphony & Bergen Philharmonic; Neeme Järvi," 53.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid.
[88] "Biography," Eduard Tubina Ühing [Eduard Tubin Society], http://www.tubinsociety.com/index.php?id=36
[89] Pärtlas, "Eduard Tubin: Current Research and Publishing Projects," 333.

> it was very difficult for Baltic refugees to make a breakthrough into Swedish culture, and many artists did not succeed in continuing their professional careers.[90]

The Tubin Society presents a more balanced history: shortly after their arrival, the composer, his wife, and sons were transferred to social housing on the outskirts of Stockholm, but already, by 1945, Tubin was offered an apartment in the suburb of Hammarbyhöjden by music publisher Einar Körling and during "the following years, several works were published by Körlings Förlag."[91] He was given a position by the Labour Board already in 1945[92] and within only months of his arrival, had founded the Stockholm Estonian YMCA Male Choir.[93]

The *Fifth Symphony*, Tubin's first major project in exile, could not have been written by a composer working in obscurity, or as Pärtlas suggests, one whose "ideology and style [were considered] too old-fashioned" in his new environment.[94] It was to become "his most performed work," not only in Western Europe but, in New York in 1952 (with Endel Kalam) and in Sydney in 1958 with Nikolai Malko conducting.[95] Ten years after its completion, the *Fifth Symphony* was even performed in Tubin's native Estonia, among more than fifty performances of the work in the composer's lifetime. Though significant on its own merits and of immediate scholarly interest in this dissertation, the piece also became hugely influential for Tubin's later works, which followed in the *Fifth Symphony*'s footsteps as Tubin adjusted to an environment both foreign and somehow oddly reminiscent of Estonia's nascent inter-war period. The period that followed was one in which Tubin

> modernised his own harmonic language and changed his nationalist style, approaching a more personal and cosmopolitan one,[96]

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[90] Ibid.

[91] "Biography," Eduard Tubina Ühing [Eduard Tubin Society], http://www.tubinsociety.com/index.php?id=36

[92] Tubin's position is described in greater detail in the Introduction to this section.

[93] Later named the Stockholm Estonian Male Choir (SEM), which exists to this day, though in greatly reduced capacity due to migration and cultural assimilation. The choir was conducted by Eduard Tubin between 1945-59 and 1975-82, and also by his son, Eino Tubin, during the period 1976-88.

[94] Pärtlas, "Eduard Tubin: Current Research and Publishing Projects," 334.

[95] "Biography," Eduard Tubina Ühing [Eduard Tubin Society], http://www.tubinsociety.com/index.php?id=36

[96] Pärtlas, "Eduard Tubin: Current Research and Publishing Projects," 334.

or stated differently:

> [s]elf-imposed exile gave Tubin the freedom to experiment with different forms of symphonic construction – a luxury he would never have enjoyed in the USSR.[97]

The *Fifth Symphony* is, hence, a very particular moment in Tubin's life, that which would typically be called a *transition piece*. More appropriately, it represents a rare instance of a musical conclusion, a denouement and a departure point, on the music of his native country, on his own compositional oeuvre, and on the short history of Estonia as an independent state – a trinity of influences that define the setting for this crucial piece.

2.2 Analysis of the *Fifth Symphony* (1946)

Above all other possible characterizations, Tubin's landmark work is one of constant motivic development. Such a methodical process could be facilely labelled as symphonic in the traditional sense, but the implications are clearly of a larger scope. In his introduction to *Eduard Tubin: Complete Works*, Kerri Kotta alludes to Tubin's genre-faithful approach: "Tubin's composition involves a creative dialogue with the entire symphonic tradition."[98] Even a cursory listening of the *Fifth Symphony* would confirm Kotta's assertion, but one must delicately pose the question, with which "entire symphonic tradition" Tubin is engaging, given that, contemporaneously, there was none in Estonia to speak of? Given the inclusion of folk material from his native country in the second and arguably the first movements[99], Tubin cannot be said to be ambivalent about the thematic origin of the *Fifth Symphony*'s musical content. Yet the source material is not treated in a contextual manner: the homophony, "strophic form, and syllabic

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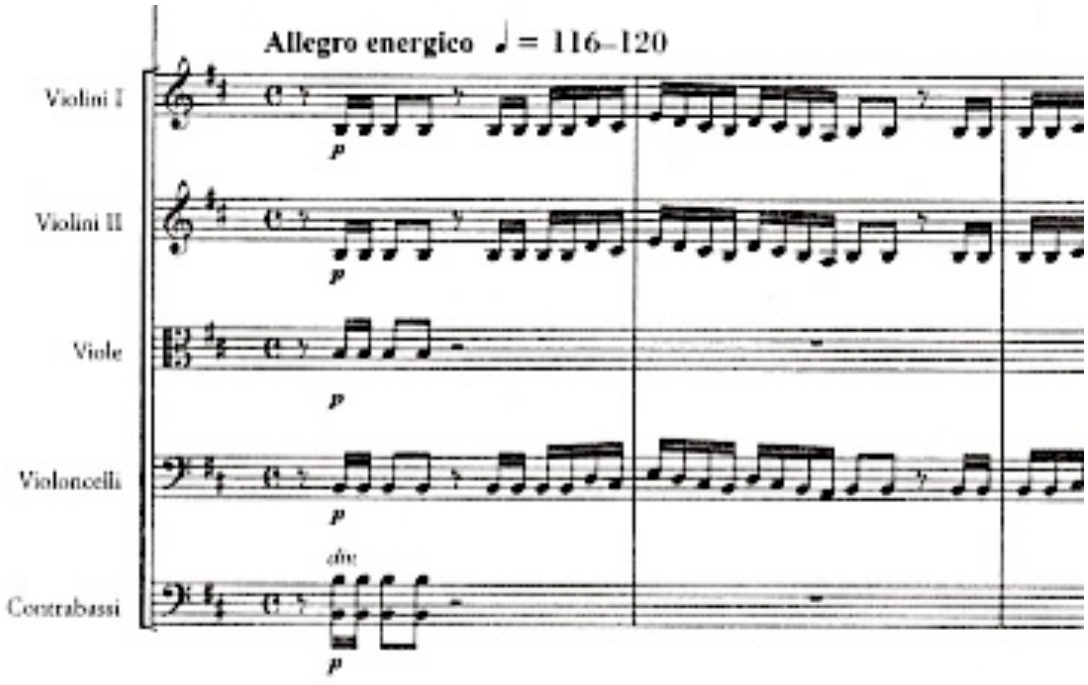
[97] Sutherland, Tubin, "Symphonies Nos. 1-10 by Tubin; Gothenberg Symphony; Swedish Radio Symphony; Bamberg Symphony & Bergen Philharmonic; Neeme Järvi," 53.

[98] Kerri Kotta, *Eduard Tubin. Complete Works. Series I Volume III. Symphonies Nos. 5 & 6*. (Tallinn/Stockholm: Rahvusvaheline Eduard Tubina Ühing/Gehrmans Musikförlag, 2014): 23.

[99] In the same text, Kotta alludes to an Estonian folk tune that could form the basis for the introductory material, one translated to "On my Beloved Country Lane." He calls the aforementioned material as "a strong homage to the homeland," though the context of the folk tune is ambiguous in the *Allegro energico* and it is quickly dispatched with in favor of an increasingly atomized development of its constituent parts. There is enough evidence of a bias in Kotta's motivations to ally the *Fifth Symphony* with a programmatic, nationalist purpose to question the veracity of the association.

meter"[100] of development in Estonian folk songs is conspicuously rejected in favour of a more cosmopolitan symphonic idiom. In defining cosmopolitan composition in a symphonic setting, especially in Tubin's case, one must look again to both the Estonian understanding of the divide between folk and serious music, and to Tubin's own physical setting in Stockholm, Sweden. Perhaps the craft of the *Fifth Symphony*, the composer's skill in dealing with both folk and serious influences in the work, can be best summed up by a review in *Stockholms-Tidningen*, stating that "Tubin's ability to give his experiences an expression so well-finished artistically is worthy of much admiration."[101]

The opening theme of the *Allegro energico* is particularly indicative of Tubin's approach to motivic development and his relationship to his source material. The phrase, possibly of folk origin[102], is progressively and methodically elaborated in the violin and violoncello parts, while the woodwinds, viola, and contrabass begin to partition the phrase into short motives, starting from the very first beat of the piece [see Example 2.2-1]. Characterized by Kotta in *Eduard*



Example 2.2-1: opening bars, *Allegro energico*, Fifth Symphony (Eduard Tubin)

[100] Vance D. Wolverton, "Breaking the Silence: Choral Music of the Baltic Republics. Part One—Estonia," *The Choral Journal*, Vol. 38, No. 7 (FEBRUARY 1998): 22

[101] Kotta, *Eduard Tubin. Complete Works. Series I Volume III. Symphonies Nos. 5 & 6*, 24.

[102] See Footnote 99.

Tubin: Complete Works as "pulsating, [with] motor-like unease and anxiety," the opening phrase only becomes more so; the second theme is, emotionally and unconventionally, an extension of the first. While Kotta interprets the second movement's form as a "theme and variations in a three-part form,"[103] the *Andante*'s progress is also cumulative, in that harmonic and textural complexity do not simply re-occur but accrue. Even the idea of a theme occurring, followed by its repetition in an evolving context, is not borne out in the movement's development: there is simply too much harmonic and thematic expansion and for a theme and variations form to sufficiently describe. In contrast, the final movement is more structurally unified, primarily based on an "active and uninterrupted motion" that ultimately resolves the tension built up from the prior two movements.[104] In the case of each of the three movements – collectively and individually – the composer's approach is distinct, consistent, yet undeniably conventional.

An increasing internal complexity is characteristic of both the first theme of the *Allegro energico* and the *Fifth Symphony* as a whole. The theme – and the piece, itself – approximates a macro-scale ABA form. The four-note motive, presented with an upbeat made up of two semiquavers followed by a strong-weak pair of quavers, is gradually spread apart, Tubin filling a kind of narrative arc between the so-called upbeat and downbeat with material that expands the motive not only in horizontal but vertical range as well. In doing so, Tubin is building the modal-harmonic language for the remainder of the piece through the motive's methodical elaboration. The first movement's climax serves also as the motive's developmental apotheosis. The timpani tremolo in mm. 254-256 [see Example 2.2-2], preceded by the motive's characteristic upbeat of two sixteenth-notes, abstracts what was heretofore imbued with rhythmic, modal, and vaguely melodic characteristics. The very first presentation of the opening theme of the *Allegro energico* [see Example 2.2-1] becomes, in hindsight, a prophetic anticipation of the timpani climax. After all, the opening material is a completely idiomatic phrase for the timpani.

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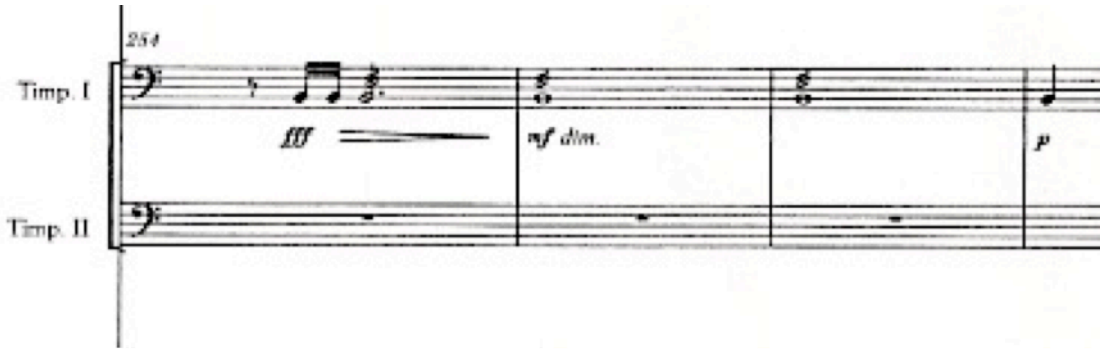
[103] Kotta, *Eduard Tubin. Complete Works. Series I Volume III. Symphonies Nos. 5 & 6*, 24.
[104] Ibid.

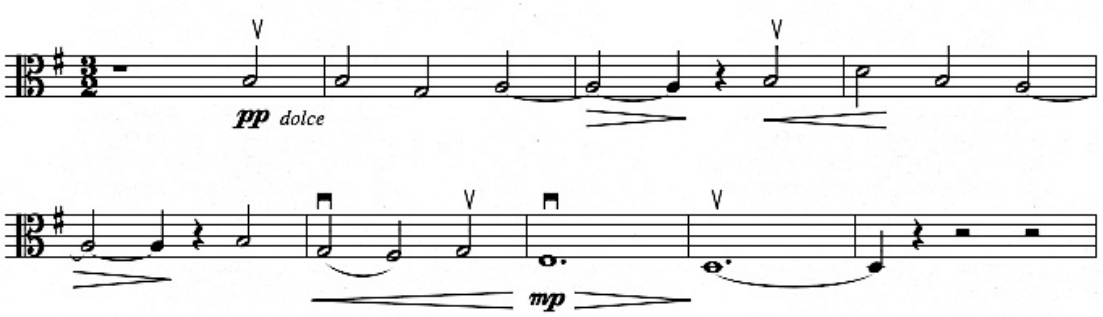


Example 2.2-2: mm 254-257, *Allegro energico*, Fifth Symphony (Eduard Tubin)

Iterative development of the four-note motive in the *Fifth Symphony*'s first movement could be classified as conventionally symphonic but the process holds greater affinity with native Estonian practices such as *regilaul*, where repetition with increasing levels of complexity forms the narrative of a composition. Composers such as Tormis, in particular, structured their choral works, particularly those best adapted to song festivals, around simple repetitive motives that grow more complicated with each return.[105] The difference between such an approach and conventional symphonic development is quite subtle. The nuance is especially felt in Tubin's case because the iterative, *regilaul* development is presented outside of its folk-choral context; unlike its origin in homophonic modal choral music, Tubin places the four-note motive in a large-scale, tonal framework. By pairing the motive with other, contrasting contrapuntal motives, the otherwise idiosyncratic process of development of the four-note motive becomes ambiguated and essentially stateless.

Conversely, the *Andante* presents an intriguing possibility of a direct musical link to Tubin's past through the appropriation of folk material for the theme introduced in the viola part [see Example 2.2-3]. The melody references the Estonian chorale, "The Night Ends Soon," the lyrics of which speak of a coming resurrection and liberation[106]. The phrasing of the melody is such that it could be sung and its placement in the middle of the register of the viola is particularly interesting. The Estonian chorale could be ethnographically classified as a lament, a kind of "solo song without chorus…sung while herding

[105] See, for example, the famous *Raua needmine* (Curse upon iron) or, particularly, *Kihnu pulmalaulud* (Kihnu island wedding songs)
[106] Kotta, *Eduard Tubin. Complete Works. Series I Volume III. Symphonies Nos. 5 & 6*, 23.



Example 2.2-3: mm. 6-14, excerpted viola part, *Andante*, Fifth Symphony (Eduard Tubin)

cattle, performing household tasks, or rocking a baby."[107] In returning to the idea and context of lament and folk song in Tubin circa 1946 when he completed the *Fifth Symphony* and to Tubin as a child, one finds striking connections. Tubin inherited "some scores, a violin, and a piccolo flute" around the age of seven, after the death of his brother Johannes, but he had been surrounded by music since birth, his father having joined a village band in Torila, in Eastern Estonia, as a trumpet player and later, a trombonist.[108] According to the Eduard Tubin Society biography, the young composer-to-be "practiced the flute by himself and enjoyed playing when he herded swine," an act that connects the composer's childhood directly to the musical material for the *Fifth Symphony*'s second movement.[109] Was the *Andante*, then, a nostalgic reflection on his earliest musical memories from childhood, now left unreachable by the Soviet occupation of Estonia? There is very little besides the incidental, yet undeniable, connections between the *Andante* lament and Tubin's childhood experiences to support such an assertion, particularly given that Tubin rarely, if ever again, referenced Estonian motives so directly. Pärtlas' claim, mentioned earlier in Section 2.1, that Tubin modernized and changed his nationalistic style to "a more personal and cosmopolitan one"[110] is echoed by Sutherland: "the Sixth Symphony [Tubin's next major orchestral work] represents a striking deviation."[111] Discarding any real or imagined intentions behind the opening

[107] Wolverton, "Breaking the Silence: Choral Music of the Baltic Republics. Part One—Estonia," 22.

[108] "Biography," Eduard Tubina Ühing [Eduard Tubin Society], http://www.tubinsociety.com/index.php?id=36

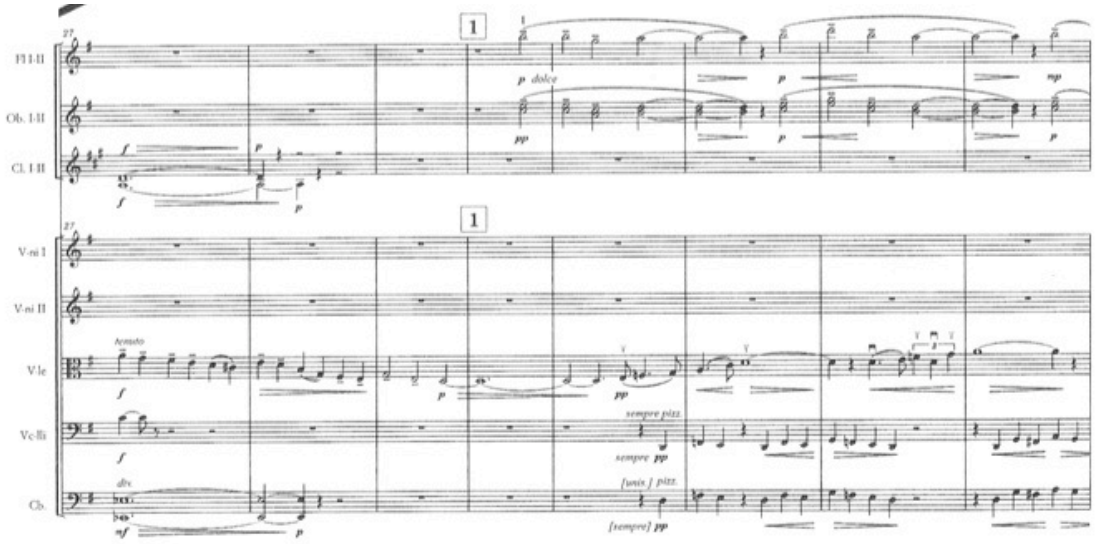
[109] Ibid.

[110] Pärtlas, "Eduard Tubin: Current Research and Publishing Projects," 334.

[111] Sutherland, "Tubin: Symphonies Nos. 1-10 by Tubin; Gothenberg Symphony; Swedish Radio Symphony; Bamberg Symphony & Bergen Philharmonic; Neeme Järvi," 53.

lament in the *Andante*, as well as its clear connection to existing folk music material, it is a fact that Tubin rarely used the technique again, and that his first experiences with music as a young child provided ample inspiration to compose such a lament – and to do so hardly twelve months into his exile from Estonia.

Even the overt lyricism of the *Andante*, however, cannot free itself of the pervasive sensation of unrest and turmoil on the horizon. As the melodic line of the violas gradually gives away to pastoral harmonies in the woodwinds [see Example 2.2-4], those same harmonies turn more strident while a violin solo references the opening material but in a changed context: no longer stable, no longer peaceful, the lament has changed indefinitely. Such development is,



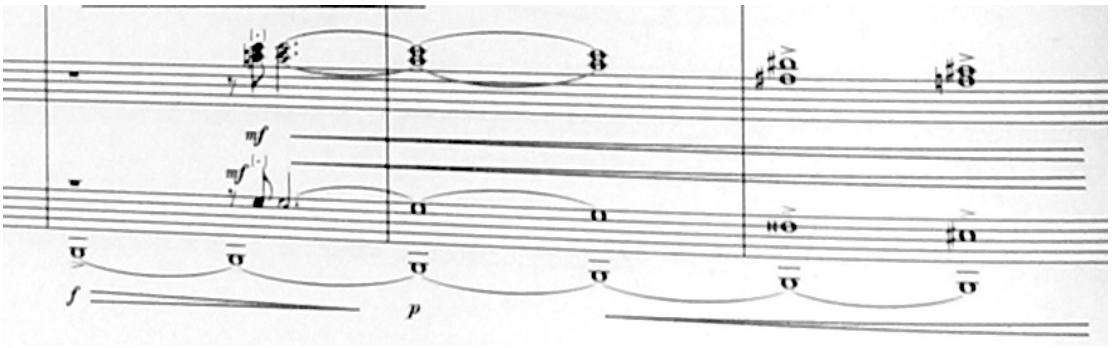
Example 2.2-4: mm. 30-34, *Andante*, Fifth Symphony (Eduard Tubin)

perhaps, characteristic of the symphony genre in general and Tubin is keen to demonstrate his own skill as a symphonist, taking a folk chorale-inspired tune into a dissonant, complex realm as a reflection of the distinction between serious music and the folk music that defined his childhood. The distinction occurs again and again in discussions of Tubin's music: "in Estonia [Tubin] had shared a nationalist ideology but his music was considered too 'modernistic.'"[112] The more methodical elements of development in Tubin's style in the *Fifth Symphony* are not, themselves, necessarily a response to the dichotomy of serious and folk music in Estonia or elsewhere. Instead, the seriousness of the *Fifth Symphony*, in particular, comes from an engagement with the events leading directly up to its composition; as a result, the work does not "consistently…transcend…social and

[112] Pärtlas, "Eduard Tubin: Current Research and Publishing Projects," 334.

political circumstance"[113] but reflects it. The work's ideological struggle between tumult and lyricism, between here and there, has its roots in Tubin's exile, which motivates the sensations of nostalgia and rupture so prevalent throughout the piece, in both its key relationships and in the fate of its melodic material.

Much as the opening material of the *Allegro energico* outlines a B-centred modality and develops it in range and motivic complexity, the harmonic superstructure of the *Fifth Symphony* elaborates that same process over the course of the three movements. The *Fifth Symphony* is unambiguously in a modal B minor tonality, though internally, the movements modulate through a succession of modally-inflected keys. The *Allegro assai*, the work's final movement, closes definitively in B Major by contradicting the aforementioned process. Tubin introduces the C-natural and A# leading tones in succession in the Trombone parts in mm. 582-584 [see Example 2.2.-5], a clearly tonal affront to the arpeggiating modal elements of the movement's opening [see Example 2.2-6], in which the lower strings gradually expose the same B-minor modal scale as the opening motive of the *Allegro energico*. The C# and A-natural having clearly



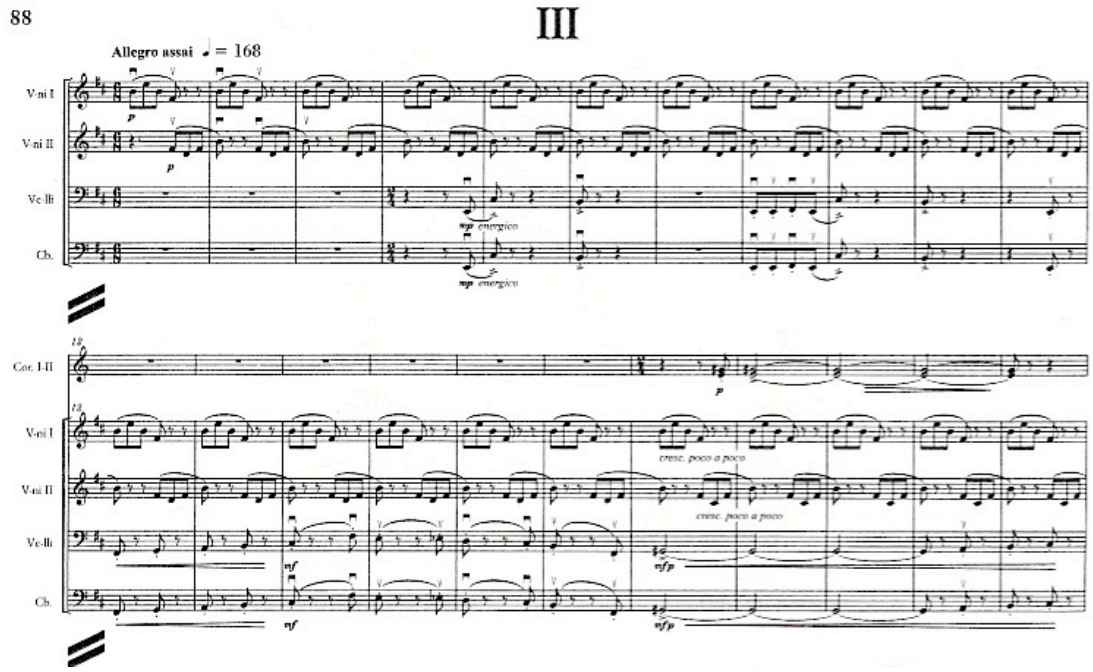
Example 2.2-5: mm. 582-584, *Allegro assai*, Fifth Symphony (Eduard Tubin)

been established[114] in the *Allegro assai*'s opening scalar passages in the lower strings[115], Tubin fills in the perpetually expanding space in the arpeggiating figures with increasing chromaticism: an unlikely double for the modal expansion of the opening theme of the first movement. The *Fifth Symphony*'s

[113] Sutherland, "Tubin: Symphonies Nos. 1-10 by Tubin; Gothenberg Symphony; Swedish Radio Symphony; Bamberg Symphony & Bergen Philharmonic; Neeme Järvi," 53

[114] The ambiguity between tonal and modal in the *Fifth Symphony* stems from the raised 2nd and 5th (but unraised 7th) in Locrian mode or the lowered 7th leading tone in B minor. The piece is effectively centered on a B Dorian mode, but its engagement with modulation and foreign leading tones means that a Dorian interpretation is overly simplistic.

[115] But also in the first and second movements. In the latter, the folk melody is conspicuously in the same modality as the rest of the Symphony's primary themes.



Example 2.2-6: opening bars, *Allegro assai*, Fifth Symphony (Eduard Tubin)

unreconciled questions of modality and tonality, of programmatic and absolute, are a product of the composer's own severed context of writing an Estonian symphony in a land that is not Estonia. The formal ABA simplicity of the *Fifth Symphony*, and its atomic constituent parts, is illusory; the ebullient B Major conclusion of the *Allegro assai* feels, as a result, anything but conclusive.

