BERMUDAS: HOW LEE HOIBY’S MUSICAL SETTING ENHANCES THE TEXTUAL INTERPRETATION OF ANDREW MARVELL’S POEM

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BY
LAUREN WALKER

DR. MEI ZHONG – ADVISOR

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY
MUNCIE, INDIANA

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**Bermudas: How Lee Hoiby’s Musical Setting Enhances the Textual Interpretation of Andrew Marvell’s Poem**

Andrew Marvell’s poem *Bermudas*, published posthumously in 1681, is a masterpiece of descriptive and elegant prose. The poem acclaims the exotic riches and natural beauties of the island Bermudas as admired from the perspective of English mariners rowing towards the land. The actual date of the composition is estimated to have been around 1653.¹ Lee Hoiby composed a vocal duet for Marvell’s poem *Bermudas* in 1983 for soprano, mezzo-soprano, and piano. The musical setting of the poem is intended to broaden and enhance the poem’s meaning. It seeks not to detract or divert the listener’s attention from the words, but rather to enrich the listener’s understanding of and appreciation for the poetry. Hoiby accomplishes this goal admirably by creating a sensitive musical setting for the poem *Bermudas*. Hoiby’s use of voicing, harmonies, piano accompaniment, and formal design enhance a literal and sympathetic interpretation of the poetic text. The purpose of this paper is to explore the variety of ways of understanding how Lee Hoiby’s twentieth-century duet *Bermudas* enhances Andrew Marvell’s seventeenth-century poem. A deeper comprehension of the text and the accompanying musical setting will enable musicians to perform the work more accurately and with greater appreciation.

Since textual interpretation is so vital to the musical setting of a vocal composition, the meaning of Andrew Marvell’s text must be determined before Hoiby’s musical setting is explored. Marvell was one of the leading poets of the Metaphysical period.2 Thus the poem *Bermudas* makes use of the physical island to hint at deeper, abstract ideas.

**Bermudas** by Andrew Marvell

Where the remote Bermudas ride  
In th’ ocean’s bosom unespy’d,  
From a small boat, that row’d along,  
The list’ning winds receiv’d this song.

What should we do but sing his praise  
That led us through the wat’ry maze  
Unto an isle so long unknown,  
And yet far kinder than our own?  
Where he the huge sea-monsters wracks,  
That lift the deep upon their backs,  
He lands us on a grassy stage,  
Safe from the storm’s and prelates’ rage.

He made us this eternal spring  
Which here enamels everything,  
And sends