2.3 Conclusion

The endless paradox of context surrounding the *Fifth Symphony* is a direct result of the piece's own individual relationship to the Estonian musical tradition – and Eduard Tubin's as well, indirectly. Tubin uses one – possibly two – folk melodies in the piece, but he uses them idiosyncratically, creating an utterly new context and developmental process for material that, up to its appropriation, had its own. Much of the melodic material is, as a result, modal but is subsequently handled in an unmistakably tonal way: Tubin's key relationships and macro harmonic plans, discussed in Section 2.2, are personal but they are also conventional in the symphonic tradition. The paradox, which is paralleled in a far more abstract sense by Tubin's legacy in Estonia as an Estonian composer, is one not of allegiance to the nation and its music[116] but one defined by personal and

[116] I believe that the aforementioned question is one that has been repeatedly answered to the effect that Tubin is a composer who absolutely was aware of Estonian folk music and culture, and

cosmopolitan processes. By this, I mean that Tubin's integration of Estonian motives and "serious" methodologies of writing symphonic music makes him, through the lens of the *Fifth Symphony*, a highly syncretic composer. And yet the *Fifth Symphony* fails to provide specific insight on its Estonian material. Appropriation works only as far as the source material retains some semblance of its source. In Tubin's case, both the folk melodies and their manner of development, if any certain connection to Estonian folk idioms can be established, are rendered indeterminate with regards to any national origin or non-absolute context altogether. It is particularly curious for a symphony created in such a charged historical context, imbued with dramatic gestures, to appear so otherwise dispassionate – or contrary – to the constitutive processes of its source material.

Much like Mart Saar[117] may claim credit for being the earliest composer of Estonian ethnicity to integrate national folk motives with Western harmonies, thus giving rise to what might be called the first Estonian "serious" vocal music, Tubin, in his symphonic work and particularly in the *Fifth Symphony*, has elevated Estonian musical culture, heretofore vocal and mostly expressed through folk idioms, into the most serious of instrumental genres: the symphony. The *Fifth Symphony*, in its near seamless integration of Estonian folk melodies and rigorous harmonic and formal development in the Western tradition, is Tubin's most successful example of such a model. The piece's success speaks for itself:

> [u]nlike a number of Tubin's other works, the *Fifth Symphony* immediately attracted wide attention. [I]t has been played all over the world by a variety of orchestras and conductors and has been repeatedly recorded.[118]

Speculation into the lack of success of Tubin's other music is beyond the scope of this chapter, but the specific success of the *Fifth Symphony* is one where context cannot be separated from the piece's merits in the absolute musical sense. While

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actively incorporated the material in his music. Any argument to the contrary, even when dealing with the *Fifth Symphony*, would have to ignore the rather pressing question of where the melodies came from, and why the composer chose to write such a conflicted, dark piece of music while living in the stable Swedish democracy.

117 See Section 1.2.2

118 Kotta, *Eduard Tubin. Complete Works. Series I Volume III. Symphonies Nos. 5 & 6*, 24

the *Fifth Symphony* is not overtly programmatic like, for example, Tubin's *Requiem for Fallen Soldiers* begun in 1949-50 and completed only in 1979, nor entirely disassociated from Tubin's Estonian roots, like some of the later symphonies and the Sixth in particular, the piece is a successful exponent of the peculiarity of the culture of once- and newly again-isolated Estonia, packaged in a musical language instantly recognizable to Western, though perhaps not Estonian, audiences.

The devastation of his homeland's forced integration into the Soviet Union and his resettlement to Stockholm presented Tubin with a number of challenges, discussed at length in previous sections, but also provided the composer with a benefit his contemporaries and predecessors never enjoyed: an outlet into the Western world. Tubin's status as a *väliseestlane* in Sweden allowed him not only freedoms in a civil sense and in a musical sense (the latter detailed by Sutherland in his *Tempo* review of the Tubin symphonies,)[119] but also eventually provided him with a conductor who could champion his cause: Neeme Järvi. And indeed, Tubin's list of foreign performances pre-exile and post-exile is balanced overwhelmingly to the latter[120], in large part due to Järvi's "deep affinity" with Tubin's work.[121] In writing the *Fifth Symphony* both as a personal reflection on his childhood and his native country, as well as an effort to align himself with a Western European cosmopolitan tradition of symphonic writing, Tubin developed an undeniably personal aesthetic – but one that nevertheless exerted little influence on the compositional development of Estonia. Despite Tubin's return to Estonia in 1961, his first after the war, and his eventual re-integration into the Estonian music scene through performances and commissions of major stage works in the 1960s-1970s, there remained little contact with his contemporaries and younger generations of composers.[122] The Eduard Tubin Society asserts that

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[119] Sutherland. "Tubin: Symphonies Nos. 1-10 by Tubin; Gothenberg Symphony; Swedish Radio Symphony; Bamberg Symphony & Bergen Philharmonic; Neeme Järvi," 53.
[120] "Biography," Eduard Tubina Ühing [Eduard Tubin Society], http://www.tubinsociety.com/index.php?id=36
[121] Sutherland. "Tubin: Symphonies Nos. 1-10 by Tubin; Gothenberg Symphony; Swedish Radio Symphony; Bamberg Symphony & Bergen Philharmonic; Neeme Järvi," 53.
[122] "Biography," Eduard Tubina Ühing [Eduard Tubin Society], http://www.tubinsociety.com/index.php?id=36

> [t]he force and active rhythms of the [Sixth Symphony] inspired many young Estonian composers such as Veljo Tormis, Eino Tamberg, Jaan Rääts, and Arvo Pärt,[123]

but there is little evidence for this in the music, particularly given that the Sixth Symphony was purposefully written as "eclectic, and cosmopolitan," incorporating "echoes of jazz and Latin American jazz rhythms" – a work "strongly influenced by Prokofiev."[124] Prokofiev had been active in the Soviet Union for decades and was therefore accessible to Estonian composers and likely programmed more often in Tallinn than Tubin ever could have been, given Tubin's self-imposed exile. One is unlikely to find Tubin's syncretic method of appropriation and development in the music of any of the aforementioned composers; the list is simply irreconcilable with history.

Tubin's position in the Estonian musical canon could be classified as one of appropriation, too: for the last twenty-one years of his life, he was a Swedish composer, with Swedish citizenship, and membership in the Swedish Composer's Union.[125] The First International Tubin Festival was held in Tallinn in 2001 as the first national retrospective on the composer's work; as Martin Anderson suggests, it

> broke musical ground not simply by exposing a number of Tubin works in concentrated concert but also by placing them in the context of his contemporaries.[126]

That the festival, which saw as its purpose a kind of reintroduction and reappraisal of Tubin's music in Estonia, felt it necessary also to concurrently present connections between Tubin and his contemporaries living in Soviet-occupied Estonia, is illustrative of the still-present divide between Tubin, the composer, and his homeland.

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[123] Ibid.

[124] Sutherland. "Tubin: Symphonies Nos. 1-10 by Tubin; Gothenberg Symphony; Swedish Radio Symphony; Bamberg Symphony & Bergen Philharmonic; Neeme Järvi," 53.

[125] "Biography," Eduard Tubina Ühing [Eduard Tubin Society], http://www.tubinsociety.com/index.php?id=36

[126] Anderson, "Tallinn: First International Tubin Festival," 42.

3. Arvo Pärt: Toward, and Beyond, an Estonian Identity

In an often-cited 1999 interview of Arvo Pärt by Geoff Smith in *The Musical Times*, Nora Pärt, the composer's wife states:

> There has been a growing number of texts on Arvo's music but very little of it [sic] is musicologically-founded…This deficit in musicological methodology is always smoothed over by biographical or personal information which cannot necessarily be linked to Arvo's music directly. Naturally, you can always connect ideas – biographical or not – with Arvo's music. Yet the meaning of the music is purely musical. Arvo is predominantly concerned with musical forms and structure.[127]

Indeed, musicological analysis of Pärt's music at the time of the interview and since then has seldom strayed from a discourse on the composer's mythic-religious leanings and the music's own purported powers of transcendence. In a revealing preface to the interview, Smith himself ascribes the aforementioned disconnect to Pärt's tendency "to talk of the compositional process in biblical terms."[128] Having given a brief outline of Pärt's musical evolution as a composer in Section 1.2.4, the following discussion will attempt to focus entirely on the question of musical forms and structure in two significant works: *Fratres* (1977) and *Miserere* (1989).

Among Pärt's compositions, one may choose any number of characteristic works. In the Tempo article, *Out of Place in the 20th Century: Thoughts on Arvo Pärt's Tintinnabuli Style*, Benjamin Skipp labels Pärt's uniformity of aesthetic as "monochromaticism," but goes on to qualify the label by claiming that

> the individual works are conceived with the goal of presenting a single attitude when received together, each resembling a single strand within a thicker fabric.[129]

Yet, a remarkable development in Pärt's aesthetic has taken place since those very first 1970s *tintinnabuli* works. Even Skipp's article, of 2009 vintage, has been superseded. The assertion that Pärt's music is "distinctly unaffected by

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[127] Geoff Smith, "An Interview with Arvo Pärt: Sources of Invention," *The Musical Times*, Vol. 140, No. 1868 (Autumn, 1999): 21

[128] Ibid, 19.

[129] Benjamin Skipp, "Out of Place in the 20th Century: Thoughts on Arvo Pärt's Tintinnabuli Style," *Tempo,* Vol. 63, No. 249 (Jul., 2009): 2.

themes and events monumentalized through the media of the recent past"[130] is difficult to reconcile with the composer's increasingly politicized output.[131] Indeed, Pärt himself admits that, while "[t]he Pärt of the past and of the present are one and the same person...my ideals have changed since."[132] In choosing one of Pärt's early and most recognizable *tintinnabuli* works, *Fratres*, I seek to demonstrate the essential aspects of Pärt's musical output in their crystalline form and suggest their essentiality in the larger picture of Estonian musical identity. *Miserere*, in contrast, was written in 1989, after Pärt's own exile from Estonia commencing in 1980. It is a piece in which, according to Pärt's biographer, Paul Hillier, the composer takes "a new direction or emphasis within the *tintinnabuli* style"[133] – a phenomenon which I intend to analyse in the context of Pärt's aesthetic, his absence from Estonia, and his emerging international identity.

3.1 Analysis of *Fratres* (1977)

In *Fratres*, like his other early works, Pärt was seeking "a theoretical concept"; the nucleus of the music, as the composer likes to refer to the ideological centre of every piece he writes, serves to answer the "question of relationships and proportions."[134] The material, Arnold Whittall writes in his review of the piece, "is ostentatiously primitive."[135] Michel Rigoni likens it to "a rupture with the dissonant world of modernity and with the materialist anti-religious world in which [Pärt] lived."[136] But aside from the almost inevitable philosophical consequences attributed to the purist expression of *tintinnabuli* that *Fratres* represents, it is also very much in the lineage of Pärt's identity of a composer – not simply beginning in 1976 with *Für Alina* but quite profoundly

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[130] Ibid, 4.

[131] For more, see Section 1.3 and Footnote 72.

[132] Smith, "An Interview with Arvo Pärt: Sources of Invention," 20.

[133] Paul Hillier, *Arvo Pärt (*Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 153.

[134] Smith, "An Interview with Arvo Pärt: Sources of Invention," 21.

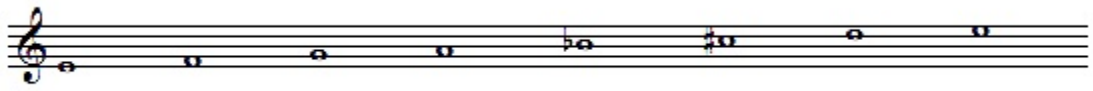
[135] Arnold Whittall. "Crescendo e diminuendo, for Harpsichord and Twelve Strings by Edison Denisov; Splitter, for Piano; Pärt, Arvo, *Fratres*, for Violin and Piano by György Kurtág," *Music & Letters*, Vol. 63, No. 3/4 (Jul. - Oct., 1982): 378

[136] Michel Rigoni, "MUSIQUE ET POSTMODERNITÉ : POUR UN ÉTAT DES LIEUX," *Musurgia*, Vol. 5, No. 3/4, Dossiers d'analyse (1998): 113. Originally: "une rupture avec le monde dissonant de la modernité et avec le contexte matérialiste anti-religieux dans lequel il vit."

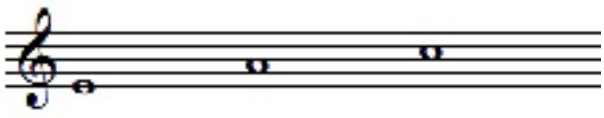
throughout his work.[137] It is no wonder, then, that in a formal explanation of the *tintinnabuli* technique that will inform my own overview in the following paragraphs, Grace Kingsbury Muzzo refers to "the distinctive Pärt sound" as "minimalist/serial," thus creating a strong link over the composer's seven years of silence between *Credo* and the *tintinnabuli* works.[138]

Pärt's highly individual style is based on a systematized application of what could essentially be classified as two scales. A "melodic" scale or M-voice, moves "mostly by step from or towards a central pitch (often, but not always, the tonic.)"[139] A second scale is based entirely on the pitches of the tonic triad, effectively restricting the "tone row" to three pitches. The composer calls the latter scale the T-voice, or *tintinnabuli*-voice. Pärt's music, or, at least, the most characteristic works of the initial *tintinnabuli* period, adhere to the rules religiously. Despite the perceived freedom of the M-voice, Hillier suggests that "the M-voice may be constructed in accordance with a textual pattern[140] or a purely abstract musical procedure; very rarely is it composed freely."[141] And, indeed, in *Fratres*, the intervallic and pitch relationships are so highly systematized that the piece could be condensed to a simple formula – the "nucleus" of which Pärt so often speaks.

The M- and T-voices of *Fratres* are presented below in Examples 3.1-1 and 3.1-2, respectively. The pitch, A, is at the center of both scales, while C and C#



Example 3.1-1: M-voice, Fratres (Arvo Pärt)



Example 3.1-2: T-voice, Fratres (Arvo Pärt)

[137] For a more detailed discussion on this subject, see Section 1.2.4.

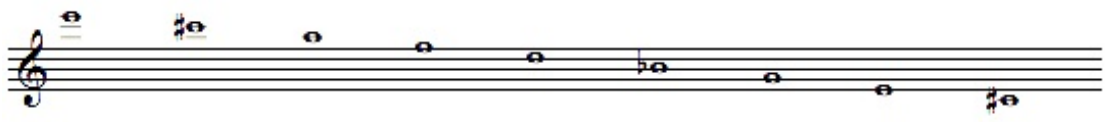
[138] Grace Kingsbury Muzzo, "Systems, Symbols, & Silence: The Tintinnabuli Technique of Arvo Pärt into the Twenty-First Century," *The Choral Journal*, Vol. 49, No. 6 (DECEMBER 2008): 23.

[139] Paul Hillier, *Arvo Pärt*, 92.

[140] For more, see Section 1.2.1 or Sundberg (2004)

[141] Ibid, 93.

present the primary dissonance of the piece. Whittall claims that the C/C# dissonance is, in fact, the source of the piece's "character and expressiveness."[142] However, Pärt's genius in *Fratres* is exposed still more subtly. The composer has labelled the Universal Edition score with nine rehearsal numbers, which coincide with nine repetitions of what appears to be a variation on gradually descending pitches, six bars long each time. The time signatures follow their own sequence of 7/4, 9/4, 11/4, repeating once in each variation. The numerology is, however, not merely coincidental. By selecting the highest starting pitch of each sequence, one finds the following scale [see Example 3.1-3], which is simply a transposition of the M-voice into thirds. Yet the highest starting pitch of each sequence in



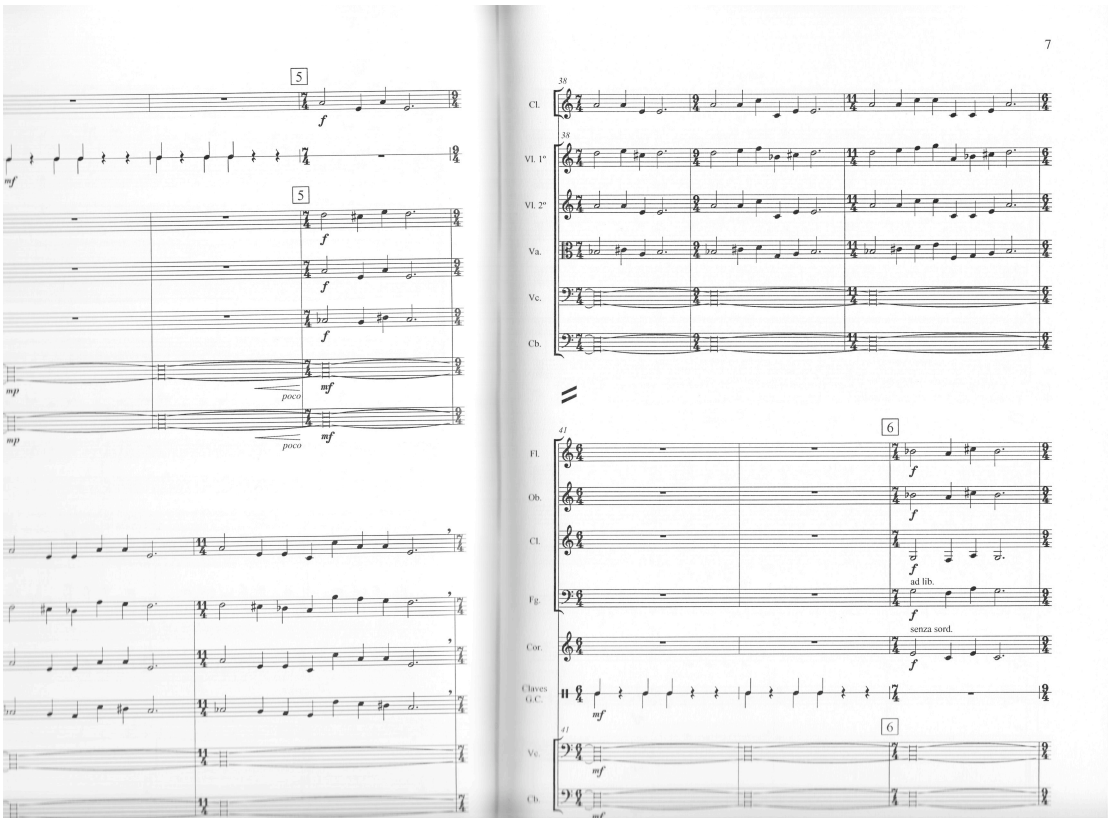
Example 3.1-3: Highest starting pitches of each sequence, Fratres (Arvo Pärt)

Fratres alternates between M- and T-voices; the relationship between the two in register, sequence, and in intervallic terms, has been firmly structured from the very beginning.

The function of the M-voice throughout Fratres is to outline the scale, but even in this context, the pattern is highly systematized. Example 3.1-4 presents the fifth iteration of the sequence,[143] in which the Violin I part is of particular interest as it is the highest-pitched expression of the sequence following the scale of the M-voice. Across each of the six bars, the start and end pitch is the same, D. The subsequent and penultimate pitches are C# and E, respectively. These remain subsequent and penultimate for the first three bars of the sequence and invert for the remaining three bars. They, along with the starting/ending pitch, form the entirety of the pitch material of the 7/4 bars. The 9/4 bars introduce Bb and F pitches, once again inverted in order for the latter three compared to the first three bars of the sequence, while the 11/4 bars complete the sequence with A and G pitches. Of interest, however, is not the pitch material of the M-voice but the intervallic relationships created by the

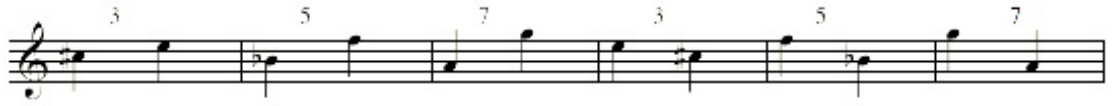
[142] Whittall, "Crescendo e diminuendo, for Harpsichord and Twelve Strings by Edison Denisov; Splitter, for Piano; Pärt, Arvo, Fratres, for Violin and Piano by György Kurtág," 378.

[143] To say that *Fratres* is cast in "a simple kind of variation form," as Whittall does, would be simply incorrect. From the first to the ninth presentation of the sequence, there is no development or variance of the material whatsoever, other than displacement by a third.



Example 3.1-4: mm. 33-43, Fratres (Arvo Pärt)

sequences. Example 3.1-5 shows the median of each 7/4, 9/4, and 11/4 bar of Sequence 5. The composer's insistence on odd numbers determining the



Example 3.1-5: Central intervallic relationships of M-voice sequences, Fratres (Arvo Pärt)

expression of the musical material extends into the intervallic make-up of the T-voice (3+4=7), the relationship of duration of the start and end pitches (2+3=5), and the amount of dynamics used (five in total: pp, p, mp, mf, and f), while the dynamics themselves form a sequence of pp to f and back to pp. Central to *Fratres* is the P5 drone in the Violoncello and Contrabass parts and the repeating bars of 6/4 (3+3) in which the claves are played three times in each bar.

Pärt believes that "the answer is written into the music. For the listener, there is a chance of a very valuable experience of decoding this information," which speaks even more to the composer's reliance of formula and an almost mathematical or geometric sense of logic.[144] Indeed, Muzzo concludes that

[144] Smith, "An Interview with Arvo Pärt: Sources of Invention," 25.

> [t]he composer's use of mathematical formulas also links the medieval world to twentieth century serialism, for as Pärt says, "Everything in the world is numerically arranged in one way or another."[145]

The serial elements of *Fratres* are neither accidental nor coincidental, given Pärt's own background as a composer and the dissident role played by serialism as an aesthetic in the Soviet Union. Rigoni writes that, in addition to serialism,

> a strong religious reference ultimately constituted a new form of opposition to the regime.[146][147]

Regardless of any mystical religious context when *Für Alina* appeared in 1976, the social and political context for the piece and for the *tintinnabuli* style was nevertheless the Soviet occupation of Estonia. "The Pärt of the past and of the present are one and the same person" is a line to which one must keep returning. Skipp's assertion that Pärt's "third way" of writing music was somehow allied to the Cage-ian ideal of "challenging the serialist hegemony" is, hence, completely untenable.[148] With the added dimension of religious fervor allied to a strict systematization of pitch, register, intervallic relationships, time signature, and even dynamics, the early, and most characteristic, *tintinnabuli* works are masterpieces in both theory and aesthetic. They, as I will describe in detail in Section 3.3, serve as Estonia's first instances of autochthonous concert music.

3.2 Analysis of *Miserere* (1989)

3.2.1 The Evolution of Perception within the *Tintinnabuli* Style

Miserere is an unusual work; it is rarely described in the context of Pärt's opus without further qualification. Hillier writes that,

> against the background of *tintinnabuli* works, Pärt's setting of the *Miserere* stands out as a dramatic conception from beginning to end. [149]

The dramatic power of the composer's works is, of course, in the eye of the beholder. Pärt, in one of his many similes, compares perception to "one person

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[145] Muzzo, "Systems, Symbols, & Silence: The Tintinnabuli Technique of Arvo Pärt into the Twenty-First Century," 27.

[146] Rigoni, "MUSIQUE ET POSTMODERNITÉ : POUR UN ÉTAT DES LIEUX.," 113. Originally: "Une réfénce forte au religieux a constitué ultérieurement une nouvelle forme d'opposition au régime."

[147] A more detailed discussion of this may be found in Section 1.2.4

[148] Skipp, "Out of Place in the 20th Century: Thoughts on Arvo Pärt's Tintinnabuli Style," 5.

[149] Hillier, *Arvo Pärt.*, 151.

prefer[ring] a flower in his vase, another one a thistle."[150] But for Pärt himself, perception is of the utmost importance, whether it comes in the form of numerological repetition, as in *Fratres*, or in other guises – in each case, Pärt refutes the Cage-ian thesis, stated by Fisk in *The New Simplicity: The Music of Górecki, Tavener and Pärt*, that "musical structure was *always* unhearable."[151] Instead, he relates – yet again – the question of perception to that of the partial tones of the overtone scale:

> All important things in life are simple…the initial, lower overtones are perceptible and easily distinguishable, whereas the upper ones are more clearly defined in theory than audible.[152]

This is a startling admission from a composer whose entire characteristic musical output is built on mimicking the sound of bells. But it is also perhaps the most crucial point of departure for understanding *Miserere* and the rest of Pärt's work after the initial purist, theoretical pieces of the *tintinnabuli* period of the 1970s.

After his departure from Estonia in 1980 to, initially, Vienna and then to Berlin, Pärt continued his long-standing collaboration with Estonian ensembles such as Hortus Musicus and, particularly, the conductor Tõnu Kaljuste who remains a champion of the composer. However, Pärt's exile beyond the Iron Curtain, much like Tubin's, put him into contact with Western ensembles, conductors, and commissions. *Miserere* was written for Paul Hillier and the Hilliard Ensemble; it was premiered in Rouen, France, at the Festival d'Été de Seine-Maritime. This change of both place and context for the creation of Pärt's music[153] is of no less significance than the one much preferred by musicologists, "[t]he, as yet, irreversible change…which occurred in 1976,…a[n] aesthetic conversion."[154] If the purported unity of Pärt's post-1976 *tintinnabuli* style is to be believed, then the evolution of the composer's compositional output post-

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[150] Smith, "An Interview with Arvo Pärt: Sources of Invention," 25.

[151] Josiah Fisk, "The New Simplicity: The Music of Górecki, Tavener and Pärt," *The Hudson Review*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (Autumn, 1994): 398.

[152] Smith, "An Interview with Arvo Pärt: Sources of Invention," 21.

[153] The idea of Pärt's *tintinnabuli* superceding serialism as the aesthetic externalization of his protest against the Soviet occupation of Estonia is more carefully explored in Section 1.2.4 and to an extent in Section 3.1.

[154] Skipp, "Out of Place in the 20th Century: Thoughts on Arvo Pärt's Tintinnabuli Style," 6.

1980 should be relatively minor. The nucleus of the music would need to be relatively impervious for the argument to hold.

Yet both Hillier and Pärt – and who would know the composer's music better? – quite clearly suggest that a profound evolution in the dialectic has indeed taken place. On *Miserere*, Hillier writes

> [That *Miserere* stands out as a dramatic conception] is not to say that there are no small, quiet moments; there are many, but even these are deliberately poised to create tension and expectation. We are aware as we hear them that this is not the norm, that we are listening to a reduced fragment of something large and powerful. This was not the case in the other major *tintinnabuli* works.[155]

Pärt goes, still, further:

> [t]hese days, I want to make something 'palatable'…There has to be a balance between the human perceptive faculty and the musical presentation.[156]

The composer's work, post-Estonian exile, is increasingly concerned with perception as a link between composer and audience. The nucleus itself is no longer enough; perhaps it is no longer even of existential necessity. The Pärt of 1999[157], unlike, perhaps, the Pärt of 1976 or 1977[158], is no longer "interested in theoretical reasoning."[159]

3.2.2 *Miserere*: A Stylistic Shift

Miserere was written in 1989 and scored for five solo voices (SAATB), mixed choir, and a mixed instrumental ensemble. It is one of the composer's more ambitious *tintinnabuli* works in terms of scope, with a stated duration of 30-35 minutes. The considerable length and scope of the piece have formal implications. Pärt has split the text into four major sections corresponding to verses, which Hillier details on page 153 in his biography on the composer. Verses III-V and VI-XXI are set for soloists, while in between V and VI is a major

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155 Hillier, *Arvo Pärt.*, 151.

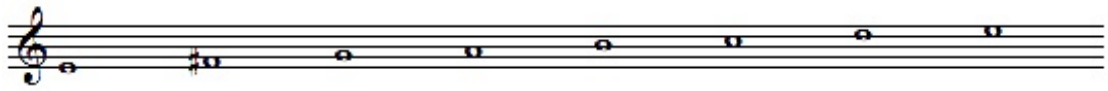
156 Smith, "An Interview with Arvo Pärt: Sources of Invention," 21.

157 The year of the Smith interview.

158 The years of composition of *Für Alina* and *Fratres*, respectively.

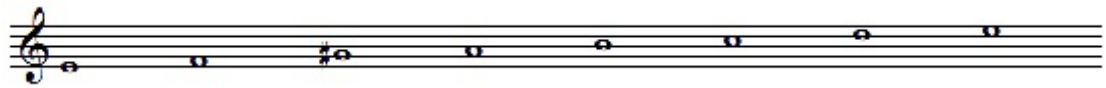
159 Smith, "An Interview with Arvo Pärt: Sources of Invention," 22.

tutti section written for choir and ensemble that sets seven verses[160] of the *Dies Irae*. The eighth verse of the *Dies Irae*, the *Rex tremendae*, concludes the piece. This section is scored for two soloists, choir, and a vastly reduced ensemble. The four constituent sections are profoundly imbalanced in terms of length, with the sections setting the *Miserere* comprising approximately 86% of the piece's duration, and the remaining *tutti* settings of the *Dies Irae* comprising just 14%. The dramatic appearance of the *Dies Irae* arrives only six minutes into the piece after a mostly unmeasured setting of Verse V of the *Miserere* which pivots the natural E-minor scale [see Example 3.2.2-1] of the first two verses into another E-centred tonality. This time, the F# of the first M-voice is lowered and the G is



Example 3.2.2-1: M-voice, Verses III-IV, Miserere (Arvo Pärt)

raised to G# [see Example 3.2.2-2], a process that prepares for what is nevertheless a surprising transition to the natural A minor of the *Dies Irae* [see Example 3.2.2-3]. The entirety of the ensuing solo sections, Verses VI-XXI, alternates between harmonic and natural F minors. Verses VI-XIII and XIX

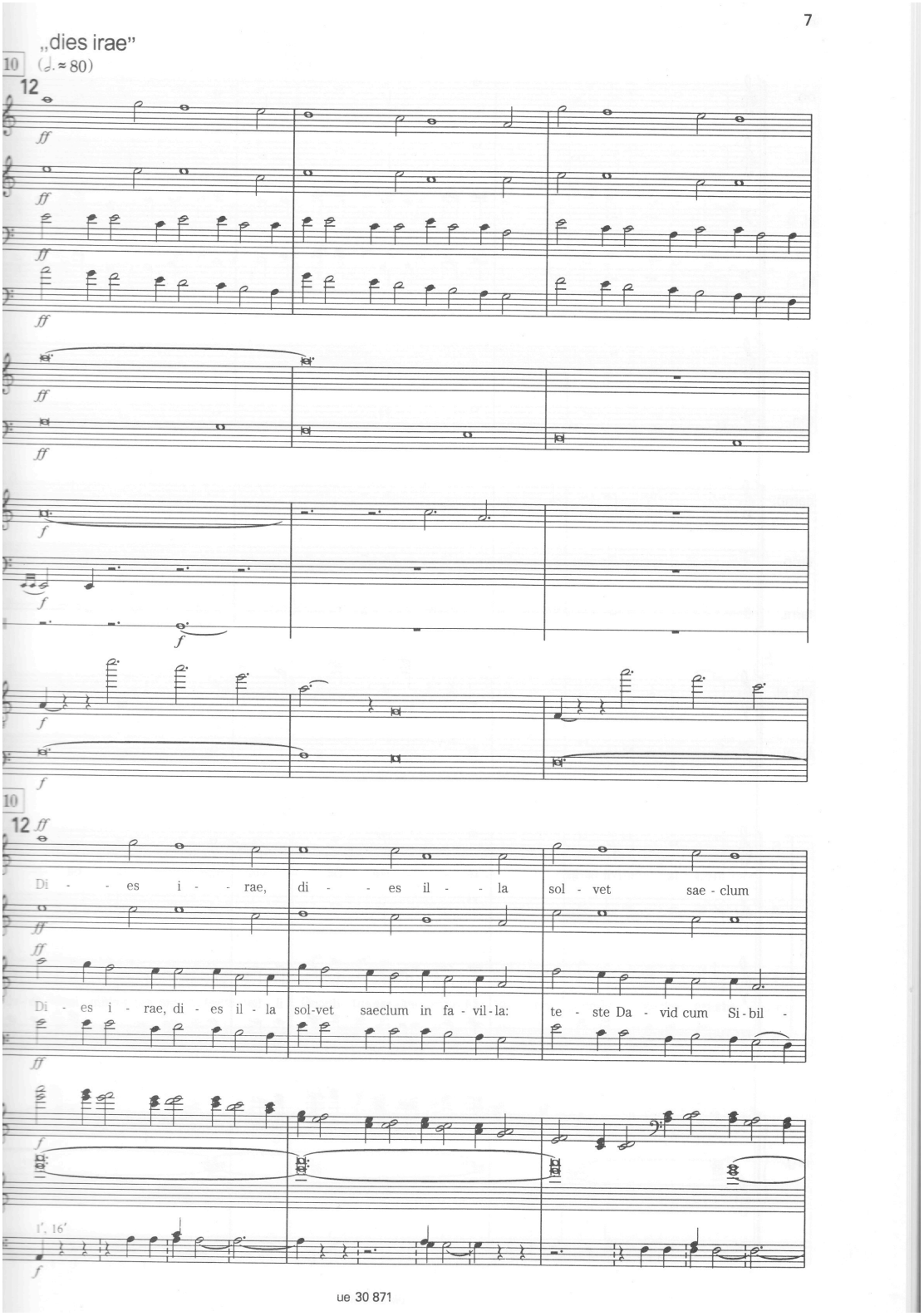


Example 3.2.2-2: M-voice, Verse V, Miserere (Arvo Pärt)

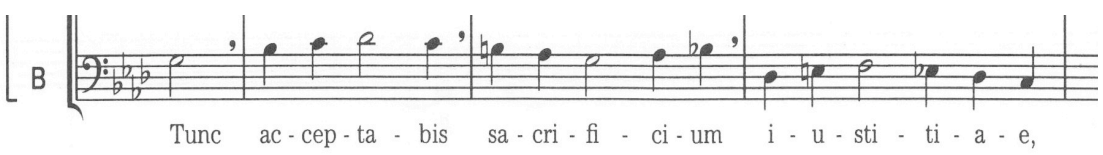
employ the harmonic minor, whereas XIV-XVIII and XX use the natural minor. Verse XXI [see Example 3.2.2-4] uses both E and Eb, while there is the added dissonant relationship of having both B natural and B flat in both Verse VI and Verses XX-XXI [Example 3.2.2-4]. The overall harmonic scheme, as a result, is E minor (*Miserere* Verses III-V), A minor (*Dies Irae* Verses 1-7), F minor (*Miserere* Verses VI-XXI), and, finally, E minor once again (*Dies Irae* Verse 8).

Of particular interest in *Miserere* is the absence of the T-voice in the most dramatic of the work's moments: the *Dies Irae*. As Lyn Schenbek notes in *Discovering the Choral Music of Estonian Composer Arvo Pärt*, "the bells return

[160] Listed as eight in the preface to the Universal Edition score, but the first *Dies Irae, dies illa* is repeated at the end. *Mors stupebit et natura* and *Liber scriptus proferetur* are also repeated, but not listed as such in the score's preface.



Example 3.2.2-3: *Dies Irae*, Miserere (Arvo Pärt)



Example 3.2.2-4: M-voice, Verse XXI, Miserere (Arvo Pärt)

later, but only in the orchestra."[161] Hillier claims that the disentaglement of M- and T-voices is, in fact, an innovation: "the T-voice…in various passages…is heard as a separate response to the M-voice, with an intervening silence."[162] Regardless of the reason, it is an abrupt departure. In the 1999 interview with Geoff Smith, Nora Pärt[163] suggests that compositional systems of Pärt, the composer,

> are only the mechanics…The prevalent reason for his decision in favour of a composition rule is always based on his desire for a particular expression…He recognizes the beauty of the 'mechanics' and plays with it.[164]

The de-systematization of the *tintinnabuli* style is omnipresent in *Miserere*. Granted, intervallic relationships are still at the forefront of the composer's writing, particularly the minor-second dissonance that informs not only the natural/harmonic minor contrasts but also the larger harmonic plan of the piece, which expands the minor second dissonance to the larger E-F-E scalar relationships. But to ascribe such symmetry to this subtle distinction would only be a faithful discussion in the early Pärt works. The incongruous *Dies Irae* section is in an A melodic minor tonality, harmonically and motivically almost indistinguishable from the composer's earlier *Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten*. It is preceded by what can only be called a dominant triad in A minor [see Example 3.2.2-5]. Would such compromises for the sake of fulfilling a "dramatic conception" have passed muster in the context of Pärt's early *tintinnabuli* works?

There is a further evolution in the composer's setting of text. Hillier suggests that

> [t]his specifically marks a turning away from the text purely as a written source, in favour of its spoken quantity, albeit within a stylized framework. Both the use of syllabic recitation and the manner in which

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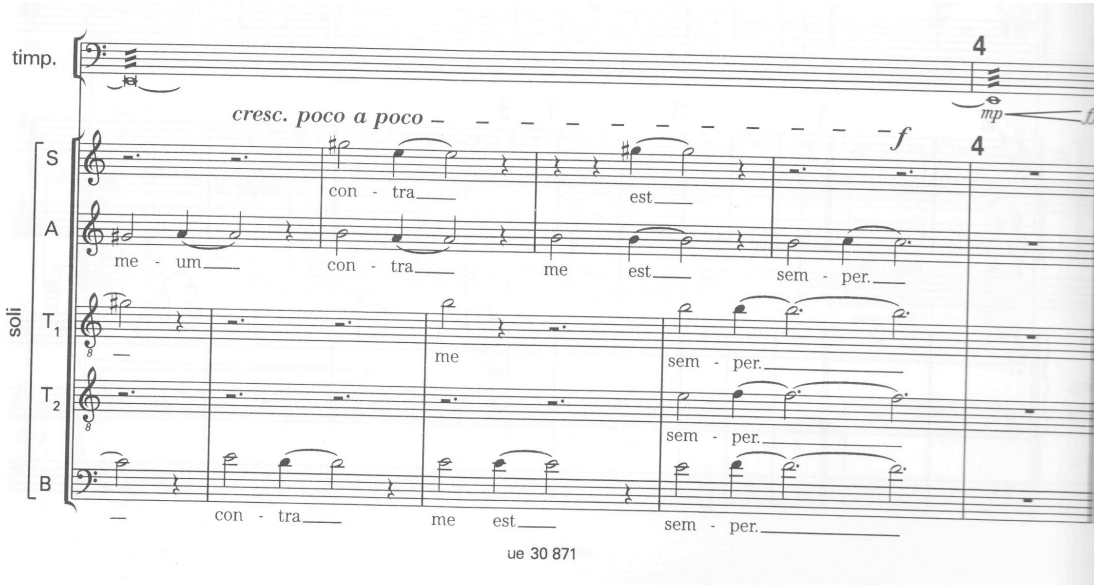
[161] Lyn Schenbek, "Discovering the Choral Music of Estonian Composer Arvo Pärt," *The Choral Journal*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (AUGUST 1993): 25.

[162] Hillier, *Arvo Pärt.*,154.

[163] Smith writes of the "partnership" between Arvo and Nora, "resembling that of La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela," implying with a great deal of liberty that the composer and his wife are artistic collaborators in addition to their marriage. More likely, Nora has served as Arvo Pärt's mouthpiece and filter; her words have been taken to be equivalent to those of her husband. Whether this aids in promoting more "musicologicall-founded" analysis of Pärt's work is doubtful.

[164] Smith, "An Interview with Arvo Pärt: Sources of Invention," 22.



Example 3.2.2-5: M-voice, Verse V, Miserere (Arvo Pärt)

> pitch changes are determined by syllable stress are reminiscent of psalmody.[165]

Example 3.2.2-6 shows one such innovation in the context of Pärt's music: one of the very first instances of a melisma in the composer's *tintinnabuli* writing. In fact, *Miserere* contains many. Alongside this is the introduction of monotonal recitation, where the M-voice does not change pitch at all but recites text on a single pitch.

> Pärt had already used monotonal recitation in *Ein Wallfahrtslied* (1984) and had further developed this in *Seven Magnificat Antiphons* (written just one year earlier,

but Miserere is "the first large-scale tintinnabuli work to demonstrate these values."[166] One is forced to return to Sundberg's admission that "it seems unclear how Estonian singers can perform Estonian lyrics in songs composed in the Western classical tradition." Pärt's significantly altered approach to setting text, though it is Latin in this case, in addition to setting his characteristic *tintinnabuli* system highlights *Miserere* as a work outside the commonly-held belief that the composer's oeuvre is unified, with "values [that] are notoriously in a tautological relationship with the music."[167] In *Miserere*, and increasingly among Pärt's compositional output, such a thesis simply cannot hold.

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[165] Hillier, *Arvo Pärt.*, 154.

[166] Ibid.

[167] Skipp, "Out of Place in the 20th Century: Thoughts on Arvo Pärt's Tintinnabuli Style," 6.

3.3 Conclusion

That a significant philosophical and musical evolution occurred from Pärt's early *tintinnabuli* works to those of the 1980s and 1990s, may be taken for a fact. The composer admits, without reservation, that he finds it

> difficult to listen to pieces from different times in one concert…You might then appreciate why it is inappropriate to present those works together. Just as the pupils of the eye only gradually accommodate to the change from light to dark, the ears too need time to adjust to strong differences.[168]

However, I posit that the "strong differences" did not occur in a vacuum, that Pärt did not go from a systematic serial approach to writing music to one that he deems more "palatable" simply by chance or by choice. While superficially *Fratres* and *Miserere* may sonically suggest a stylistic unity, the nuclei of those pieces and, in fact, all pieces pre- and post-1980, begin to markedly diverge. Tellingly, the composer suggests that

> [w]e don't realise it because the ears are held in such good training in our everyday life. But our minds and our hearts, nevertheless, register the differences and the need for gradual transition.[169]

The superficial aesthetic identity of Pärt's canon may fool the occasional musicologist into a false state of security regarding a constant philosophical and aesthetic unity in his work. But "the ideals have changed since," as Pärt confirms. Instances of numerological and intervallic symmetry so essential to *Fratres* are almost entirely absent in *Miserere* and many of Pärt's compositions of that later time period. The pieces may sound the same, he is saying, but only to our ears.

I have detailed to some degree in Sections 1.2.5 and 1.2.6 the thesis that Pärt represents the first instance of a national music in Estonia, and I have linked it to the socio-nationalist role music has played in Estonia, as a form of cultural preservation. Section 1.2.5 suggested that by embracing techniques in concert music that intentionally carried connotations of protest and dissent, Pärt became emblematic of a much wider national movement. Another proponent of this theory, though only in passing, is Michel Rigoni in *MUSIQUE ET*

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[168] Smith, "An Interview with Arvo Pärt: Sources of Invention," 20-21.
[169] Ibid, 21.

POSTMODERNITÉ: POUR UN ÉTAT DES LIEUX (1998). On the other hand, Paul Hillier casually refutes any musical or aesthetic relationship between Pärt and Estonia in his biography, claiming that,

> any suggestion that his music could be characterized as 'Estonian' would be misleading: it makes no use of Estonian themes or motifs.[170]

Section 1.3 demonstrates that the use of Estonian "themes or motives" is not at all a prerequisite for a music to be characterized as an Estonian music. In his *tintinnabuli* works, and arguably much earlier in his serial experiments, Pärt managed to channel something much deeper in the national psyche. But the discovery of nuance even within the *tintinnabuli* compositions from 1976 onwards begs the question of what the composer's ongoing relationship with Estonian music might be. Did Pärt's exile and eventual return to Estonia in 1992[171] change the composer's approach to *tintinnabuli* or was the evolution merely correlated with his departure from his homeland in 1980?

Unlike Tubin, Pärt has remained immensely popular in Estonia, and has become increasingly so since his return – a phenomenon corresponding to his rising international fame. Yet by far the most recorded and performed works in Pärt's catalog are the early ones like *Fratres*, *Für Alina*, and the *Cantus in Memoriam Benjamin Britten*.[172] There is no practical reason for such enduring popularity in comparison with the more recent works, few of which have gone on to enduring success; Pärt's music has consistently remained simple and is increasingly eminently available. The separation of M- and T-voices in *Miserere* must stand for something more than simply a technical, or even internally conceptual, decision. In a seldom-cited article in the New York Times, Pärt tells Arthur Lubow "the whole secret of *tintinnabuli*…[is in t]he two lines. One line is who we are, and the other line is who is holding and takes care of us."[173] Shed of the burden of censorship, of isolation, and of aesthetic questioning, Pärt post-exile "gradually transition[ed]" into writing music that appropriated the systematic, quasi-serial protest aesthetic of *tintinnabuli* without necessitating

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[170] Hillier, *Arvo Pärt.*, 24.

[171] Permanently, only in 2010.

[172] "Performances," Arvo Pärt Center, http://www.arvopart.ee/en/performances/

[173] Arthur Lubow, "The Sound of Spirit," New York Times, last modified 15 October 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/17/magazine/17part-t.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

the actual practice of "rigidly structured" musical creation.[174] It is perhaps this that Pärt means when he characterizes his later work as "palatable" instead of "theoretical." However, what this risks is very much living up to Fisk's characterization that "[i]nstead of giving us music that requires our own input and interpretation, he provides music that is already pre-interpreted."[175]

To pass such a judgment on Pärt would involve invoking the extra-musical information so often carelessly considered in musicological study of the composer's work. Pärt's lengthy and illustrative compositional output both in Estonia and in exile allows for a holistic study of the composer's evolution while accounting for constant variables, of which "music as protest" I believe to be the most significant. The characterization by Pärt of the M- and T-voices in the New York Times article cited in the previous paragraph, when conflated with my analysis of *Miserere*, suggests a breach in the conceptual utility of not only the composer's aesthetic, but the aesthetic's entire raison d'être as well. Fisk accuses composers such as Pärt (and Gorecki and Tavener) of writing music that "offers no dialogue, no ambiguity, and no inner life."[176] While such an accusation is wildly exaggerated given the context of Pärt's musical output as an Estonian composer during the Soviet occupation, a complete disassociation from the notion of a social role to Pärt's music would lend credence to Fisk's theory. As an exile of a totalitarian state, Pärt post-1980 no longer possessed an ideological adversary; there was no longer an existential reason to clothe or "encode" his ideas in "mathematical rules."[177] In a free society where Pärt's music is already palatable, the composer has become increasingly dependent on justifying his musical ends through musical means to which he, like his *tintinnabuli* voice, no longer holds on.

4. Toivo Tulev: Post-independence, Looking Outward

Remarkably little biographical or contextual information exists on the composer Toivo Tulev; there is a conspicuous absence of scholarly material even in his

[174] Smith, "An Interview with Arvo Pärt: Sources of Invention," 25.
[175] Fisk, "The New Simplicity: The Music of Górecki, Tavener and Pärt," 409.
[176] Ibid, 411.
[177] Smith, "An Interview with Arvo Pärt: Sources of Invention," 21.

native Estonian. Only a handful of interviews scattered among Estonian cultural journals like *Sirp* and *TeaterMuusikaKino*[178] provide any meaningful insight into Tulev, a composer who has occupied the seemingly irreconcilable positions of both insider and outsider in the Estonian musical world. The following discussion will serve not only as a holistic exploration of Tulev's most characteristic work, *Songs*, but as the first English-language scholarly analysis of Tulev, the composer.

Despite claims that Tulev "became more widely known in the 90s,"[179] and the 2008 Harmonia Mundi release of a composer portrait CD with the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir and Arvo Pärt-championing conductor Paul Hillier[180], Tulev's music has gained little of the traction of his aforementioned compatriot. Nevertheless, a *Choral Journal* review asserts that "the parallels between Pärt's and Tulev's music are numerous."[181] A former student of Tulev's, Benjamin Broening, characterizes the composer's sound world as relying,

> on beautifully calibrated dissonances in a generally diatonic and harmonically stable sound field, [with] resonant orchestration, accented appogiaturas, and wide melodic leaps.[182]

The description is in accordance with the *Choral Journal* article which suggests that, in its similarity to Pärt's style, Tulev is "perhaps more overtly dramatic."[183] There are also allusions to other members of the holy minimalism movement such as John Tavener, to whose influence – or aesthetic sensibility – are ascribed Tulev's propensity for using "melismata[e] and long-held string lines."[184] But Tulev is no minimalist. Nor is his music at all invested with Arvo Pärt's

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[178] Originally named *Sirp ja Vasar* (Hammer and Sickle) and begun under the Soviet of Estonia in 1940, the current incarnation of *Sirp* (Sickle) is the preeminent Estonian cultural journal. *TeaterMuusikaKino* or *TeMuKi* (Theatre, Music, Cinema) was begun after Estonian re-independence in 1992 and serves a parallel role to *Sirp*. Both are government-sponsored enterprises.

[179] Marju Riisikamp. "Vastab Toivo Tulev," TeaterMuusikaKino (TeMuKi), http://www.temuki.ee/2014/05/vastab-toivo-tulev/

[180] Toivo Tulev: *Songs*. Perf. Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir, Tallinn Chamber Orchestra, soloists Robin Blaze (countertenor), Marrit Gerretz-Traksmann (piano), Kädy Plaas (soprano), Raul Mikson (tenor), Toomas Tohert (tenor), Harry Traksmann (violin). Cond. Paul Hillier. Harmonia Mundi, 2008. CD.

[181] Rich Brunner, "Toivo Tulev: Songs by Robin Blaze; Paul Hillier," *The Choral Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 3 (OCTOBER 2009): 74.

[182] Benjamin Broening, "Tallinn: Estonian Music Days," *Tempo*, Vol. 62, No. 243 (Jan., 2008): 55.

[183] Brunner, "Toivo Tulev: Songs by Robin Blaze; Paul Hillier," 74.

[184] Anderson, "Tallinn: Estonian Music Days," 65.

characteristic – and arguably, overt – structural asceticism. "Simplicity has no other function than to bore me," states Tulev.[185] Tulev's music, outwardly simplistic but imbued with a consummate internal complexity, satisfies none of the conditions predetermined for its easy classification on the modern music spectrum. It deserves deeper exploration.

4.1 Tulev in the Context of Estonian Musical Trends pre-1991

The Nineties, the first decade of Estonian re-independence, were a decade during which not only Tulev but many other Estonian composers "became more widely known." Even before EU enlargement in 2004, before the Soviet tanks had left Estonia[186], a remarkable mobility in Estonian music had taken place. Composers like Toivo Tulev and Helena Tulve[187], among many others, left their nascent nation behind to seek, as Tulev writes, "new perspectives [and] new possibilities."[188] As newly-Estonian citizens, they had left behind

> stagnation, corruption, suppression of free speech, total control not only from outside, but control which had reached [its] desired goal – self-censorship.[189]

Inversely to Tubin, Tulev came of age as a composer during the Soviet occupation and entered his professional career as a composer only once Estonia had become independent. Prior to that point, Tulev had written music in the 1970s and 80s under the tutelage of Eino Tamberg[190], whom he later replaced as Head of Composition at the Estonian Academy of Music & Theatre. Tulev's career prior to 1991 was defined not solely by composition, but by the performance of Gregorian chant and other early music as well.[191]

Early music and medieval polyphony remain vital influences for Tulev. In the *TeMuKi* interview, he claims that "rigorous study of medieval polyphony has

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185 Toivo Tulev, Personal Interview, 6 February 2015, See Appendix A – 6.

186 See Section 1 and Jauhiainen (2007).

187 See Section 5

188 Toivo Tulev, Personal Interview, 6 February 2015, See Appendix A – 2.

189 Ibid.

190 The connection with Tamberg places Tulev in direct contact with Eduard Tubin. It is, after all, Tamberg whom the *Eduard Tubina Ühing* places as a composer directly inspired by Tubin. For more, see Section 2.3.

191 Marju Riisikamp, "Vastab Toivo Tulev," TeaterMuusikaKino (TeMuKi), http://www.temuki.ee/2014/05/vastab-toivo-tulev/

always been required…in Estonia,"[192] a function of Estonian music education that arose in conjunction with "an early music boom in Estonian musical life of the [E]ighties."[193] Of course, one can view such a phenomenon as a product of the success of Arvo Pärt and others like conductor Andres Mustonen, whose ensemble Hortus Musicus commissioned *Fratres* and other works from Pärt in the 1970s and 80s. In doing so, however, one overlooks the social and cultural basis behind the Estonian musical sphere's flirtation with holy minimalism, discussed in further detail in Sections 1.2.5 and 1.2.6. Tulev states that

> there is an aspect of spirituality and the innate gravitation toward [the] religious [in early music]. It was that much easier to quench those needs with early music than with music from Romantic and later periods of music history.[194]

The possibility that not only Tulev but his predecessor, Pärt, felt compelled to "counterbalance what was there" during the period of Soviet occupation in Estonia becomes more and more likely.[195] The turn toward a pre-occupation, arguably timeless "early music" aesthetic, was not a circumstance unique to Arvo Pärt in the 1970s but part of a larger movement in Estonian musical-cultural life later taken up by Toivo Tulev and others. The Estonian early music boom and its associated exponents occurred very much in the context of the Soviet period, instead of in an ascetic, "solitary" vacuum as Hillier[196] and other Pärt scholars[197] have suggested.

4.2 Analysis of *Songs* (2005)

4.2.1 Introduction

Songs is Tulev's most ambitious work. Scored for an ensemble that is "part Britten, part Stravinsky…part Penderecki" and also surely unimaginable in scope during Soviet occupation-era Estonia, the score demands two choirs, numerous vocal soloists, strings, two organs, two percussionists, two bassoonists

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[192] Ibid.
[193] Toivo Tulev, Personal Interview, 6 February 2015, See Appendix A – 1.
[194] Ibid.
[195] Ibid.
[196] Paul Hillier, "Arvo Pärt: Magister Ludi," *The Musical Times*, Vol. 130, No. 1753 (Mar., 1989): 134.
[197] See, for example, Skipp (2009).

both doubling contrabassoon, two oboes both doubling english horn and one also doubling duduk, and two flutes, one doubling alto flute and piccolo, and the other doubling alto flute, piccolo, and duduk.[198] The work, with a duration of almost thirty minutes, is performed with the entire ensemble in the shape of a cross with no breaks and with an almost constant textural presence of the two choirs. Commissioned by Paul Hillier during Tulev's residency with the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir during 2004-2005, the work came out of Paul Hillier's vision for a "polychoral piece with various groups of singers and instruments distributed around the concert venue" – Niguliste church in Tallinn, Estonia, which has hosted most of the ensemble's major choral premieres.[199]

Despite attestations to the work's "timelessness" [200] and Rich Brunner's contextualization of Tulev's music as "the second wave of Estonian composers"[201] following in the footsteps of Arvo Pärt, meaningful comparisons to Pärt's oeuvre are difficult to make. Unlike *Miserere*, for example, which is, like *Songs*, a work for ensemble, choir, and soloists, based on a religious text and of substantial length, Tulev's work is anything but minimal. It eschews Pärt's characteristic austere soloistic passages in favour of dramatic, harmonically complex *tutti* sections. Tulev's vocal writing espouses contrasts, from homophonic harmonic writing [see Example 4.2.1-1], to breathing and whispering effects [see Example 4.2.1-2], to vocal-instrumental duos [see Example 4.2.1-3]. The instrumental writing throughout *Songs* is mainly harmonic with gestural inflections, such as the flute's embellishment of the solo Soprano line in the third movement [see Example 4.2.1-4]. A consistent integration of the vocal and instrumental material permeates the work; unlike Pärt, who also creates compound vocal-instrumental textures, like in the *Dies Irae* of *Miserere* [see Example 3.2.2-3], Tulev employs timbre to distinguish the vocal and instrumental lines. Rarely is one pairing of voice and instrument repeated. Tulev, as if the ensemble in *Songs* is a symphonic unit, uses voices, both in

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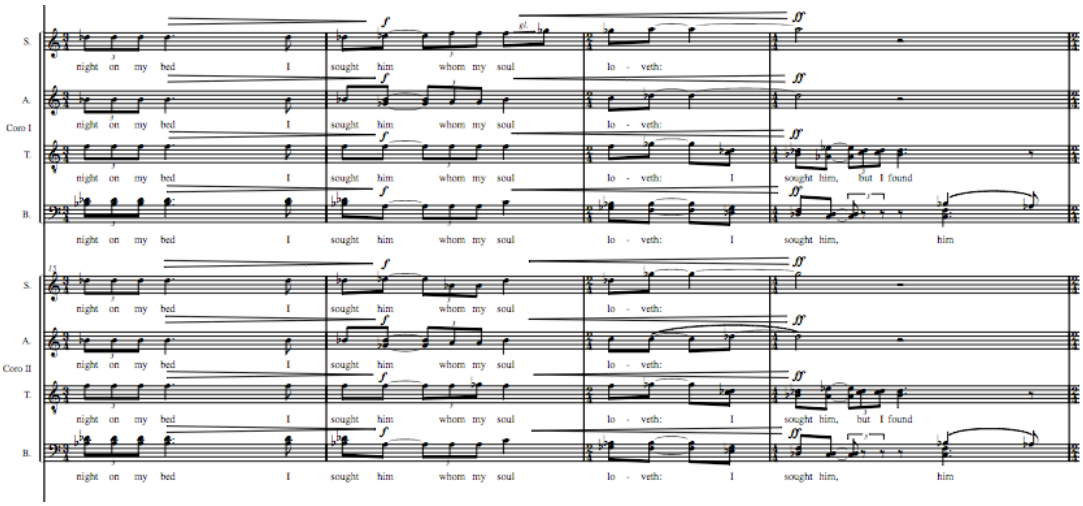
198 Rich Brunner, "Toivo Tulev: Songs by Robin Blaze; Paul Hillier," 74.

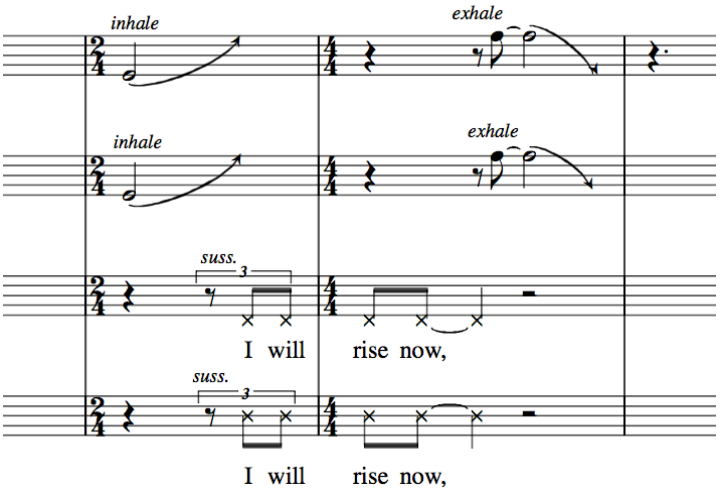
199 Toivo Tulev: *Songs*, Perf. Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir, Tallinn Chamber Orchestra, soloists Robin Blaze (countertenor), Marrit Gerretz-Traksmann (piano), Kädy Plaas (soprano), Raul Mikson (tenor), Toomas Tohert (tenor), Harry Traksmann (violin). Cond. Paul Hillier. Harmonia Mundi, 2008. CD.

200 Anderson. "Tallinn: Estonian Music Days," *Tempo,* Vol. 57, No. 226 (Oct., 2003): 66.

201 Rich Brunner, "Toivo Tulev: Songs by Robin Blaze; Paul Hillier," 74.



Example 4.2.1-1: mm 15-18, Songs, I (Toivo Tulev)



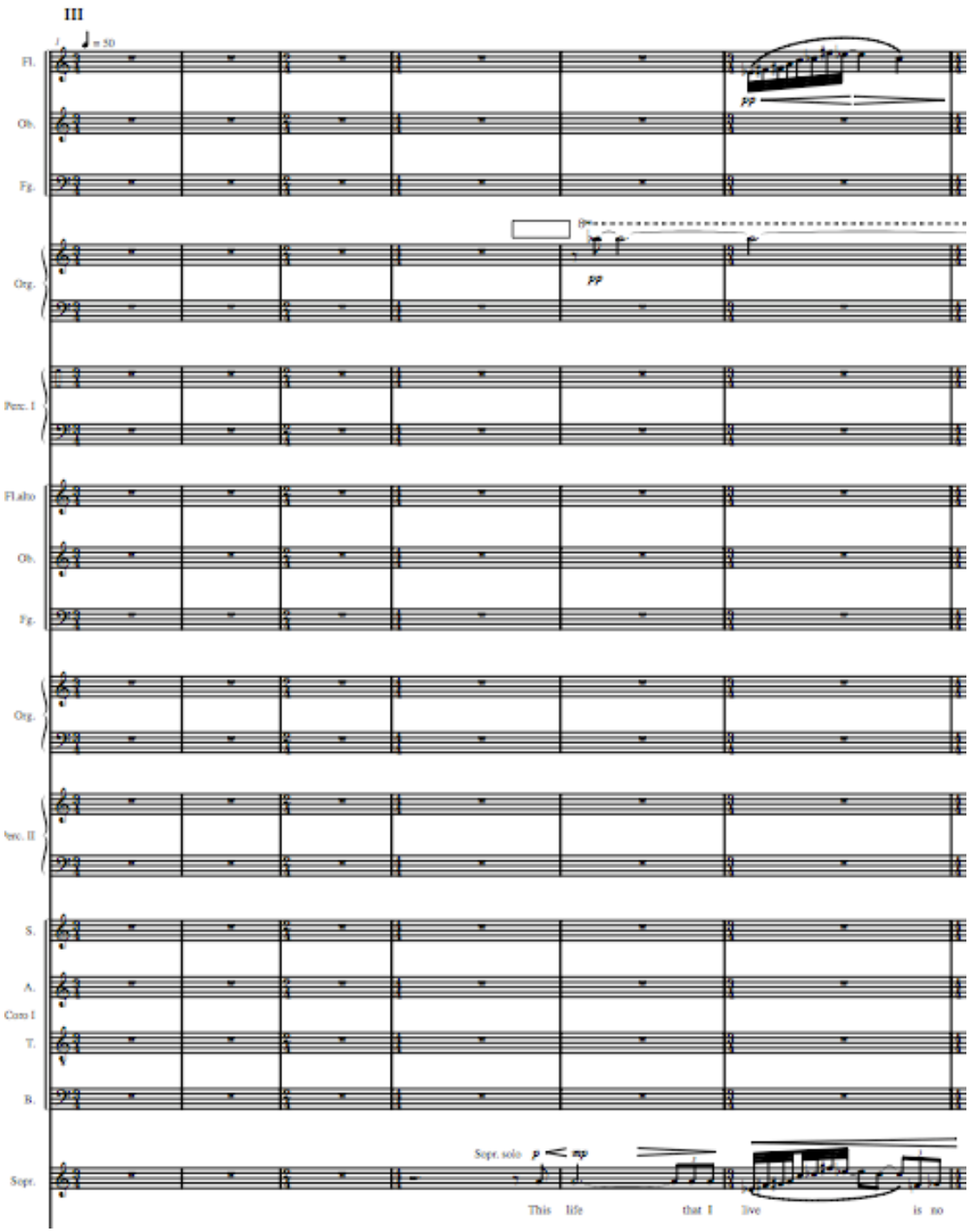
Example 4.2.1-2: mm 21-22, Songs, I (Toivo Tulev)

homophonic and soloistic textures, to layer the already timbrally complex sonorities provided by the instrumental forces.

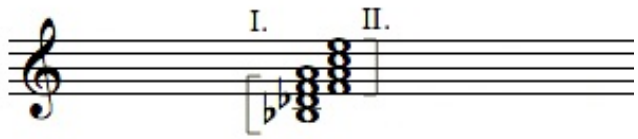
4.2.2 Systematic Applications of Tonalities in Tulev's *Songs*

Brunner characterizes Tulev's sonorities as "root[ed] in overtones" and much of the surface harmonic material of the piece is indeed formed of overlapping, suspended held notes inflected by a kind of gestural filigree.[202] Yet, the underlying harmony of *Songs* is remarkably static. The first movement is an elaboration of a Bb minor tonality, often arranged as a Bb minor major seventh chord, where the A natural (the raised seventh scale degree) repeatedly resolves to the tonic. The effect is never final and the second movement, centred around

[202] Ibid.

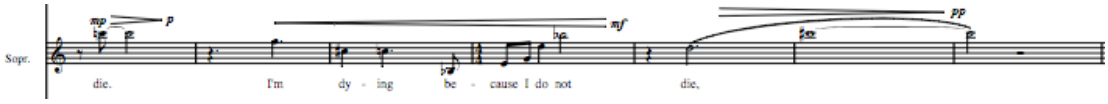


Example 4.2.1-4: mm 1-6, Songs, III (Toivo Tulev)



Example 4.2.2-1: harmonic reduction of the first and second movements, Songs (Toivo Tulev)

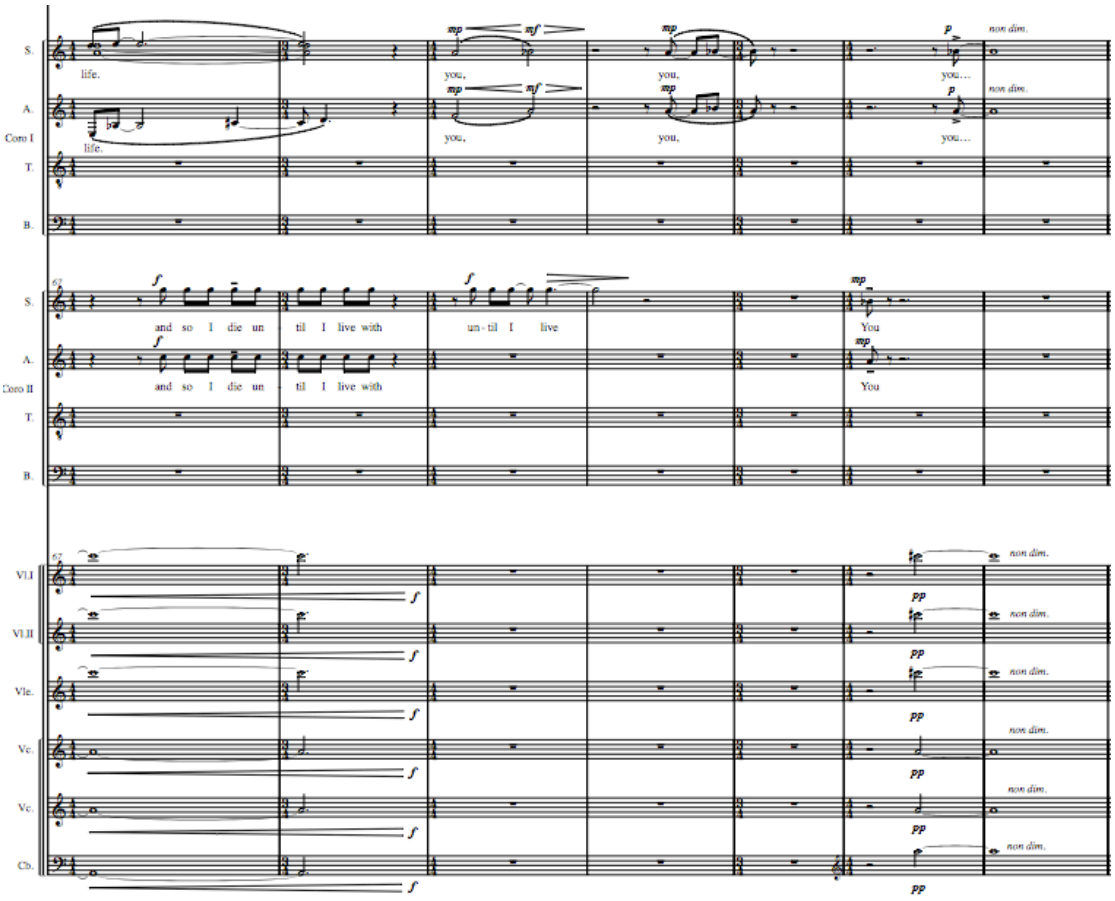
an F Major seventh, creates a further layer of thirds [see Example 4.2.2-1] which is subsequently blurred by Tulev's insistence on the second and third scale degrees in the F minor scale (Gb and Ab). The third movement dispenses with the stacked Bb minor chord entirely. In addition to a striking change in texture (from dense choral and instrumental writing to thin, lingering solo passages), the harmony has likewise focused on a stable A Major tonality. While the modality of Tulev's writing in the third movement often suggests A minor as well, the leaps of the soprano line, characterized as "nothing short of astounding" in Brunner's *Choral Journal* review, constantly outline C# [see Example 4.2.2-2] both from below, using the C natural as a leading tone[203], and from above, with the D natural in the place of the C# as an unresolved (and unresolving) appoggiatura.



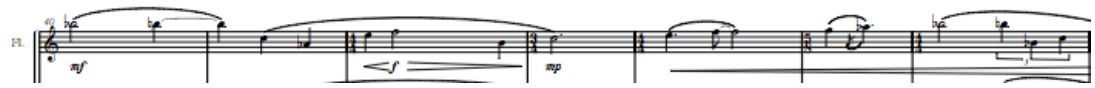
Example 4.2.2-2: mm 34-40, Songs, III (Toivo Tulev)

The following two movements, *Nigra Sum* and *Behold, Thou Art Fair*, are altogether more harmonically complex, yet both also reference preceding harmonies directly. The enigmatic ending of the third movement, final in its A-C# tonality yet uncertain because of the choir's insistence on A-Bb [see Example 4.2.2-3], suggests the initial Bb major/minor opening of the fourth movement. Tulev eventually does settle on A Major yet again, but he uses the Db (the minor third in the Bb minor triad), enharmonically spelled as C#, to get there. The fifth movement, the work's longest, initially seems almost analytically impregnable, a quasi atonal rising tenor solo line supported by mostly *pianissimo*-marked upper strings making little sense of any harmonic direction. However, it is increasingly clear that the tonality is once again a completely fixed one: the scales repeatedly outline a C Major dominant seventh chord. By pairing the major third interval of the chord (E-natural) with the Bb seventh in ascending lines [see Example 4.2.2-4], Tulev, increasingly, centres the harmony of the fifth movement on C Major. Yet, F minor is present as well in the scalar motion, hinted particularly by the presence of the Ab and the primacy of C-natural as both tonic (in C Major) and dominant (in F minor, suggested by the dominant seventh in the C Major chord.) The sixth movement, the work's climax, retains the fifth's C

[203] Ibid.

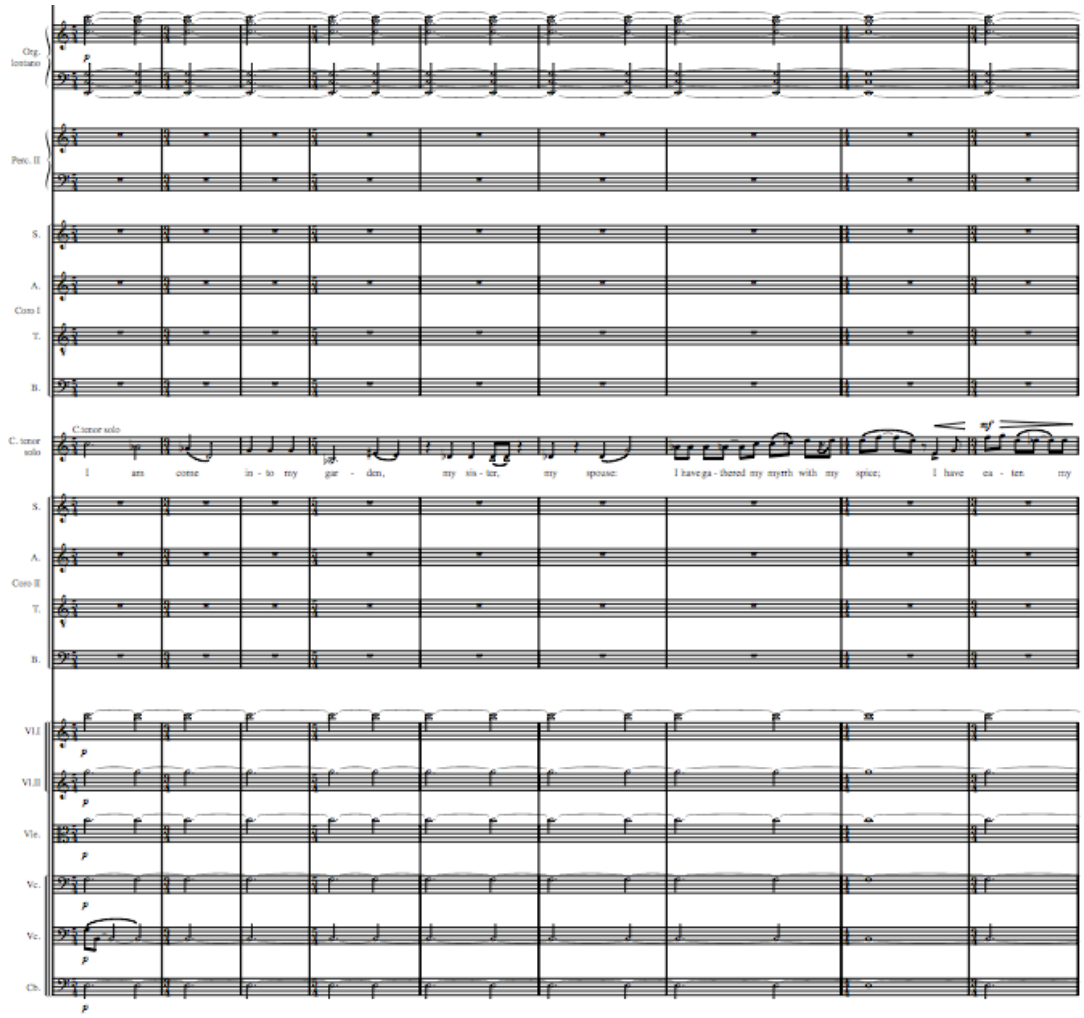


Example 4.2.2-3: mm 67-73, Songs, III (Toivo Tulev)

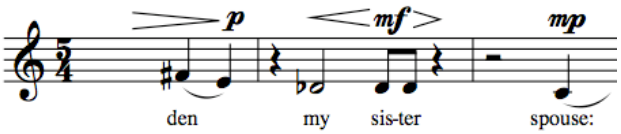


Example 4.2.2-4: mm 40-46, Songs, V (Toivo Tulev)

Major tonality, yet presents it in an even more final, stable way: the strings hold the C Major chord throughout the three-minute movement, as does the organ [see Example 4.2.2-5]. The counter-tenor soloist, the choirs, and the remaining instruments colour the harmony with highly chromatic, modal material that nevertheless stubbornly resolves on C. Tulev prefers an F#-E-natural-Db-C-natural line [see Example 4.2.2-6] that references the minor modality of the C Major scale he has constructed. The counter-tenor solo, and arguably the entire preceding movement, are instantly re-contextualized by the abrupt harmonic change in the seventh movement, *Reveal, Reveal Your Presence*: suddenly the tonality is both F minor and Bb minor. Organ 1 enters on the downbeat of the first measure of *Reveal…*; Organ 2 enters on the second beat of the same measure, while string *pizzicati* mark both entrances [see Example



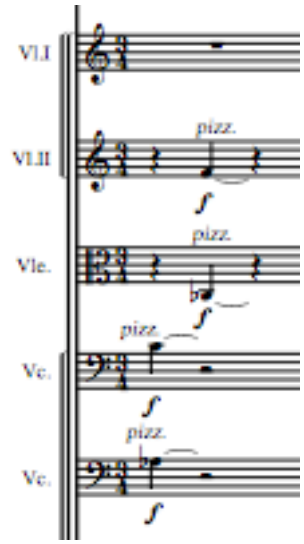
Example 4.2.2-5: mm 1-9, Songs, VI (Toivo Tulev)



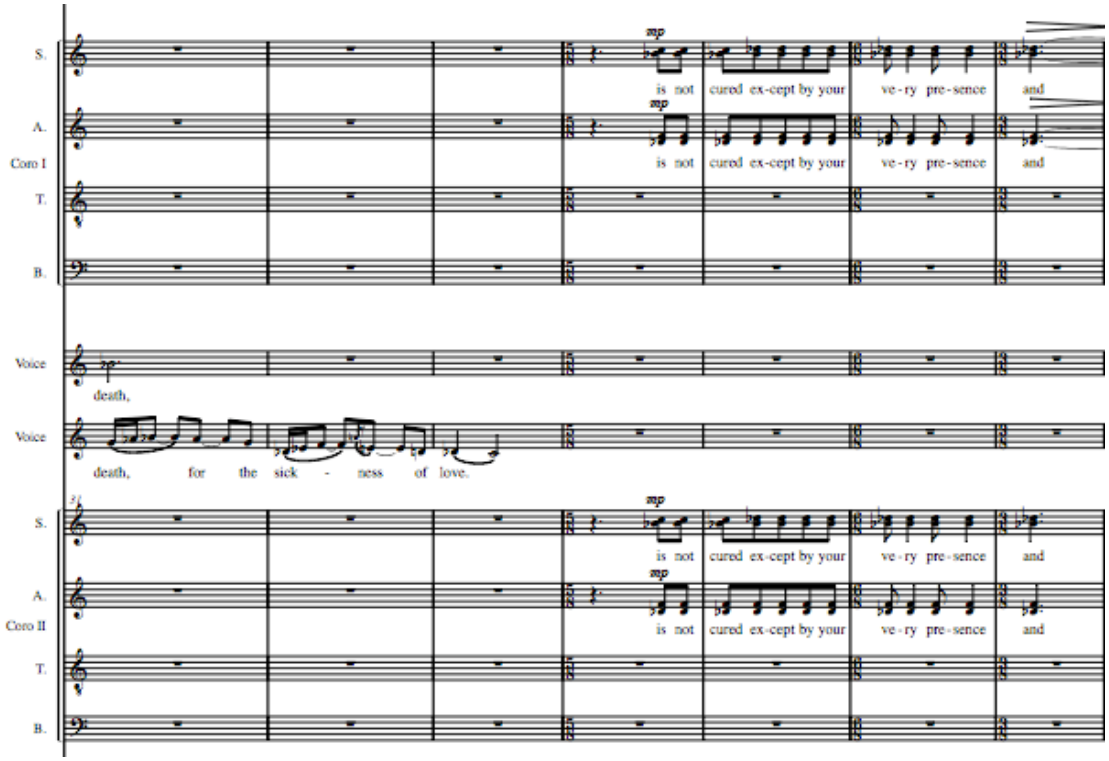
Example 4.2.2-6: mm 28-30, Soprano part in Choir 1, Songs, VI (Toivo Tulev)

4.2.2-7]. The seventh movement gradually applies the F minor tonality as the minor dominant of Bb minor. Repetitions of the Bb minor triad in the choral parts [see Example 4.2.2-8] further strengthen Bb minor as the tonic.

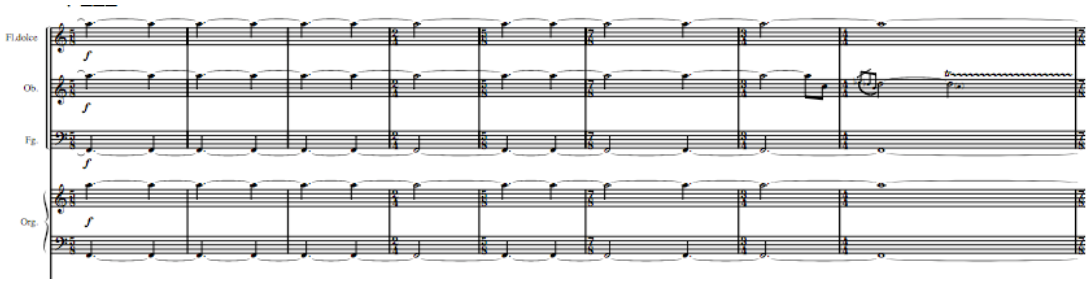
The final movement, *Mira Que la Dolencia de Amor*, stands entirely distinct from the preceding seven, as a harmonic summation of the work and as a transmutation of the material in a seemingly entirely different direction. The opening of *Mira…* presents a static F Major chord [see Example 4.2.2-9], perceived as a dominant given the seventh movement's Bb minor tonality. Instead of decisively resolving back to Bb minor, Tulev enharmonically respells the Gb and Ab scale tones (mentioned in the second movement) as F# and G#,



Example 4.2.2-7: mm 1, Songs, VII (Toivo Tulev)

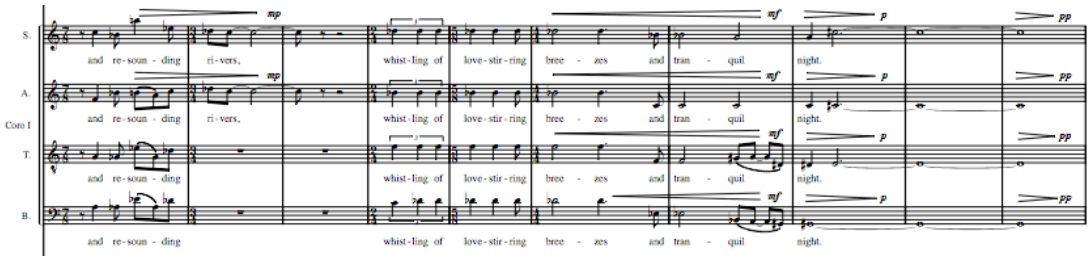


Example 4.2.2-8: mm 31-37, Songs, VII (Toivo Tulev)



Example 4.2.2-9: mm 1-8, Songs, VIII (Toivo Tulev)

and re-centres the piece in C# minor [see Example 4.2.2-10]. The G# is

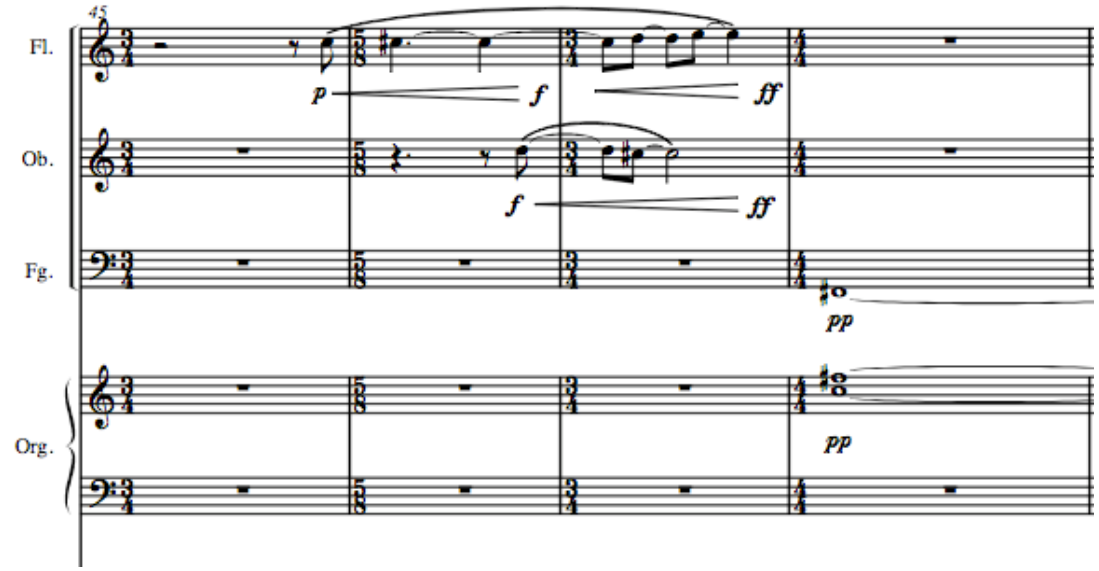


Example 4.2.2-10: mm 9-18, Songs, VIII (Toivo Tulev)

respelled back as an Ab in measure 20 in both the lower instruments and voices, shifting the harmony to the mode of the fifth and sixth movements, suggested by the rising G# (Ab)-B-natural-C-natural line in the *coro lontano* [see Example 4.2.2-11]. The implied Db from the F#-E-natural-(D-natural)-Db-C-natural

Example 4.2.2-11: mm 19-22, Songs, VIII (Toivo Tulev)

descending line from the sixth movement [see Example 4.2.2-6] has become enharmonically re-spelled as a C#, implying the dominant key of an entirely new tonality: B Major [see Example 4.2.2-12]. Indeed, the rest of the movement establishes B Major (with the dominant seventh A added on) as the final, home key of the movement, though the effect is perhaps still too subtle and brief to make the modulation seem final in the context of the entire thirty-minute work.

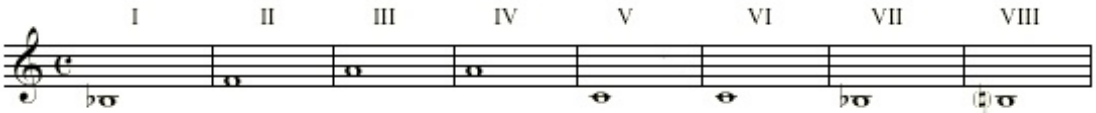


Example 4.2.2-12: mm 45-48, Songs, VIII (Toivo Tulev)

I have devoted considerable attention in the preceding paragraphs to a conventional harmonic analysis of a piece written in 2005: why? Tulev writes, about *Songs*, that

> the music…arose from something [that] could be called a non-dualistic dream, [a] craving for unity. At the time I wrote the music, the pain of being separated had grown close to unbearable.[204]

The harmonic analysis presented in this section should therefore not be interpreted as merely circumstantial. The case for unity in Tulev's *Songs* given such varied instrumentation, numerous textual sources, and extended duration must be made through other means, namely, harmonic and textural analysis. An initial, reductionist approach to the tonal centres of the eight movements of *Songs* [see Example 4.2.2-13] revisits both the initial key relationships presented in Example 4.2.2-1 but leaves unexplained Tulev's eventual use of B Major where one, in vain search of symmetry or unity, might expect to find something more closely related to the chord tones presented in the initial movements. The

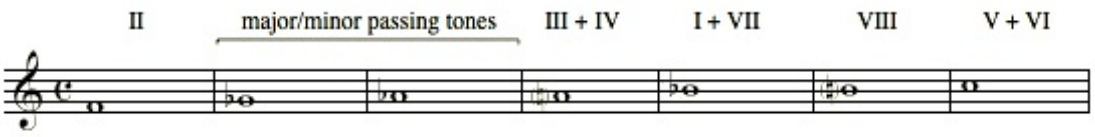


Example 4.2.2-13: Tonal centres of all eight movements, Songs (Toivo Tulev)

common tones in Example 4.2.2-1 forming, nominally, an F Major third, deserve deeper exploration. Besides their dominant function in I and VII and tonic function in II, Tulev commonly exchanges minor for major (and vice versa) so the F and A (or Ab, in this case) also form the minor fifth of I and VII, the minor tonic of II, and, crucially the frequently reoccurring minor iv chord of V and VI. Further, the F minor scale tones of Gb and Ab, first mentioned in my harmonic analysis of the second movement of *Songs* and used frequently thereafter, are the same pivot notes for Tulev's eventual modulation to B Major.[205] Example 4.2.2-13, including the F minor scale tones, can thus be reinterpreted as Example 4.2.2-14, wherein a rising scalar passage as seen in the fifth movement, *Behold, Thou Art Fair*, also suggests a clear melodic and structural purpose for the eighth movement's surprising modulation. Effectively, the composer's melodic material

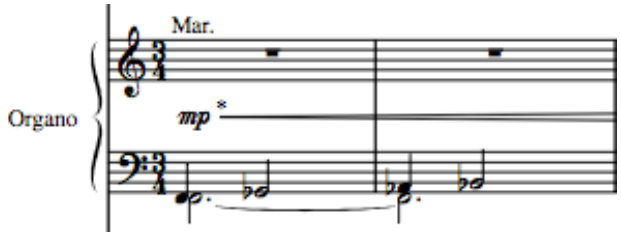
[204] Toivo Tulev, Personal Interview, 6 February 2015, See Appendix A – 3.

[205] In their enharmonic spellings of F# and G#



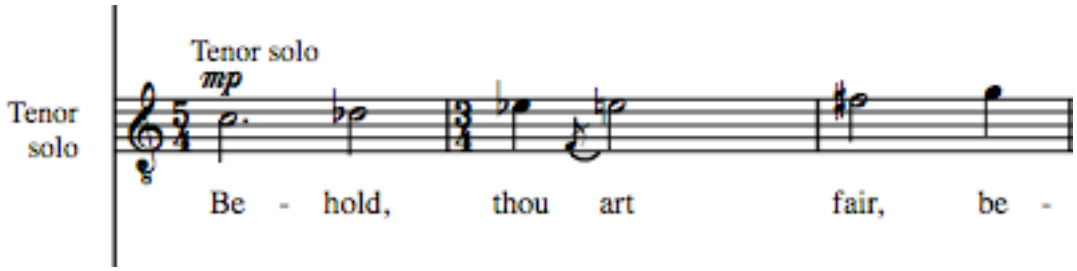
Example 4.2.2-14: Tonal centres of all eight movements, revised, Songs (Toivo Tulev)

portends the piece's macro-harmonic material, suggesting an almost systematic approach to selecting pitches that belies the work's otherwise intuitive material. The pitch set itself is explicitly stated at the beginning of the third movement [see Example 4.2.1-4] in the solo soprano part, with the enharmonic spellings of F# and G# for Gb and Ab, but the melodic material, in general, is supposed from the very beginning [see Example 4.2.2-15]. It is, perhaps, no surprise that the



Example 4.2.2-15: mm 1-4, Songs, I (Toivo Tulev)

ascending melodic tenor line at the beginning of the fifth movement [see Example 4.2.2-16] is an exact intervallic transposition to the fifth of Example 4.2.2-14, and that the preponderance of Tulev's melodic material in *Songs* synthesizes the piece's macro-harmonic structure into a new mode.



Example 4.2.2-16: mm 1-3, Songs, V (Toivo Tulev)

4.2.3 A Context for Textural "Silence" and Complexity

Any remaining, tenuous connections between Tulev and Pärt must be further questioned given the two composers' diametrically opposed respective understandings of texture, namely the interplay of sound vs silence. In Pärt, silence is of both structural and spiritual importance, if the latter may be of any analytical relevance. In Tulev's *Songs*, however, silence is almost never to be found. There are, in total, two moments of complete rest in the first movement,

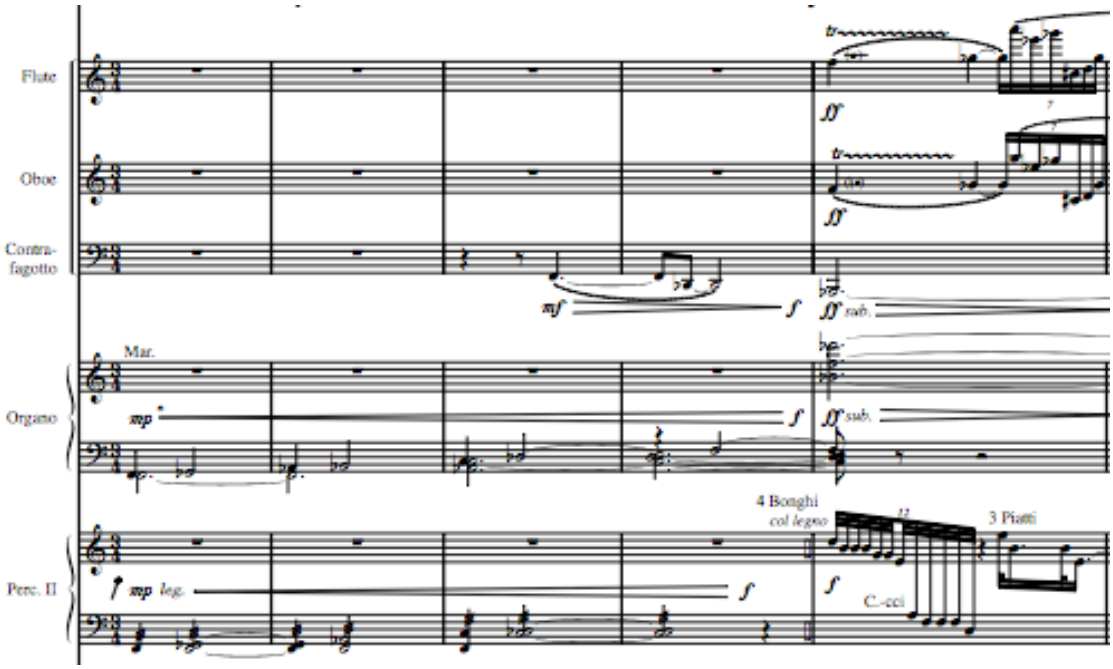
in measure 14 of approximately two beats, and in measure 46, the movement's final measure, lasting exactly one beat. The second movement, likewise, has two silent moments, each of approximately one bar (three beats) duration. One may proceed through the entire work, the eight movements of which sound *attacca* throughout, to catalogue all moments of rest, but such a project would ignore the crucial fact of *Songs*' concert venue[206], for which the work was commissioned. The "resonant, airy acoustics" of Niguliste would render Tulev's ephemeral silences little more than breaks in the otherwise thick texture and would therefore mean that there is no true moment of silence, nor one meant to be, in *Songs* whatsoever.[207]

Instead, Tulev manufactures the silence-sound balance texturally, especially through the manipulation of harmonic rhythm. Unlike Pärt, in whose music contrast is created by the "rhythm" of silence to texture, Tulev's approach is both more subtle and ultimately more complex and nuanced. Given Tulev's distaste for "exaggerated simplification of musical texture," *Songs* follows a particular pattern for harmonic development that is intrinsically linked with texture. [208] A particular tonality is created through the accumulation of a set of pitches until a certain density is reached, after which a free set of 16th- or 32nd-notes leads to a more tonally settled section that is almost always a definitive statement of the movement's tonality. For example, in the first movement, an F minor mode containing the pitches F-Gb-Ab-Bb-C-Db-Eb is presented in measures 1-4, until the entrance of the bongos and woodwinds in 32nd notes and trills upsets the accumulation of tension over the course of measures 5-8 and finally collapses into a stable Bb minor harmony in bar 9, where the choirs enter [see Example 4.2.3-1]. 32nd-note motives in measure 13 in the Oboe and Violin I parts elicit responses from percussion parts in measures 15-19 which propel the harmonic rhythm of the choir and ensemble into another moment of pitch accumulation, until harmonic stability arrives yet again in measure 20 [see Example 4.2.3-2]. An extended version of the same pattern begins with a short

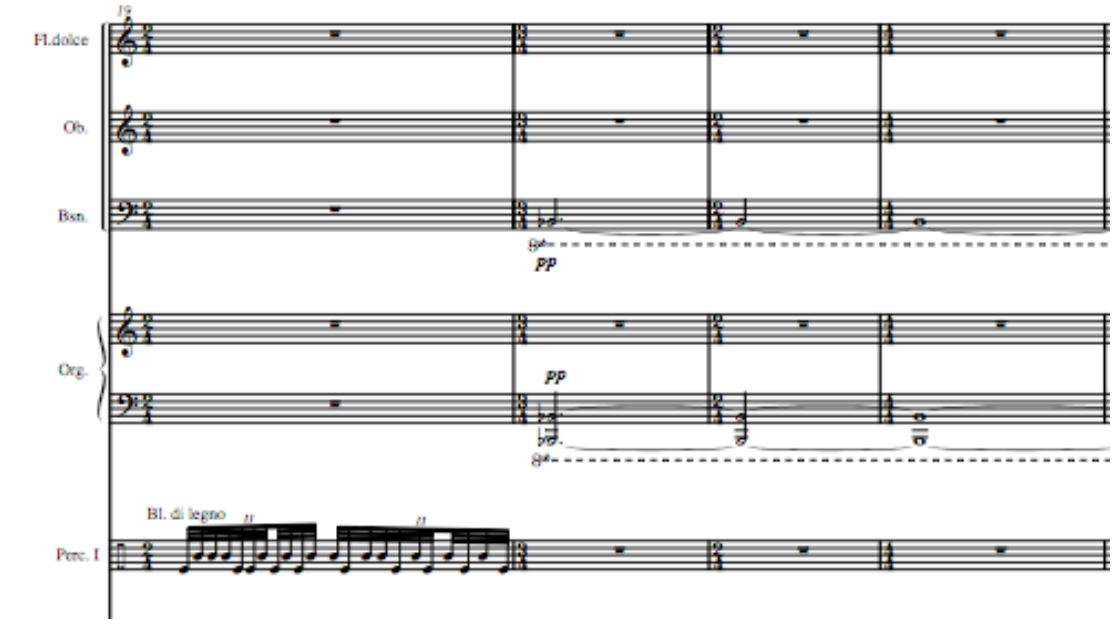
[206] See Section 4.2.1

[207] Toivo Tulev: *Songs*, Perf. Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir, Tallinn Chamber Orchestra, soloists Robin Blaze (countertenor), Marrit Gerretz-Traksmann (piano), Kädy Plaas (soprano), Raul Mikson (tenor), Toomas Tohert (tenor), Harry Traksmann (violin). Cond. Paul Hillier. Harmonia Mundi, 2008. CD.

[208] Toivo Tulev, Personal Interview, 6 February 2015, See Appendix A – 6.

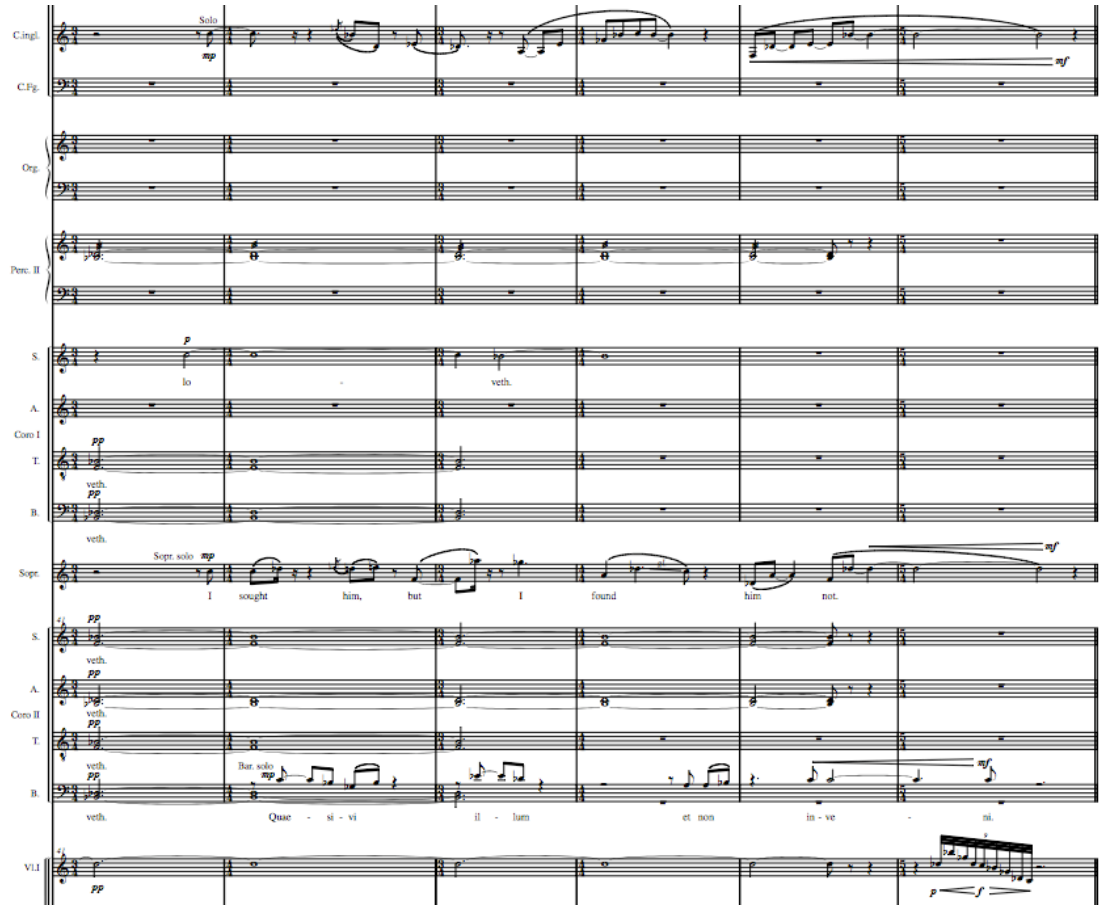


Example 4.2.3-1: mm 1-5, Songs, I (Toivo Tulev)



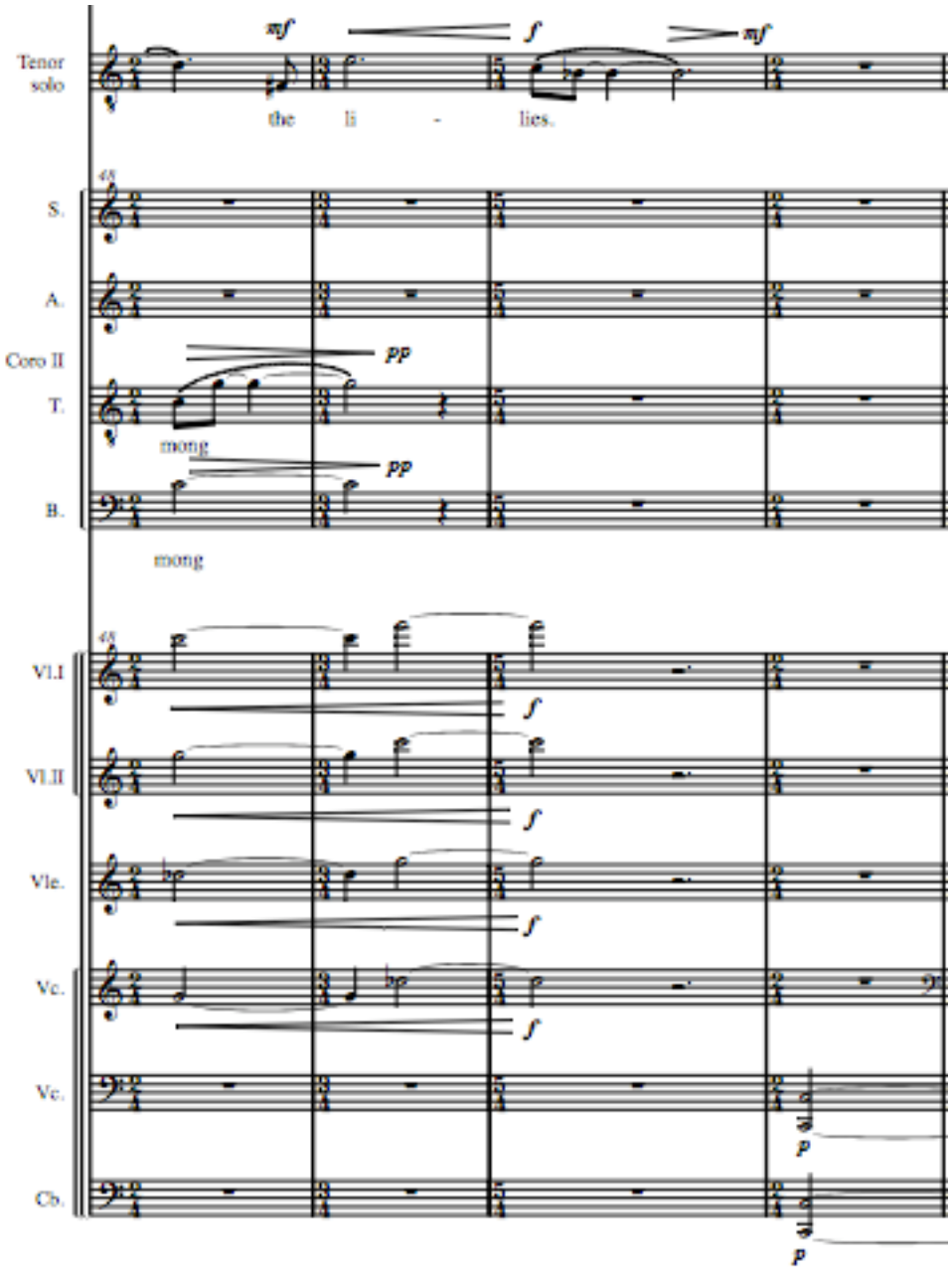
Example 4.2.3-2: mm 19-22, Songs, I (Toivo Tulev)

32nd-note gesture in the alto flute in measure 24 and continues until measure 35 where the texture and pitch collection reduce to a stable Bb major tonality. A *rubato* 32nd-note motive in the flute in measure 41 heralds the movement's final episode of harmonic change and pitch accumulation which resolves into a mimicking 32nd-note motive in the Violin I part, leaving only the soprano and English horn parts holding a Bb-Db minor third [see Example 4.2.3-3]: the first movement's final moment of repose.



Example 4.2.3-3: mm 41-46, Songs, I (Toivo Tulev)

The accumulation of pitch in *Songs* has more than vertical – or, broadly, textural – meaning. In the fifth movement, the piece's longest example of pitch accumulation begins from the first measure and lasts until measure 51. Until the entrance of the organ, marimba, and lower string C-natural drones, there has been no stable tonal center. But directly before that [see Example 4.2.3-4], Tulev has stacked all of the constituent pitches of the mode presented in Example 4.2.2-16 vertically. Not only is the tension between harmonic stability and accumulation, between textural complexity and simplicity, omnipresent in the composer's work, the nature of that tension is inextricably linked to the macro-harmonic scheme of the piece. The various variations on the central mode presented in Example 4.2.2-16 and discussed at length in Section 4.2.2 create the narrative, horizontal building-blocks of the piece but also serve in establishing and destroying the vertical harmonic structure of the piece as it oscillates between textural complexity and tonal (and textural) stability. Essentially, the extent of Tulev's use of any set of pitches also serves as a fatalistic sign of that tonality's unavoidable destruction, given that the accumulation of pitches



Example 4.2.3-4: mm 48-51, Songs, V (Toivo Tulev)

becomes more and more chromatic and unstable vertically in relation to its horizontality. As Tulev states,

> [t]here are always hidden values, which reveal themselves only through the musical interpretation…[M]usic acts as a translational interface.[209]

Perhaps, in ways entirely other than any claim of "parallels between Pärt…and Tulev" might suggest, there exists a very interesting commentary on the divine

[209] Ibid, See Appendix A – 5.

and the earthly in *Songs*, that, faithful to its subject matter, is at the very heart of the work's unity.[210]

4.3 Conclusion

In analysing Tulev's work, one must invariably keep in mind that the composer is not necessarily an archetype of Estonian contemporary music post-1991; neither can he so neatly be categorized as representing the second wave of contemporary Estonian composers, as Brunner suggests. Yet, his inclusion in my research reveals considerable insight on a number of strands in the transition in Estonian music history from Soviet occupation to post-1991 independence. These are, namely: the extent of local (folk) influence on classical music, the interplay of voice and text, the application of compositional systems, and the relation of composer to state (and the nature of the state, as well). There is also, of course, the more direct relation of Tulev's *Songs* to Pärt's *Miserere* as extended works for large mixed vocal-instrumental ensembles dealing with sacred texts. There is, further, the link of Paul Hillier as the former music director of the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir who pioneered the music of both Tulev and Pärt outside the small nation's borders.

Most importantly, Tulev serves as an example of an Estonian composer whose career has almost wholly been defined after his return from living and studying outside of Estonia. Unlike Pärt and Tubin, for whom there is a body of work pre-exile which serves to contextualize the music written during and post-exile, no such context exists for Tulev. Moreover, rather than conforming to a pattern wherein being positioned geographically in Estonia leads to distinct musical results compared to music written abroad or in exile, with Tulev, one simply cannot make such a conclusion. The work may only be judged and interpreted based on its analysis by the aforementioned factors; a narrative for Estonian music post-1991 might ultimately have little in common with that during Soviet occupation.

Or, does Tulev, writing in 2015, make a case that a post-1991 Estonia has itself invariably changed, as if composers coming of age in an environment of re-

[210] Brunner, "Toivo Tulev: Songs by Robin Blaze; Paul Hillier," 74.

independence no longer look upon the same land? In addressing the question of leaving Estonia to live and study abroad in 1991, Tulev writes:

> [I]t was surprising for me, and that was my first big surprise, how little of positive use people made of the freedom that was out there. (I see the same now here in Estonia.)[211]

He goes on to say that

> [T]here were and are the questions of musical aesthetics and the role music plays for the individual growth of a human, but [sic] also its meaning in the society. For me, the music had to do with the truth, the road and the life. Less with its aesthetic contents, which seemed to be more in the foreground in the West.[212]

Given the thoroughly addressed question of the social relevance of music in Estonian history and society, *Songs* raises further questions of Tulev's role as a composer in Estonia and his relationship with the socio-musical narrative of his native country. In the *TeMuKi* interview, when asked about the nature of his relationship with folk music and any existing pressure to write music in any Estonian style, Tulev responded:

> I cannot imagine myself in such a role at all. I am very proud of the heritage that we have, but it remains alien…I have no emotional or intellectual attachment to Estonian folk music.[213]

Indeed, *Songs* has little common ground with more archetypal, canonic Estonian works by composers like Veljo Tormis, though Tulev recalls singing Tormis' music "with joy."[214] Yet, neither can one find many aesthetic similarities between Pärt's oeuvre and Tormis. Relationships between composers of contemporary classical music in Estonia and the country itself are not based on aesthetic criteria but on national consciousness and its changing face in the wake of re-independence in 1991.

In an illuminating commentary on his process of creation, Tulev says that "the process starts in accordance with the design of an inner logic but everything

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211 Toivo Tulev, Personal Interview, 6 February 2015, See Appendix A – 2.
212 Ibid.
213 Marju Riisikamp, "Vastab Toivo Tulev," TeaterMuusikaKino (TeMuKi), http://www.temuki.ee/2014/05/vastab-toivo-tulev/
214 Ibid.

beyond is the preserve of the unconscious."[215] Thus, the inner logic of *Songs*, in its almost systematic application of the composer's mode in a macro-harmonic sense and in the very intimate push and pull of tension and release at any given moment, is its own unity of the rational and the divine in Tulev's lexicon. In search of unity, or as Tulev calls it, "the lost counterbalance," there is the almost ignored assumption of a duality that must be bridged – something omnipresent in Estonian musical life pre-1991 given the struggle for independence and, at the very least, cultural survival.[216] In no longer newly-independent Estonia (Tulev composed *Songs* fourteen years into the country's re-independence), with the absence of the "other" as the Soviet Union represented for so long, the question of identity itself is one that has had to be entirely reconsidered. And so in considering the aforementioned strands of folk music, compositional systems, and composer-state relationships, the so-far elusive strand of text-setting is one that perhaps holds a greater answer.

As discussed with some specificity in Section 3 in the context of Pärt's music and more generally in Section 1.2.1 of the Introduction, the setting of Estonian text in choral music had been perhaps the most effective means of linguistic (and, therefore, cultural) survival in Soviet-occupied Estonia. No longer an existential topic, the setting of text, even of non-Estonian text, has evolved in Estonian contemporary music much the same way as the function of choral singing and song festivals has become more a matter of cultural display and historicization of the Singing Revolution rather than the revolution itself. Tulev claims that, "[t]he phonetic contents of the text seems to be of equal importance with that [sic] of the semantic one," but it is seldom that one sees a *regilaul*-esque rigor applied to the setting of the Latin, English, and Spanish texts in *Songs*.[217] The approach is far more nuanced and specific. Earlier in the interview, Tulev espouses a more illustrative view:

> But it happens now and then that the existing texts do not fully suite [sic], be it because of its [sic] phonetic or other values, to the general atmosphere and focus of the music. In these moments I tend to hear

[215] Ibid.

[216] Toivo Tulev, Personal Interview, 6 February 2015, See Appendix A – 6.

[217] Ibid, See Appendix A – 5.

> besides the music also words and have dared to use them as an additional text source.[218]

What Tulev is describing is more than simply the application of text to a piece containing spiritual material communicated through musical means. There is a fundamental reappraisal of the role of text vs the role of music in Estonia, something that will likewise be demonstrated in my analysis of Helena Tulve's *North Wind, South Wind* in Section 5. Text, previously concrete and imbued with social and national resonance, has been abstracted, retaining little more, if not less, communicative function than the music itself: it has become subordinate to the greater logic or concept. "Music works as a translational interface," concludes Tulev, and in *Songs*, it is not the text but the music that translates and transfers a cultural, national, or entirely personal message.[219]

5. Helena Tulve: On the Periphery of a Globalized World

At the age of nineteen, Helena Tulve, an Estonian composer who has been labelled "the leading light of her generation,"[220] packed her bags in search of "the ephemeral, flexible, emotional." [221] Alongside her, though bound for other destinations, were Mari Vihmand, Jüri Reinvere[222] – and, of course, Toivo Tulev. The aforementioned composers formed the first post-independence outflow of Estonian talent, fleeing what Tulev had defined earlier as "self-censorship;" an act that Tulve, on the other hand, characterizes as a "very natural [decision] to catch the opportunity."[223] Since 1991, Tulve has indeed established herself as one of Estonia's foremost cultural exports and beyond a clear personal language, she has also arguably contributed to the development of a new musical identity inside Estonia: she is probably the nation's most imitated composer. Yet, her aesthetic – Broening describes it as a "distinct and coherent harmonic world

[218] Ibid, See Appendix A – 3.
[219] Ibid, See Appendix A – 5.
[220] Broening, "Tallinn: Estonian Music Days," 54.
[221] Helena Tulve, Personal Interview, 7 February 2015, See Appendix B – 1.
[222] Ibid.
[223] Ibid.

[with] a dream-like sense of continuity" – is, without question, personal and inimitable.[224] Tulve describes her own way of writing music as a

> detailed look to different phenomena, multiple and very various local expressions of things, but always trying to see the similar and uniting that may not always be visible.[225]

In this sense, her 2010 composition, *North Wind, South Wind* is a particularly intimate, inimitable piece, both in its instrumentation, and in the nature of its subject matter and how it relates to the composer. As an exemplar of the composer's insular yet worldly-aware persona, it serves as a fascinating window into Tulve's sound world. The ensuing discussion, much like that of Tulev, constitutes the first English-language scholarly analysis of Tulve's music.

5.1 The Spiritual and the Marginal: Tulve and New Estonian Music

Spiritual fervour and mystical aestheticism should be unlikely musical trends in any nation or culture where only 29% of the population identifies itself with any religious movement – one of the lowest shares of religious affiliation anywhere in the world.[226] Yet the incorporation of texts from the Song of Songs to Rumi and others is a common thread in new Estonian music. It is neither by coincidence nor by plan that both Tulev's *Songs* and Tulve's *North Wind, South Wind* incorporate at least one, or both (in Tulve's case) of the aforementioned texts. Tulve considers the act of composition to be an "artistic, intellectual, and spiritual quest."[227] Her music reflects this: it is both at the frontiers of compositional technique[228] and also very much unconcerned with technique altogether. She states,

> It's so strange, the way I listen. The music in my brain dissolves to the extent that I no longer hear the underlying structure. My head's filled

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[224] Broening, "Tallinn: Estonian Music Days," 54.

[225] Helena Tulve, Personal Interview, 7 February 2015, See Appendix B – 2.

[226] See: http://pub.stat.ee/px-web.2001/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=PC0454&lang=1. Though the statistic is accurate in terms of affiliation to established religions, Estonians maintain a variety of pre-Christian customs and celebrations, most of which relate to the seasons and to nature, such as *Jaanipäev* (St. John's Day), which occurs on the summer solstice and is a public holiday.

[227] Helena Tulve, Personal Interview, 7 February 2015, See Appendix B – 5.

[228] Tulve's biographical material on EMIC states: "The composer makes use of micro-intervals, vibrato and untraditional playing techniques." (http://www.emic.ee/?sisu=heliloojad&mid=58&id=101&lang=eng&action=view&method=biograafia)

> with colours, with non-musical materials. For me, to compose means to interpret.[229]

North Wind, South Wind, which incorporates texts from distant cultures yet sets them for an Estonian ensemble incorporating the *kannel*, the national folk instrument, is one of Tulve's many compositions that reflect her paradoxical international-local musical existence. Compositions like *à travers* (1998), the chamber opera *It Is Getting So Dark* (2004) based on Sei Shonagon's *Pillow Book*, and the slightly more recent *In a nakht fun yeridah* (2006) reveal a world of influences distilled into an aesthetic that is more than personal, but also somehow local, Estonian.

The environment in which Tulve creates music is both a motivational force and a reflection of the cultural state of Estonia post-1991. Much as Toivo Tulev claims that

> [c]ertain trends in Estonian music, which are fatiguing and a bit frightening for me at the moment, are those related to the exaggerated simplification of musical texture,[230]

Tulve likens the phenomenon to "conformism, formatting and accepting the practices of consumerism."[231] Perhaps, for composers such as these, who represent a cross-section of Estonian musical society today, there is a lack of a strong, centralized, statist form of censorship. Such a vacuum leads Tulve, for example, to a musical aesthetic defined more by a removal of her creative impulse from the commoditized, globalized world she sees around her, an Estonia that is no longer occupied or necessary even at the periphery, but a functional, though demographically insignificant, member of the European Union. "The way I feel about my current situation is rather being happy to live at the periphery in some classical sense of cultural density," she says.[232] Is *North Wind, South Wind*, then, a veiled manifesto on anti-consumerism and local vs global politics? To ascribe such implicit qualities to a work that clearly transcends its environment would be misleading.

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[229] "Estonian Composers: Helena Tulve," EMIC, last modified June 2013, http://www.emic.ee/?sisu=heliloojad&mid=58&id=101&lang=eng&action=view&method=biograafia.

[230] Toivo Tulev, Personal Interview, 6 February 2015, See Appendix A – 2.

[231] Helena Tulve, Personal Interview, 7 February 2015, See Appendix B – 5.

[232] Ibid, See Appendix B – 2.

Tulve's success lies in the effectiveness of her musical language to communicate paradoxes, particularly one of a global universality and a personal unity. In *North Wind, South Wind*, she intends that there be "something more if you try to dig deeper, that allows to find maybe something that rather unites, complements and widens, then tears apart."[233] The dialectic of music from the era of Tubin and Pärt, and indeed from Tormis and all composers who came of age during the Soviet Occupation, has irrevocably changed from the role of cultural preservation to commentary and criticism – in Tulev and Tulve's case, one may also add, cultural transcendence and universalism. The analysis of *North Wind, South Wind* in the following section will therefore consider the actual musical material on its own merits, disassociated from its cultural context, but will also then examine the work on the basis for what it represents as a defining piece for new Estonian music post-1991.

5.2 Analysis of *North Wind, South Wind* (2010)

5.2.1 Introduction

North Wind, South Wind was commissioned by the Estonian new music ensemble, Resonabilis, for its 2010-11 season. As part of the ensemble's mission "to introduce their musical world to…listeners in Ireland, Germany, Finland, Latvia, the UK…, Iran," among others, *North Wind, South Wind*, dedicated to Resonabilis, was premiered at the Vale of Glamorgan Festival in 2010.[234] Tulve's collaboration with Resonabilis establishes her among a constellation of Estonian composers who have worked with the group, which is comprised of flute, voice, *kannel,*[235] and violoncello; as the group's biography states, "nearly all the best-known Estonian composers of our time have written music for [Resonabilis.]"[236]

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[233] Ibid, See Appendix B – 3.

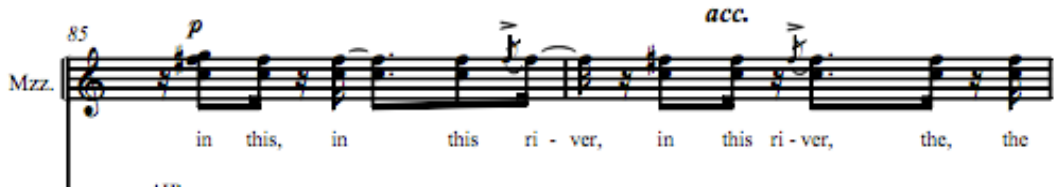
[234] *North Wind, South Wind*. Perf. Resonabilis. Estonian Record Productions, 2012. CD.

[235] From the *North Wind, South Wind* CD notes: "*Kannel* is a string instrument spread in the Baltic countries and Finland under different names and forms. Kannel resembles to some extent…[the] German *Zither* or Turkish *kanun*. *Kannel* is played in horizontal position, the strings are plucked with fingers. Its origins are prehistoric – extending to thousands of years. Nowadays Estonian *kannel* has developed into [a] sophisticated concert instrument – its four octaves of chromatic steel strings produce a particularly beautiful and resonating sound; it is possible to play almost any music from Bach to…very contemporary repertore. Thanks to its flexibility and sound qualities, *kannel* blends notably well with…classical instruments, opening thus a new road for further development in…contemporary music."

[236] *North Wind, South Wind*. Perf. Resonabilis. Estonian Record Productions, 2012. CD.

Though Tulve's international reputation is built primarily on her orchestral work and close collaboration with the NYYD Ensemble, the small world of Estonian professional musicians implies that the members of Resonabilis have performed Tulve's work among numerous platforms. For example, Tulve's residency with the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir coincided with Resonabilis vocalist Iris Oja's tenure as the Choir's alto soloist.[237] Consequently, Tulve's mission to write for the "personal characteristics" of musicians takes on special meaning in the case of Resonabilis' commission for *North Wind, South Wind* – and particularly so for Estonian musicians when compared to collaborations with ensembles abroad.[238]

The instrumentation of *North Wind, South Wind* is one that would likely prevent it from being performed by any other group; Resonabilis has no imitators or competitors. The ensemble's membership has remained unchanged since its foundation in 2002, which makes Tulve's decision to write a kind of vocal *ossia* part in the score of *North Wind, South Wind* highly unusual [see Example 5.2.1-1]. The possibility of the work being performed elsewhere, by



Example 5.2.1-1: mm 85-86, North Wind, South Wind (Helena Tulve)

another ensemble, is predicated on the availability of an instrument analogous to the *kannel*, of which there are many [see Footnote 233]. So far there have been no performances of the work apart from those of Resonabilis, which has toured with the piece widely. Apart from the premiere in Wales and performances in Estonia, there have been further presentations of *North Wind, South Wind* in Denmark, Ireland, Moldova, and many other countries.[239] Regardless, having left the possibility open for the work to have a life outside Resonabilis' repertoire, Tulve is making a conscious statement: "ideas do not follow official borders of

[237] "Estonian Performers: Iris Oja," EMIC, last modified 2008, http://www.emic.ee/?sisu=interpreedid&mid=59&id=72&lang=eng&action=view&method=biograafia.

[238] Helena Tulve, Personal Interview, 7 February 2015, See Appendix B – 4.

[239] "Kontserdid," Resonabilis, http://www.resonabilis.com.

visible cultural density. Life and creativity happens everywhere."[240] *North Wind, South Wind,* in its intended mixture of the local and global, is a musical representation of the composer herself.

5.2.2 Rationalizing Intuition: A Case for Understanding *North Wind, South Wind*

Tulve writes,

> I have been asking and observing what I do and how closely I am connected to the expression of the music, how much I am working from the present, intuitive and unknown, not from the preplanned, modelled, fully rationalised.[241]

In this way, the composer wishes to discourage any analysis of her music that might seek to liberate it from its confines in the mysterious creative process of its maker. However, some rationalization of Tulve's intuitive process is not just possible but also a very interesting way to understand the music even from a non-dialectic point of view. *North Wind, South Wind* is a piece that implies, to generalize considerably, an ABA form. The instantly recognizable opening of the piece [see Example 5.2.2-1] is brought back at the very end [see Example 5.2.2-2], this time, only by the *kannel* and the violoncello, though the material in the voice and flute parts strongly reference the *kannel* and violoncello whispers. The distinction between A and B, formally, could only be made in terms of pitch vs non-pitch. In other words, A progresses into B; there is no dividing line. Tulve introduces pitch very gradually in the opening, the first instance being the glissando from Ab to E in the *kannel* left hand, which nevertheless is essentially an unpitched gesture [see Example 5.2.2-3]. The notes, though fundamentally unintelligible, hold significance. A more concrete pitch is heard in the flute in measures 13-14 and again in 17-18[242], before the voice's pitched entrance in measure 19 [see Example 5.2.2-4].

The introduction – and it is clearly heard as one – suggests a very limited set of pitches that, while unheard, constitute a source for further episodes in Tulve's intuitive framework. The pitches, all in the *kannel* part are: Ab-E

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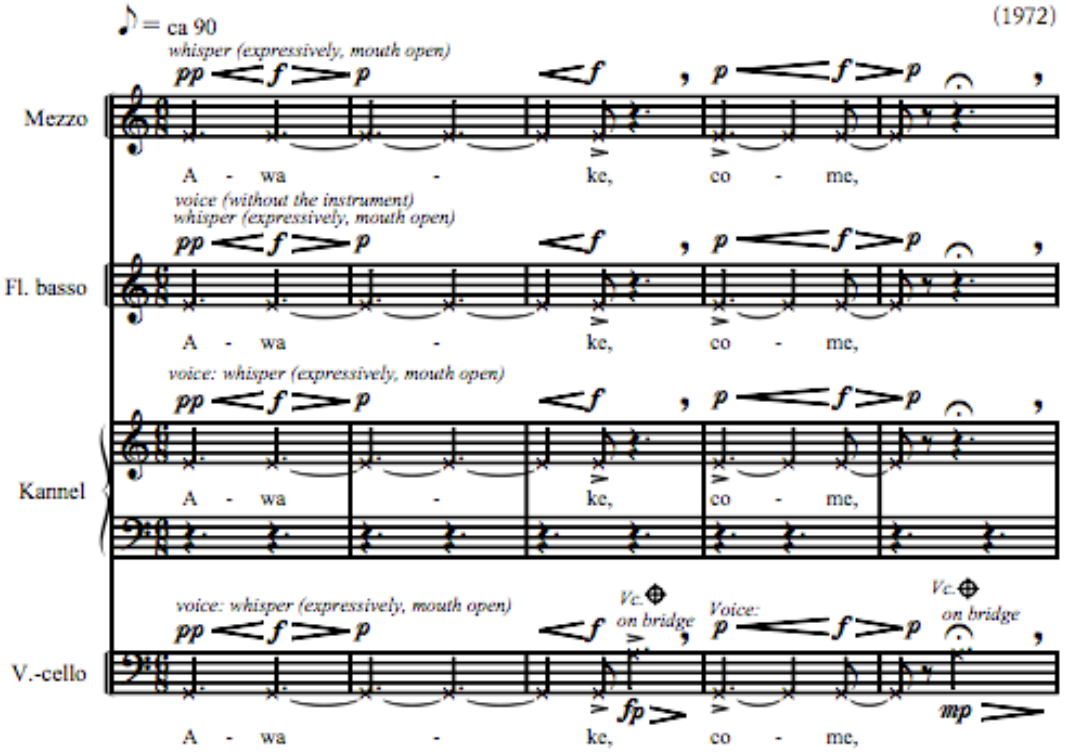
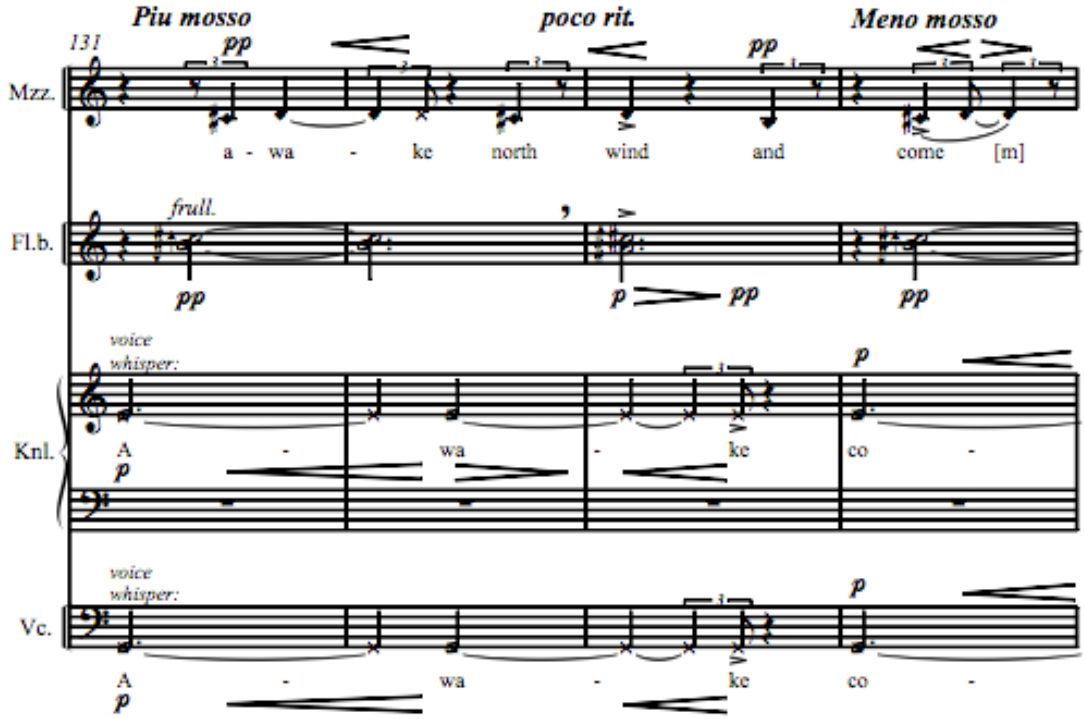
[240] Helena Tulve, Personal Interview, 7 February 2015, See Appendix B – 2.

[241] Ibid, See Appendix B – 5.

[242] The note is marked with an "x" and is meant to be essentially pitchless as well; nevertheless, an approximate E-natural pitch is heard.

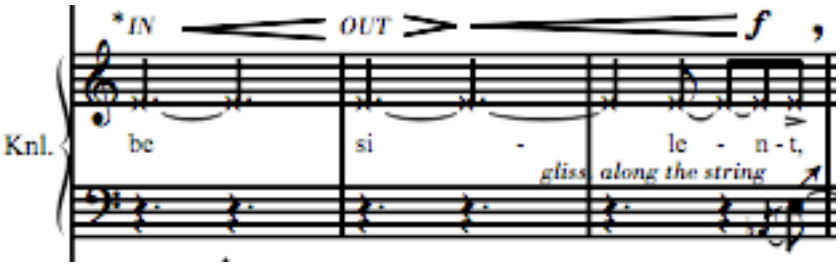


Example 5.2.2-1: mm 1-5, North Wind, South Wind (Helena Tulve)

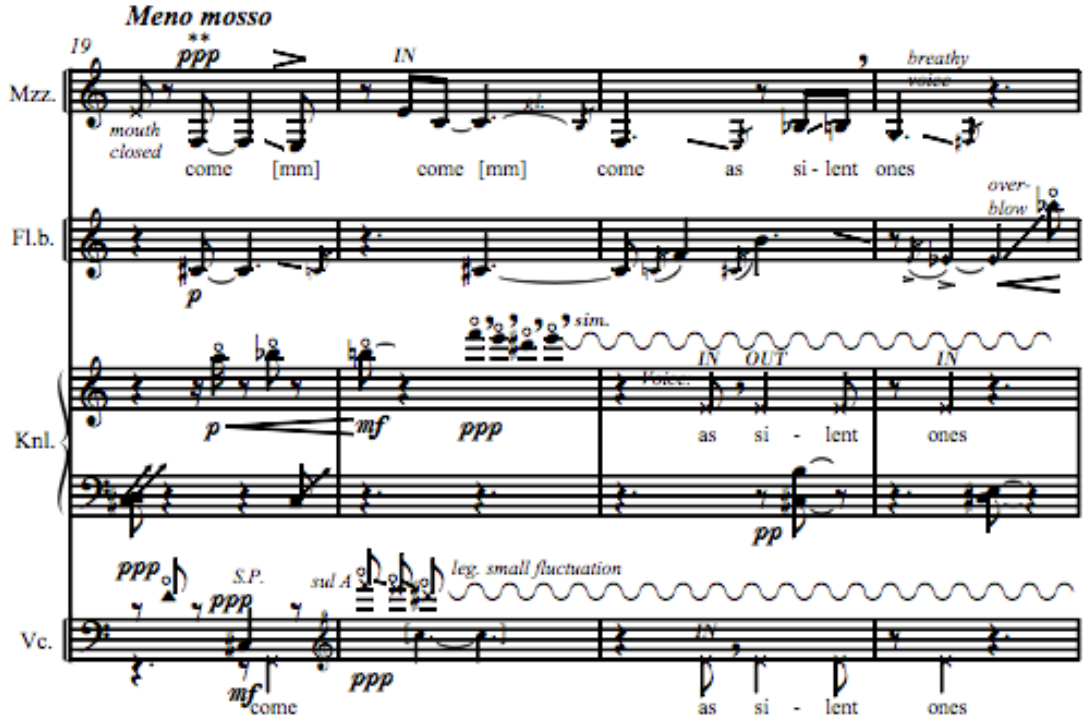


Example 5.2.2-2: mm 131-134, North Wind, South Wind (Helena Tulve)

glissando in measure 8, E in measure 10, Eb, Eb (repeated), D, Eb, D in measures 11-14, and Eb, G, Eb, G#, Eb in measures 15-18. The flute suggests E and Eb in non-consecutive *frullato* notes in measure 15-18 as well, while the flute pitch in

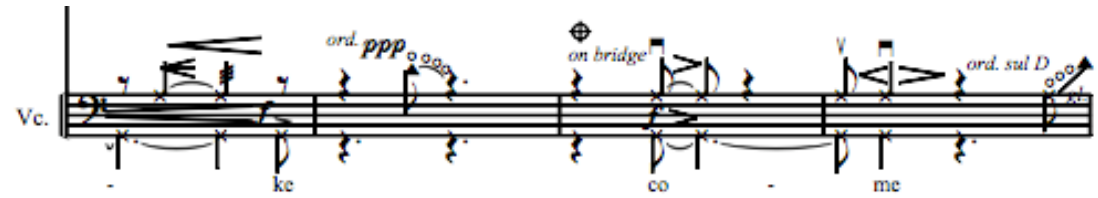


Example 5.2.2-3: mm 6-8, North Wind, South Wind (Helena Tulve)



Example 5.2.2-4: mm 19-22, North Wind, South Wind (Helena Tulve)

measures 13-14 and in 17-18 suggests E natural.[243] Finally, the violoncello's harmonics, though effectively impossible to hear clearly, are asked by the composer to be performed on the D string and are therefore based on the D harmonic series [see Example 5.2.2-5]. The total pitch collection is therefore



Example 5.2.2-5: mm 15-18, North Wind, South Wind (Helena Tulve)

limited to D-Eb-E-G-G#(Ab), forming a tritone, an interval that appears abundantly in Tulve's score [see, for example, Example 5.2.1-1]. The first clearly heard pitch of F in the vocal part in measure 19 signals a new section, one that is

[243] *North Wind, South Wind*. Perf. Resonabilis. Estonian Record Productions, 2012. CD.

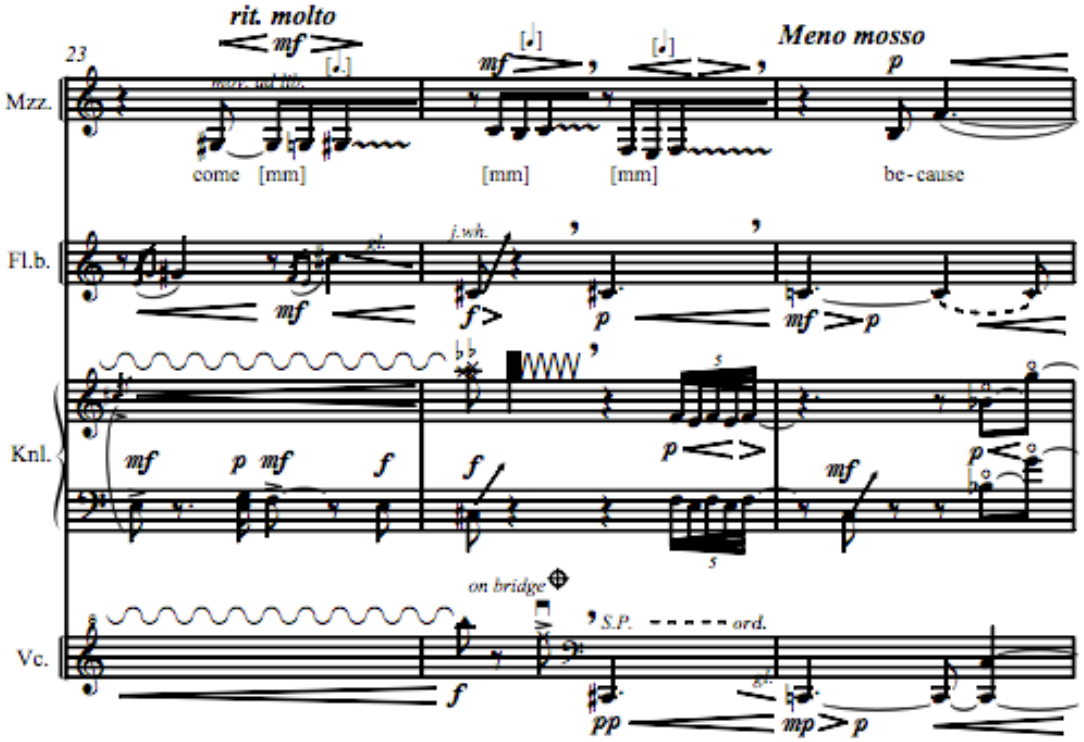
nevertheless centred on the E of the aforementioned pitch set as the voice's lowest note [see Example 5.2.2-4]. Though the score itself looks vastly different in Example 5.2.2-4, the sound-world is hardly affected except for the notable transmutation in the vocal part from whispered to sung: it is the last member of the ensemble to do so.

North Wind, South Wind is structured in episodes delineated by timbral focus; each succeeding episode builds upon the material of the last until the piece reaches its unusual anti-climax in measure 85 [see Example 5.2.1-1]. The first episode, B1[244], after the introduction, commences in measure 19 as shown on Example 5.2.2-4 and lasts until the midpoint of measure 40. The following episode, B2, lasts from the midpoint of measure 40 until the midpoint of measure 54; B3 from the midpoint of 54 to the midpoint of 72, B4, from the midpoint of 72 to the end of 84; B5, the (anti)-climax, from 85 to 92; B6, a revisiting of earlier material, from 93 to 107; and the final section, referencing the introduction, is the longest, lasting from measure 108 until the end (measure 138). The episodes are generally of similar length; only the anti-climax and the final section are what would be called outliers. It is doubtful that there is any systematic emphasis by Tulve in the planning of the episodes within *North Wind, South Wind*; it is here that the intuitive approach perhaps expresses itself most clearly. Yet the composer has also made a conscious effort to avoid an uninterrupted development of the material: my schematic of the work's episodes is based on either a complete disintegration of the texture to silence or the presence of a fermata over the entire ensemble implying a complete pause in the narrative. The score, then, exemplifies Tulve's self-referential approach to the development of a piece – and, in her words, to the development of her musical language[245] – in its own organic, nonlinear development of material.

The descending vocal glissando beginning in measure 19 in the voice part [see, once again, Example 5.2.2-4] is the primary characteristic of the first episode, B1. The voice elaborates the idea in measures 23-24 [see Example 5.2.2-6], but essentially, the rubric for this effect has already been provided in the

[244] The episode titles – B1, B2, etc. – have been created for the purpose of analysis and are not present in the score.
[245] Helena Tulve, Personal Interview, 7 February 2015, See Appendix B – 5.

oscillating pitches in the *kannel* part beginning in measure 20 [see Example 5.2.2-4]. The effect is introduced to the violoncello part in measure 20 as well

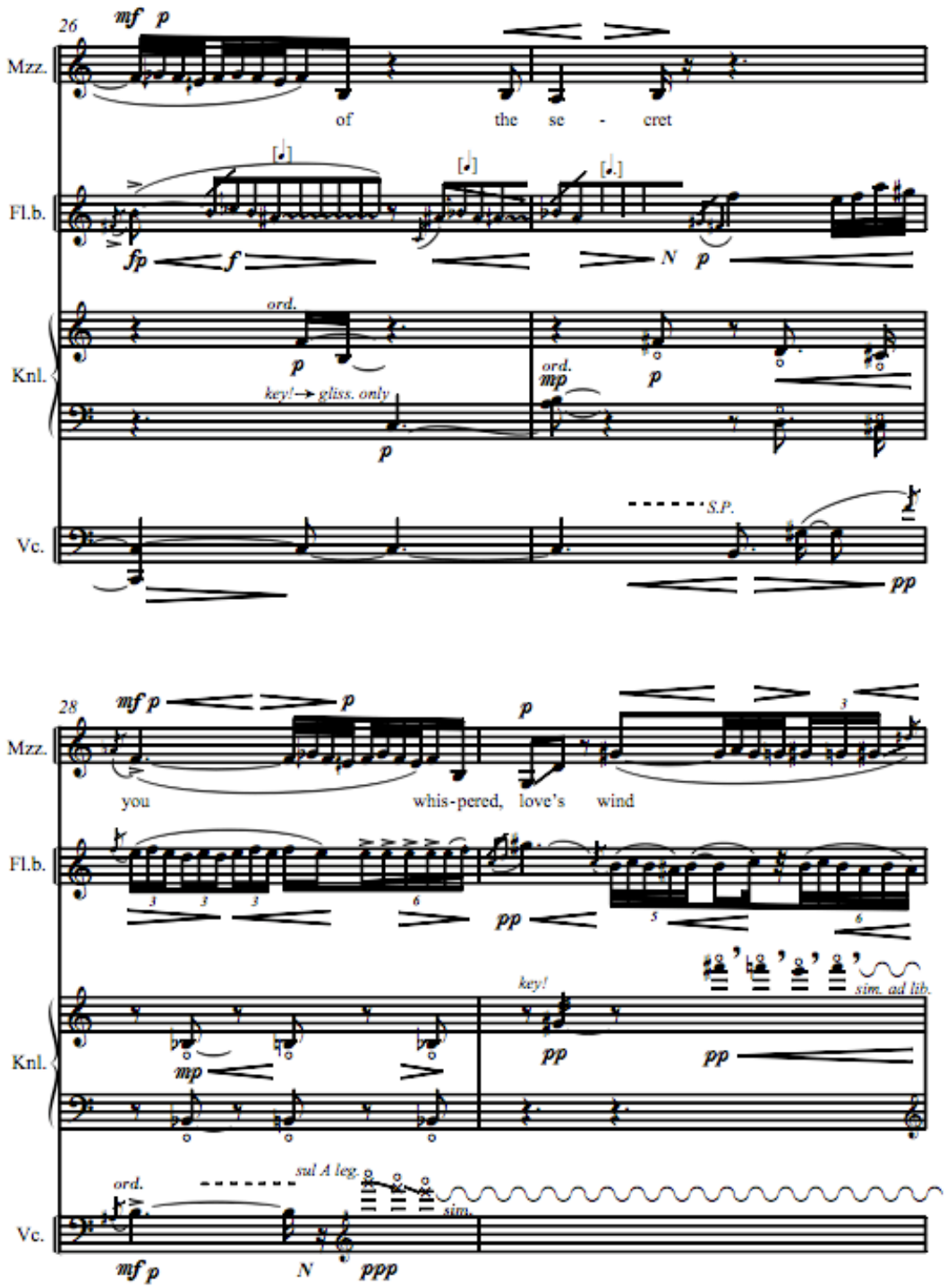


Example 5.2.2-6: mm 23-25, North Wind, South Wind (Helena Tulve)

and to the flute part in measure 26 [see Example 5.2.2-7], so that, within seven measures, the oscillation, or notated trill, has extended throughout the ensemble. Having introduced pitch in the introduction, Tulve expands the range of the ensemble in B1. E having been the lowest heard pitch in the introduction, the violoncello extends the range significantly downward from C# to C-natural in measures 24-25 [see Example 5.2.2-6], establishing a relation between the E Major tonality alluded to in the beginning to a compound C-E Major tonality shown in Example 5.2.2-7. The unsettled, oscillating trills of B1 are a natural outgrowth of the introduction within the framework of Tulve's conception: the uneasy transfer of breath to pitch must also involve a certain faithfulness to the reality of sound production. Or, as Tulve states:

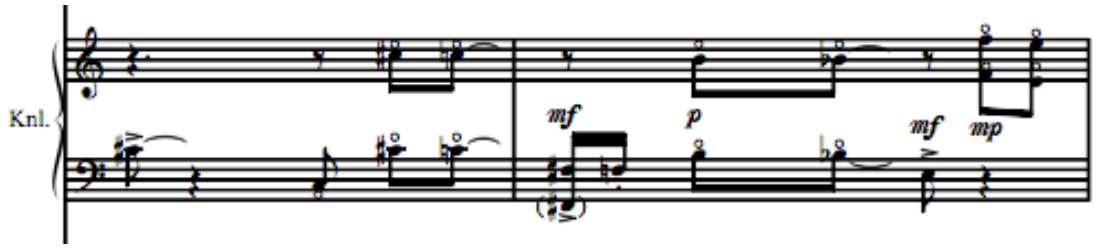
> [m]y attitude still is related to the perception of the something I call the nature of the instrument, the nature of the sound of an instrument.[246]

[246] Ibid. See Appendix B – 3.

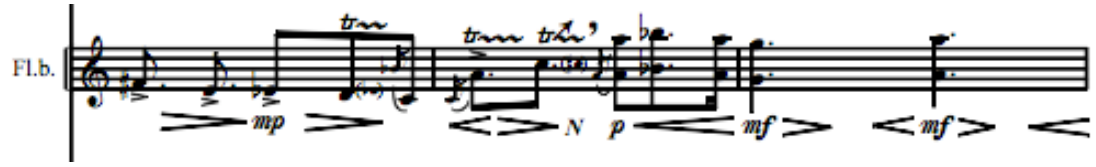


Example 5.2.2-7: mm 26-29, North Wind, South Wind (Helena Tulve)

The second episode, B2, expands the dramatic range of the work by its inclusion of octaves and grace-note leaps; once again, these spread progressively through the episode. The *kannel* introduces the octaves in measure 42, first with an octave in parenthesis, as if the composer wishes for the performer to introduce the material tentatively [see Example 5.2.2-8]; the flute follows with multiphonics in measures 44-45 [see Example 5.2.2-9]. The voice concurrently

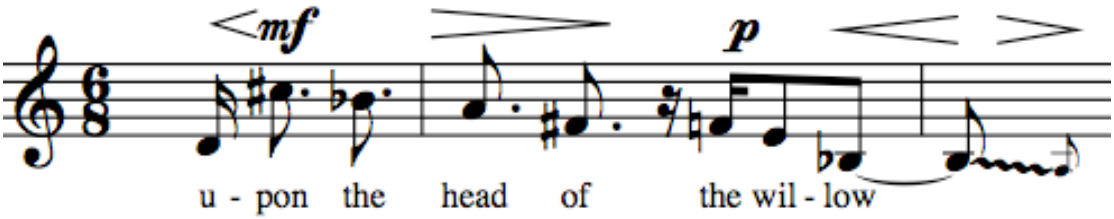


Example 5.2.2-8: mm 41-42, North Wind, South Wind (Helena Tulve)



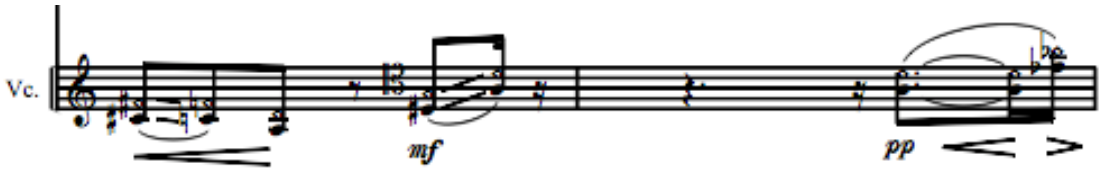
Example 5.2.2-9: mm 43-45, North Wind, South Wind (Helena Tulve)

outlines an octave over the two-bar phrase stretching from measures 42-43, combining it with the descending glissando motive from B1 [see Example 5.2.2-10]. The violoncello, notated in artificial harmonics, integrates the descending



Example 5.2.2-10: mm 42-44, excerpted voice part, North Wind, South Wind (Helena Tulve)

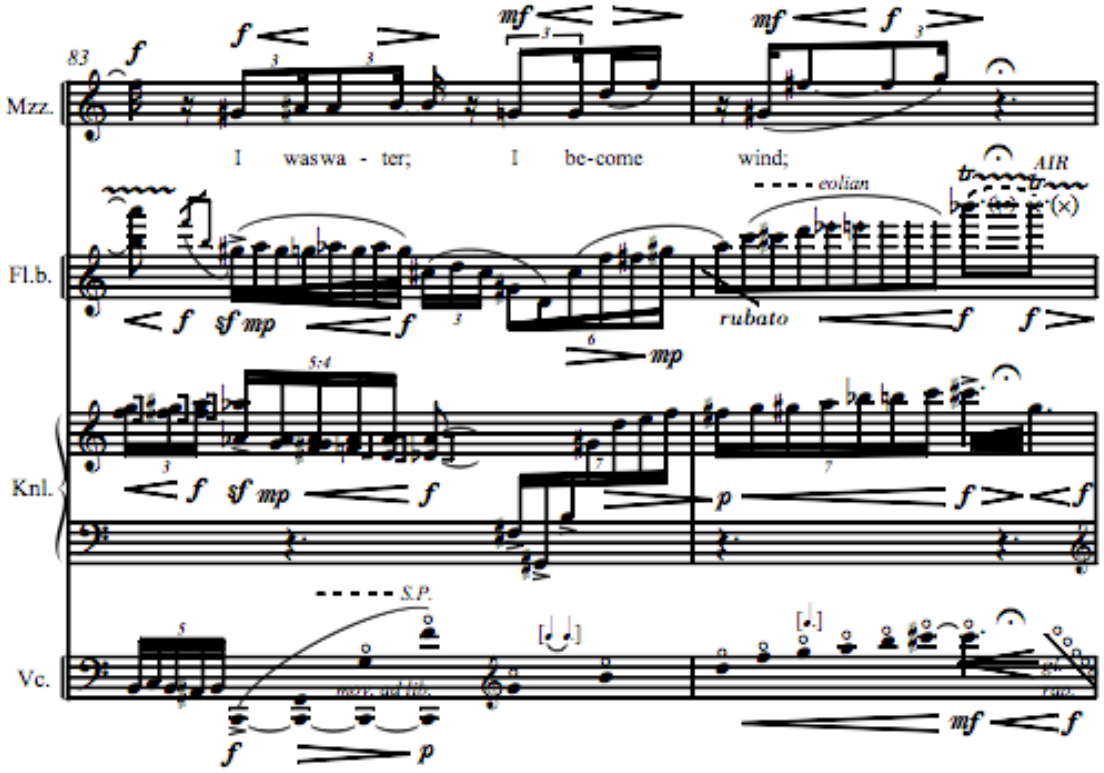
glissando and octave motives in measures 46-47 [see Example 5.2.2-11], and while it is the last instrument to do so in this episode, it also completes the further extension of range in the work from the bottom note of the violoncello as seen in Example 5.2.2-6 to the very high notated artificial harmonics.



Example 5.2.2-11: mm 46-47, North Wind, South Wind (Helena Tulve)

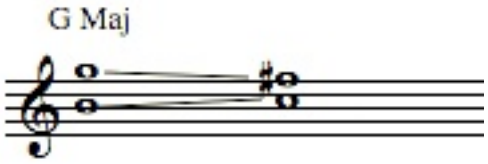
B3 and B4 extend the scope of the material further: the composer steadily, organically increases complexity, range, and, most importantly, density further until the moment immediately before the anti-climax of measures 85-92: here [see Example 5.2.2-12], the instruments reference the G Major harmonic series while the voice remains tonally independent, essentially highlighting the

primary opposition of G-natural and G# that serve as the C-E Major tonalities' point of dissonance. With nowhere further to go, Tulve's anti-climax is, in fact,



Example 5.2.2-12: mm 83-84, North Wind, South Wind (Helena Tulve)

quite rational. Centred on the C-F# tritone[247] [see Example 5.2.1-1], this eight-bar section implies either an atonal, gestural or even primitive moment in the piece given that the tritone never truly resolves, or a collapse of the G Major harmonic series tonality immediately prior [see Example 5.2.2-13]. It is,

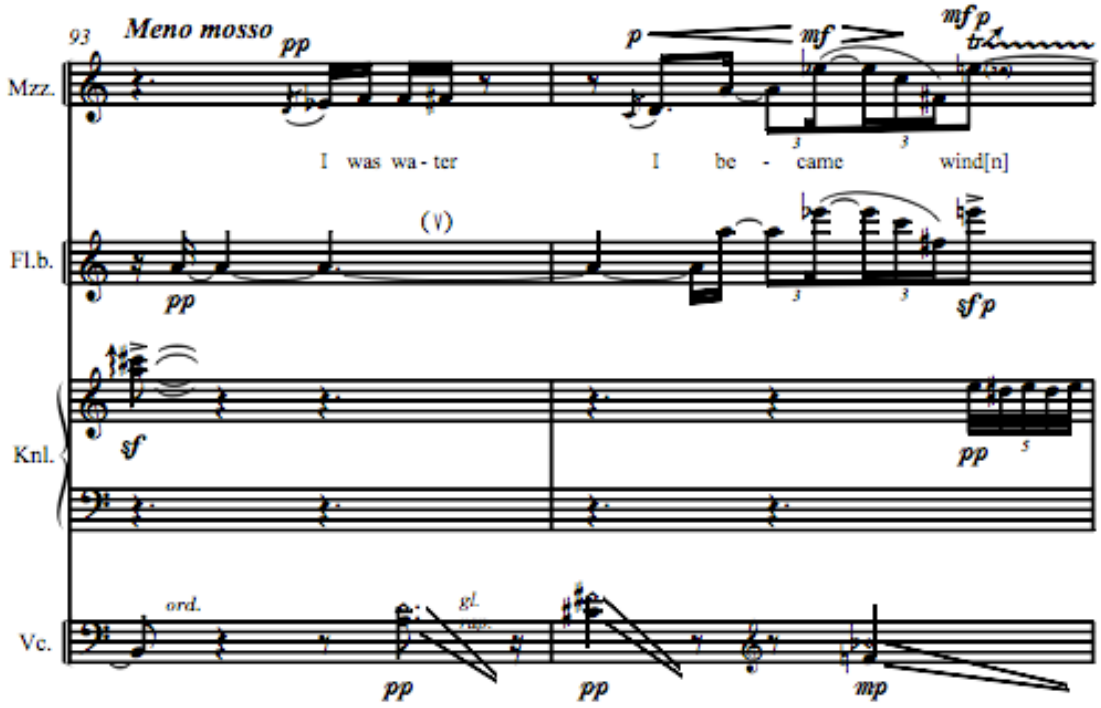


Example 5.2.2-13: tonalities of measures 83-84 in B4 and tritone of B5, expressed as a possible reverse cadence relationship, North Wind, South Wind (Helena Tulve)

however, unlikely that either of these is the case. My suspicion is that if the section does have any tonal relevance to the piece, which it most likely does, then the C-F# tritone acts as a diminished ii chord in an E-tonality; the clear entrance of the A in measure 93's flute part, at the beginning of B6, fills in the

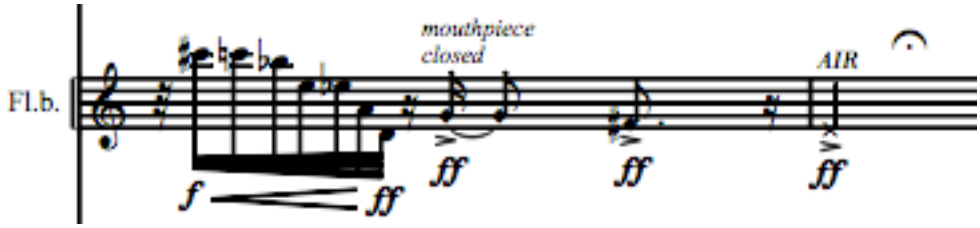
[247] As mentioned in 5.2.1, the tritone is only implied, as both notes are offered to the vocalist by the composer. In the ERP recording, the vocalist chooses to outline the tritone by alternating F# and C.

missing fifth [see Example 5.2.2-14]. The apotheosis of the flute's phrase at the



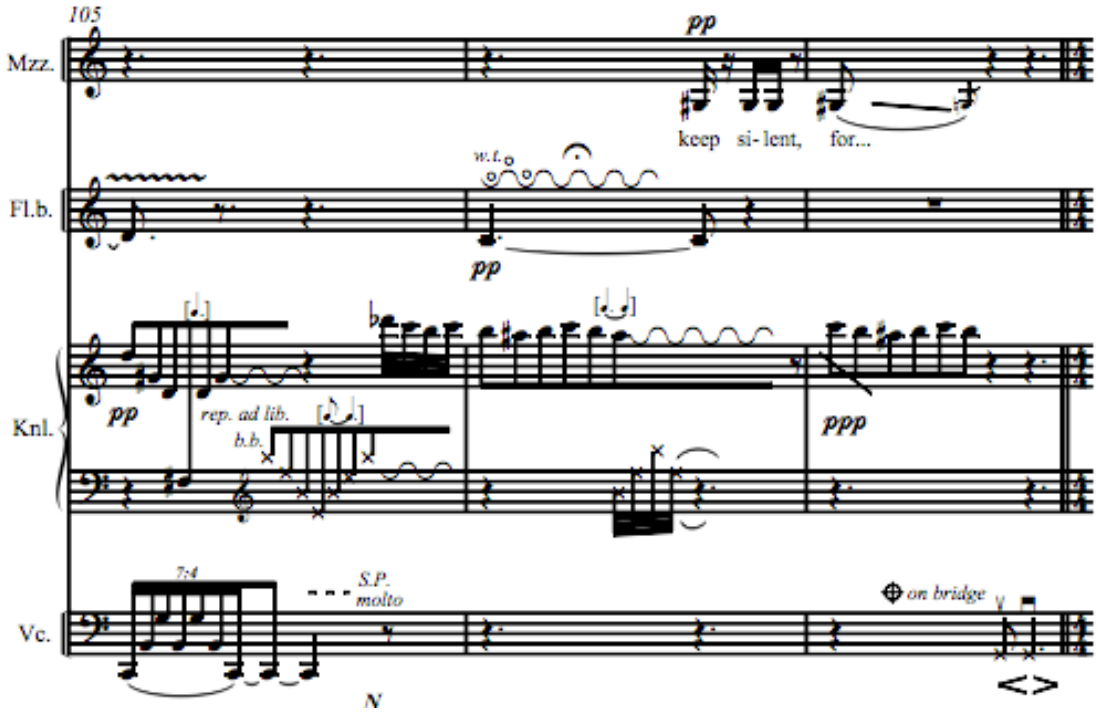
Example 5.2.2-14: mm 93-94, North Wind, South Wind (Helena Tulve)

commencement of measure 93 is the high E, while E itself is implied in the G-F#-E motion in the anti-climax section in measures 91-92 [see Example 5.2.2-15].



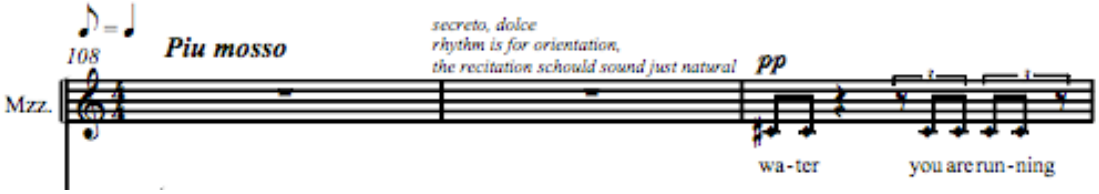
Example 5.2.2-15: mm 91-92, North Wind, South Wind (Helena Tulve)

The function of B6, in addition to possibly clarifying the tritone of the anti-climax is to strip the complexity and density accumulated in the piece so far. This allows the piece to essentially disintegrate into the final section. Indeed, the registral scope, pitch variety, and timbral complexity which had reached their cumulative acme in B4, particularly in measures 83-84, are reduced to remnant oscillations and descending glissandi prior to the piece's concluding section [see Example 5.2.2-16]. In this way, the large-scale A-B-A form is alluded to, with B1-B6 representing a macro accumulation and dispersion of content and complexity. The final section – the work's longest – is, perhaps unintentionally, an apt summation of the composer's aesthetic, both in general and for *North Wind, South Wind* in particular. Tulve instructs the vocalist to perform the section's



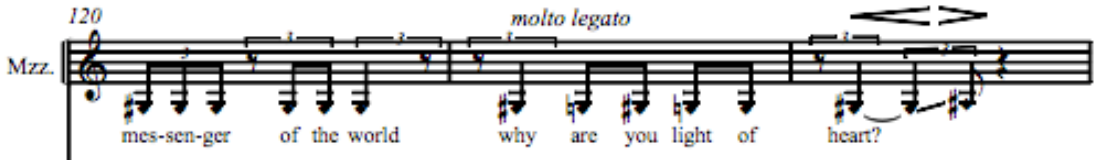
Example 5.2.2-16: mm 105-107, North Wind, South Wind (Helena Tulve)

only foreground material, notated as half-sung, half-recited, as: "the recitation schould [sic] sound just natural" [see Example 5.2.2-17]. Unlike the introduction,



Example 5.2.2-17: mm 108-110, North Wind, South Wind (Helena Tulve)

the conclusion is characterized by ascending glissandi or, if not, then slightly ascending endings of phrases [see Example 5.2.2-18]. The overall effect is one



Example 5.2.2-18: mm 120-122, North Wind, South Wind (Helena Tulve)

akin to Gregorian chant, which was a focus of the composer's studies in France in the early Nineties.[248] Indeed, the striking contrast between simplicity and primitivism in the piece, and "micro-intervals, vibrato and untraditional playing

[248] "Estonian Composers: Helena Tulve," EMIC, last modified June 2013, http://www.emic.ee/?sisu=heliloojad&mid=58&id=101&lang=eng&action=view&method=biograafia.

techniques,"[249] as the composer's EMIC biography describes, is of primary importance to Tulve's instinctive "plan" for *North Wind, South Wind*. The naturalistic simplicity of the A (introduction-conclusion) sections of the piece, despite the extended techniques required to achieve them, also imply a certain complexity: the harmonic series, inflections, expressivities inherent to each pitch and phrase, even to the most minor, fragile pitch are explored in the piece's middle section, only for Tulve to return to the very essential. For Tulve, it is important to be

> organically related to the nature of the music. Sometimes this connection is to be worked out more closely, but it is important for me to find it.[250]

In rationalizing the composer's intuition behind *North Wind, South Wind*, one actually sees Tulve's thought process unfold until the integrity of the source material is no longer elastic enough to sustain further development, at which point the music collapses internally, reducing the content to its very essence.

5.3 Conclusion

The "ephemeral, flexible, emotional" – all that Tulve was seeking upon her departure from Estonia in 1991 – are omnipresent in *North Wind, South Wind*, a work written many years after Tulve's return to her home country in 1994.[251] As discussed in Section 5.1, *North Wind, South Wind* could only have been written for an Estonian ensemble – though not necessarily an Estonian audience. The work's instrumentation, demanding a folk instrument be played at an exceptionally high level, incorporating a wide variety of extended techniques, limits *North Wind, South Wind*'s performance to a select few interpreters of the *kannel*, and, of course, only one ensemble that offers the specified instrumentation. However, the composer consciously refuses to be limited by her choices: both the musical content and the aesthetic vision behind *North Wind, South Wind* are notably cosmopolitan. The paradox between the oft-

[249] Ibid.

[250] Helena Tulve, Personal Interview, 7 February 2015, See Appendix B – 4.

[251] "Estonian Composers: Helena Tulve," EMIC, last modified June 2013, http://www.emic.ee/?sisu=heliloojad&mid=58&id=101&lang=eng&action=view&method=biograafia.

mentioned local and universal elements in Tulve's music must finally be reconciled.

The composer writes,

> I have since long time [sic] been curious about different oral traditions of the world, vocal and instrumental as well. It has brought my attention more and more to my own tradition, [the] Estonian one...[a]nd invited me to be more specific observing regional differences and vocal specificities of various genres.[252]

And indeed, in its synthesis of texts and of vocal and instrumental techniques that exemplify an awareness of the latest trends in modernism, *North Wind, South Wind* is a remarkably current, global work of music. It is also written in a highly personal style that, while it may have its imitators in Tulve's native Estonia, is impossible to replicate due to the composer's intuitive process of creation. Over time as her country becomes more deeply and inextricably linked to the world around it, Tulve remains even more adamant on the viability, perhaps necessity, of her process:

> it has affected the musical language and concrete musical ideas, related to time, space and all other aspects, small or large-scale. The main thing that has changed is my own trust into the process and into the closer connection to the presence. My own words make more sense to me, at least - as much they are mine.[253]

The composer's sojourn in France, early in her professional development, stands, therefore, not as an extrinsic act but a necessary point of departure for Tulve's personal, local approach to writing music.

Given Tulve's admission that leaving Estonia was, perhaps, not for the purpose of seeking something new but defining something internal, could the preceding chapters be reinterpreted?

> I can see that at the same time the way I was thinking in music had already before unconsciously affinities [sic] with some aspects I met later in France.[254]

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[252] Helena Tulve, Personal Interview, 7 February 2015, See Appendix B – 3.

[253] Ibid, See Appendix B – 5.

[254] Ibid, See Appendix B – 1.

The question of the cultural integrity of creating Estonian music abroad may, post-1991, be one that is no longer adequately phrased or conceived. Quite in contrast, the social act of remaining in Estonia as a composer holds with it certain connotations that did not exist prior to re-independence, while leaving and returning holds entirely others. Toivo Tulev expands the idea of return further:

> Most of the students, who have studied abroad, have returned. I guess these studies do not just broaden their mindset, but let them also find the core - what they are and what they [would] like to be. And being away provides them with the necessary look from aside [sic], from the distance.[255]

North Wind, South Wind, which exists as a bridge between the competing dialectics of folk music, the ongoing establishment of an Estonian musical aesthetic, and trends in contemporary music in Europe and worldwide, solves the incongruities internally. Through the work's organic rate of development and its quasi-naturalistic form, which acts as an avatar for the material's innately imposed limitations, the distinctions between what is "ours" (Estonian) and what is "theirs" is no longer clear, no longer relevant. In this way, Tulve represents a departure point for a new definition of Estonian music, less concerned with cultural and linguistic preservation, and more so with a distinct, admittedly abstract or nuanced, identity.

6. Conclusion

In establishing Arvo Pärt as a likely prototype for a distinct aesthetic in Estonian music already in Section 1, I now pose the question regarding the course of Estonian music since Pärt's breakthrough compositions from the *tintinnabuli* period of the 1970s: who, or what, has followed him? Estonia's re-independence fifteen years since *Für Alina*, its entry into the European Union and NATO thirteen years later, and the marking of twenty years of re-independence in 2011, already thirty-five years removed from the birth of Pärt's characteristic aesthetic, have witnessed a remarkable shift and development in contemporary Estonian music. The impulse to contextualize younger generations of Estonian

[255] Toivo Tulev, Personal Interview, 6 February 2015, See Appendix A – 8.

composers as "the second wave of Estonian composers" post-Pärt has largely come up empty; Pärt was neither the first, nor is he the last, to create definitive works. Indeed, Tubin, writing decades earlier, may stake the same claim. One could make a scholarly case for Tubin's music as an archetype for Estonian music in one important sense: having established large-scale classical forms in an Estonian idiom, his legacy post-exile is inextricably linked to the cultural resonance of symphonies, ballets, and tone poems in Estonian music history.

What had "been sought and…[what had] been found by previous generations of composers (Saar, Kreek, Tubin)" was in fact formalized by none of the composers discussed in great detail in this dissertation, but by the man whose words launched the present discussion: Veljo Tormis.[256] As Daitz writes, "were it not for the quality of his…music," Tormis might have been wholly absent from any analysis with a focus beyond ethnomusicology.[257] And, indeed, Tormis is so closely allied to the course of Estonian music, that his "music…cannot be discussed without an understanding of Estonian history."[258] In a *TeMuKi* interview, Tormis once likened his lifelong project of collecting folk material to that of Wagner[259]; he has been – mostly erroneously – characterized as a "among the foremost radicals of Estonian music," a charge he has denied.[260] Had the course of Estonian history run differently, had the country remained occupied by the Soviet Union or subjugated by another foreign power leading to an even more conscious, political or cultural role for music, Tormis' music might have remained more than a frame for this discussion. But given two decades of independence, a reorganization of cultural priorities, and a decreasing sensation of possible cultural or linguistic annihilation, Tormis' emphasis on ethnomusical nationalism holds increasingly less immediate musical relevance for younger generations of composers.

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[256] Mimi S Daitz and Veljo Tormis, *Ancient Song Recovered: The Life and Music of Veljo Tormis* (New York: Pendragon Press, 2004), 244.

[257] Ibid, 7.

[258] Harriet Simons, "Ancient Song Recovered: The Life and Music of Veljo Tormis by Mimi S. Daitz," *The Choral Journal*. Vol. 48, No. 2 (AUGUST 2007): 66.

[259] Daitz and Tormis, *Ancient Song Recovered: The Life and Music of Veljo Tormis*, 247.

[260] Ibid, 251.

> The composer has stated many times that he considers it his 'duty' to promote the folksongs of Estonia – indeed, a duty more important than his own musical creation, [261]

writes Simons. The reality that Tormis' music "helped preserve Estonian culture during the Soviet period" is as resonant today as it ever has been, but without the spectre of occupation, the cultural objectives of Estonian composers have changed irrevocably.[262] Tormis is a musical predecessor to a cultural movement that is no longer viable in post-1991 Estonia.

Instead, the cultural focus has shifted beyond aesthetic considerations, *regilaul*, and the song festivals. The narrative of Estonian culture – at least, in the musical realm – is increasingly about Estonia and the West and the fragile dance of integration and isolation, of dependence and independence, that the country now wishes to pursue. As Toivo Tulev writes, "after Estonia gained its independence again, things were different: new perspectives, new possibilities."[263] The resonant dialectic between Estonia and the West exists not only in music but in broader society. Witness, for example, the Estonian President's Twitter response to economist Paul Krugman's New York Times blog post critical of Estonian economic policy in 2012:[264]

> But yes, what do we know? We're just dumb & silly East Europeans. Unenlightened. Someday we too will understand.[265]

Tulev's insistence that Estonia's independence has led to remarkably "little…use…of the freedom that was out there" [see Section 4.3] is echoed by Helena Tulve's caution about the increasing tendencies to "consumerism" in Estonian contemporary music [see Section 5.1]. Tulve's aesthetic and identity are inarguably linked to this phenomenon – or, to be more specific, as a conscious stand against it. She writes that, living in Estonia, she is,

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[261] Harriet Simons, "Ancient Song Recovered: The Life and Music of Veljo Tormis by Mimi S. Daitz)," 66.

[262] Ibid.

[263] Toivo Tulev, Personal Interview, 6 February 2015, See Appendix A – 2.

[264] "Estonian Rhapsody," The New York Times, http://krugman.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/06/06/estonian-rhapsdoy/?_r=0

[265] Toomas Hendrik Ilves (llvesToomas). "But yes, what do we know? We're just dumb & silly East Europeans. Unenlightened. Someday we too will understand. Nostra culpa." 6 June 2012, 2:15pm. Tweet.

> more easily free from very close and oppressing milestones of a very crowded cultural environment. [Estonia] is a place where you can be in close contact with this still present simpler way of living, living with traditions, living with nature and having time for the tiny, subtle and marginal. I feel that being from here, I can live it more truly.[266]

This sentiment is increasingly a unifying mindset among Estonian composers. But Estonia, itself, too, has increasingly less to offer composers. Tormis controversially admits that he has "constantly worked with folk song. But it keeps growing more and more meagre."[267] At the same time, the temptation to adopt a more cosmopolitan aesthetic and mindset is a danger too, if the legacy of Tubin's music in Estonia is a bellwether. In this new reality, it is the necessity of leaving Estonia to "find [the] core," as Tulev notes, that has almost entirely assumed primacy among Estonian composers' development. It is as if, offered too little in their home country, and too much in the world beyond, that Estonian composers must find context for their place in the world between the two extremes. Or, more likely, as Tulve remarked about vocal music, an understanding of "different oral traditions of the world… brought [her] attention more and more to [her] own tradition."

Tormis has since gone silent[268], while recordings and performances of Arvo Pärt's music grow each year,[269] and new generations of Estonian composers confront the question of whether Estonian music is still defined by "structurally interconnected [components]: melody, words, manner of performance," or my own definition presented in Section 1, or by something still elusive, yet to be determined.[270] The end of Soviet occupation in 1991 has made the task far more difficult: there is no *politburo*, no censor, no immediate threat of cultural extermination. The first twenty years of independence have offered a myriad of directions for Estonian music to follow, two of which are presented in this dissertation in Chapters 4 and 5, while an earlier archetype, Arvo Pärt, continues to enjoy the status of the nation's most esteemed, most performed

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[266] Helena Tulve, Personal Interview, 7 February 2015, See Appendix B – 2.
[267] Daitz and Tormis, *Ancient Song Recovered: The Life and Music of Veljo Tormis*, 252.
[268] Ibid, 243.
[269] "Performances", Arvo Pärt Center, http://www.arvopart.ee/en/performances/
[270] Daitz and Tormis. *Ancient Song Recovered: The Life and Music of Veljo Tormis*, 244.

composer. The definitive answer, should there be any, will be produced only in many decades' time and will emerge in concert with the establishment of an Estonian identity itself liberated from the nation's history of subjugation and occupation. Neither Moscow, nor Brussels, will dictate Estonia's musical identity. The truth will no longer be whispered in Estonia, nor, ultimately, shouted or tweeted, but expressed unreservedly through the nation's most essential cultural resource: music.

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Appendix

A: Personal Interview with Toivo Tulev. 6 February 2015.

The responses below have not been altered. The written interview was conducted in English and is presented in its original form. Any grammatical inaccuracies, misspellings, etc. have been cited in the dissertation but are presented verbatim here.

1. You have had a long association with early music - as a singer and perhaps also in your compositional practice, it appears to be informed in many ways by this association. What drew you to early music, why, and at what point in your (musical) life? How do you see this relationship today?

I guess the predilection for early music has been there since when I started to realize the existence of the different strata of musical epochs and expression. It is difficult to say what drew me to that. Curiosity in the first place, then, the need to counterbalance what was there at offer in the mainstream music education and in the concert life. Although, bearing in mind the situation of early music, Estonia was a big exception not only in Soviet Union, but also in the Nordic region. We can even speak about an early music boom in the Estonian musical life of the eighties. So, I guess my interest did not appear out of the blue. And then there is the aspect of spirituality and the innate gravitation towards religious. It was that much easier to quench those needs with early music than with music from romantic and later periods of musical history.

2. Your career as a performer took you out of Estonia on a number of international appearances. Later on, you studied with Sven-David Sandstöm and electroacoustic music at the Cologne Hochschule der Musik. But eventually you returned to Estonia. What encouraged the move home, if it was ever under question - and how do you see your time abroad in that perspective? What was it like for you as an "Estonian composer" to study/live abroad?

We have to put ourselves into perspective. Soviet times, stagnation, corruption, suppression of free speech, total control not only from outside, but control, which had reached the desired goal – self censorship. You see it, experience it and understand that there is no space for you in it. That living a life in a free world would make much more sense. Coming back was due to my family and only due to that.

And later, after Estonia gained its independence again, things were different. New perspectives, new possibilities.

But coming to the question of what experienced and sensed an Estonian musician abroad – it was surprising for me, and that was my first big surprise, how little of positive use people made of the freedom that was out there. (I see the same now here in Estonia.)

In order to live a more or less satisfactory musical life one has to be able integrate into the society to a certain extent at least. And although I experienced and still experience many deficiencies, which inhibited me here in Estonia to reach my external goals, reach the musicians and the audience, I was realistic enough to understand that the same happens everywhere. But most importantly, I was more concerned with solving the creative problems than exposing them and the outcome to the audience. And you are alone with that regardless of where you live.

And then there were and are the questions of musical aesthetics and the role music plays for the individual growth of a human, but also its meaning in the society. For me the music had to do with the truth, the road and the life. Less with its aesthetic contents, which seemed to be more in the foreground in the West. But it is always risky to make big generalizations. I found and still find

hidden spots of spiritual fervor, but these do not have much to do with the current establishment. Luckily so, avoiding corruption.

3. "Songs" sets a variety of texts, ranging from the Bible to the poetry of Juan de la Cruz. You also from time to time write your own text for your choral music. How is the musical content of your "Songs" and other relevant works informed by its subject matter?

Songs – one can ask what is its subject matter. And what is the subject matter of the Song of Songs? There are different answers for that. The music of Songs rose from the something, which could be called a non-dualistic dream, craving for unity. At the time I wrote the music, the pain of being separated had grown close to unbearable.

There is the beautiful story from the Orient, where a boy, the Lover is knocking at the garden gate of his chosen one, the Beloved. But the Lover has to leave, the gate staying closed since after being asked "Who is it?" the boy's reply was, "It's me". This happens twice. The Beloved does not open the gate. Only on the third attempt the Lover says, "It is You". And here is when the gate is opened.

Concerning San Juan, it was him who translated the Songs of Songs into a language I understood, hence the use of his texts. But it happens now and then that the existing texts do not fully suite, be it because of its phonetic or other values, to the general atmosphere and focus of the music. In these moments I tend to hear besides the music also words and have dared to use them as an additional text source.

4. How do you begin to write music and from what was that process developed - from an inner instinct, from past composition teachers, etc.?

It developed from an early dream seeing myself sitting by a piano and "writing" music in total solitude. Then came the music studies and reading music, which alienated me from such thoughts totally. And only after starting to play guitar in a rock band I came out with some pretty simple rock scores followed soon after by, I guess quite complex, but totally "uneducated" fragments meant to be played by acoustic instruments. This was the platform from which I started to get my first composition lessons at the age of 18 and which once again alienated

me, this time from myself. So, I guess it was the inner instinct and craving which kept me going and searching and coming back again and again.

But now, yes, there are those layers of past experiences and habits and instincts grown out of the earlier works. Those can be of help, but can be a distraction in the same way. It is really dangerous when composing starts to be too easy. So I guess I am both leaning to these positive experiences and at the same time avoiding them.

5. Is there any principle you follow when setting text to music?

The text has to speak to me and has to have some basic elements, which correspond to my understanding of what a poetic utterance is.The phonetic contents of the text seems to be of equal importance with that of the semantic one. Then comes the interpretation of the text. It might be that the only good reason to use a text in a composition, is to understand it to the core. There are always hidden values, which reveal themselves only through the musical interpretation. In that way music works as a translational interface. And composing is both a process of commenting on the subject and translating it.

6. How have you seen your musical language evolve in the last ten years? Do you see any trends in Estonian music over the same time?

Certain trends in Estonian music, which are fatiguing and a bit frightening for me at the moment, are those related to the exaggerated simplification of musical texture. Would it be just texture all would be well. But along with simplification something gets lost and along with that certain functions of music start to evaporate. In case music seizes to be intellectually engaging it should find counterbalance in something else. I am not always able to see that “else”.

That has a lot to do with my own pretty obvious fluctuations between complexity and simplicity. For the moment simplicity has no other function than to bore me, it seems. Again, that is because of the lost counterbalance.

7. Many of your recent premieres have been with internationally recognized ensembles outside Estonia. How would you characterize your past collaborations with Estonian ensembles and choirs? Do you at all find

that your music commissioned by non-Estonian ensembles/organizations somehow differs from what you write for the local audience? If not, do you see any differences between audiences in Estonia and abroad in terms of their composition, expectations, tastes?

The difference is there and obvious, but that changes from hall to hall. Since Estonia is that small and the possible audience that limited it is not that easy to see the difference perhaps. But clearly, there is the "choir audience" which has their own expectations and pretty clear understandings of what choir music is. And since it is quite obvious that it is not my first concern to satisfy one's expectations I do not see much resonance here. The same music sung somewhere else has different reverbs.

But I have had very satisfying collaborations both here and abroad both in the realm of instrumental and vocal music.

8. As Chair of the Composition Department of the Estonian Academy of Music & Theatre, you perhaps have the most contact with younger generations of composers of anyone else in the country. What patterns do you see in their careers and their musical interests? Do most of them study abroad or is their education still generally conducted in Estonia? Of those who do go abroad, do most stay or do most return? Are there problems of re-integration for the latter group?

It is difficult to describe what the pattern of the appearance of talented people looks like. But the pattern is there. There are waves and then some nice exceptions in between.

Most of the students, who have studied abroad, have returned. I guess these studies do not just broaden their mindset, but let them also find the core - what they are and what they'd like to be. And being away provides them with the necessary look from aside, from the distance.

It is difficult to establish a concrete pattern of interests though. There is always a myriad of them. But it is natural that people find themselves through following an example, through imitation. Because of that certain stream and trends are noticeable. At the same time I would be happy to see the interests to be more_defined but combined with open-mindedness at the same time.

Curiosity is something I lack in young people, and the need for adventure. Salt has to be salty.

9. You write both instrumental and choral music - but meant for professional ensembles only. Have you had any contact with the amateur choir world in Estonia? What do you think is the primary feature in your music that puts those ensembles off from performing it - meaning, what is the biggest "barrier to entry"?

Yes, there have been some brief encounters with so-called amateurs, but also with the real ones, what a lovely word - the ones, who love. And these have been both the singers from professional and non-professional ensembles. The will and fervor are what matter. A lukewarm Lover, a lukewarm professional singer, what are they good for?

But there might be more than one feature that puts different ensembles off from performing the scores. First come the technical aspects. (Singers, who do not have enough self-respect and love to train, I speak here of the professional musicians, stay naturally out.) There is another repellant, the contents of the music, the contents, which stays hidden behind the musical utterances. It is quite obvious that with ideas of the kind one has to be happy with no more than perhaps a couple of dedicated performers and performances.

B: Personal Interview with Helena Tulve. 7 February 2015.

The responses below have not been altered. The written interview was conducted in English and is presented in its original form. Any grammatical inaccuracies, misspellings, etc. have been cited in the dissertation but are presented verbatim here.

1. You left Estonia quite early in its history as an independent country post-1991 to study at the CNSM in Paris. Did you feel like you were blazing a trail for other Estonian composers, both geographically and musically?

Honestly, things somehow happened to me at this stage of life. One thing brought to an other, the liberation of Estonia was happily simultaneous with the moment when I was ready to go and see around for further studies. When you are 19 you do not think in a very conscious way of a very large context of your

choices and actions. At least I did not, I was curious about life and the world that miraculously opened to me, I just tried to observe, get in contact and understand more. It was a moment when several other composers went to study abroad - for example Mari Vihmand to Lyon, Jüri Reinvere to Poland and later to Finland etc. It seemed very natural to catch the opportunity. Going to study in France was from one side a wonder, because in the deep Soviet time and even when it all started to open little by little - this culture seemed most far away compared to Finland, Sweden, Germany, that historically are much more present Estonian culture and mind-set. Yet French culture represented to me at this moment the ephemeral, flexible, emotional - an image that in reality is maybe not really true and existing - but definitely very different of our nordic protestant identity, that has come through the occupations and lastly 50 years of Soviet repressions. The choice to go to France just happened to me, but looking at the things from now I can see that at the same time the way I was thinking in music had already before unconsciously affinities with some aspects I met later in France.

2. From your EMIC bio: "Of utmost importance to me is the extending of musical boundaries. By this I mean the extension of timbral, formal and stylistic borders as well as the opening-up of music's geographical boundaries. The latter has greatly advanced the former." In some way, Estonia also happens to be on the fringe of Europe and of classical music in general. At least it has been that way. Have you found that isolation working as a composer in Estonia? Has it been liberating or constraining? Do you feel you have a canon or a point of reference in your music, and as a result, is your aesthetic a conscious decision to tread your own path or is it somehow embedded in the minds of Estonian composers to look beyond the nation's small borders?

The way I feel about my current situation is rather being happy to live at the periphery in some classical sense of cultural density. Although I think it is this way only from a certain outer perspective of the idea of being at some place in the centre of the vortex of the events of the mainstream-culture. I like to live where I live from many perspectives. It sets you - if you wish - more easily free from very close and oppressing milestones of a very crowded cultural

environment. It is a place where you can be in close contact with this still present simpler way of living, living with traditions, living with nature and having time for the tiny, subtle and marginal. I feel that being from here, I can live it more truly, I think and instinctively understand more the spirit of a place, and related to that, the essence of being alive. That kind of familiar environment and trust helps me to see and understand the similar and different - something that is important to me in the context of creation as well. Yet I do not see, specially nowadays, being separate from the rest of the world. Important things, things that have gravity for me are the same everywhere, you have to try to look behind more carefully. That means I am interested in detailed look to different phenomena, multiple and very various local expressions of things, but always trying to see the similar and uniting that may not always be visible. My aesthetic is not separate from this way of thinking about the world and in more and more close reflection of what and how it resonates in me. I think of it as of something very personal and intimate, but yet certainly not belonging to me at all and being separate from the creation all over. This is my inner feeling, but I cannot say anything general about how things are for Estonian composers overall body, if something as such exists. I believe that ideas do not follow official borders of visible cultural density. Life and creativity happens everywhere.

3. "North Wind, South Wind" combines voice, a traditional Estonian instrument, and "Western" classical ones like flute and cello. There is an implied of meeting of sensibilities, of the folk/local and the global. How does the piece reflect your own position as a composer with both a local renown and reputation in addition to a global one?

Of course there are connotations to the traditional and classical proceedings. My attitude still is related to the perception of the something I call the nature of the instrument, the nature of the sound of an instrument. It is of course related to different traditions, that are inherent. But at the same time there is something more if you try to dig deeper, that allows to find maybe something that rather unites, complements and widens then tears apart. This is mainly my departure point in most circumstances. What about the outer look on my music, then I do not relate much to this concern, I cannot help.

4. Considering the rich history of vocal music in Estonia, how does your writing for the voice react to that? Are composers like Tormis in your "rearview mirror" or are you entirely on your own? The question really means to ask: is what we consider to be Estonian national (vocal) music reconcilable with your own?

I have since long time been curious about different oral traditions of the world, vocal and instrumental as well. It has brought my attention more and more to my own tradition, Estonian one. And invited me to be more specific observing regional differences and vocal specificities of various genres etc. I think that vocal aesthetics and technics are closely related to the nature and purpose of the musical expression. My own preference goes always more to the natural voice, that is of course difficult to define. I am more likely willing to go with the personal characteristics of a particular voice - powerful or fragile -, in the largest possible meaning, but in the limits of being organically related to the nature of the music. Sometimes this connection is to be worked out more closely, but it is important for me to find it.

5. How have you seen your musical language evolve in the last ten years? Do you see any trends in Estonian music over the same time?

Difficult question. I think the main focus I have been very consciously dealing with is the process of composing it-self, not the style or technique or musical models. I have been asking and observing what I do and how closely I am connected to the expression of the music, how much I am working from the present, intuitive and unknown, not from the preplanned, modelled, fully rationalised. This has been in a way bigger preoccupation then the change in the resulting music, though obviously it has affected the musical language and concrete musical ideas, related to time, space and all other aspects, small or large-scale. The main thing that has changed is my own trust into the process and into the closer connection to the presence. My own words make more sense to me, at least - as much they are mine.

It is difficult to talk about the trends in music separated from trends in the society, cultural behaviour, consumerism or opposition to those trends. And somehow I feel a little helpless to have a distinct picture. I know most of creators,

I see their personal path and goals too closely to be able to generalise. Maybe I even do not want to adopt this in a sense analytical and unavoidably judgemental point of view, specially being part of this picture, but not wanting to fix my own position either. There are certain tendencies to conformism, formatting and accepting the practices of consumerism becoming more and more visible, that I do not feel comfortable with myself. It is not limited to my view on Estonian music specifically. I am asking if we do not lose the tensity of the artistic, intellectual and spiritual quest. Hopefully not.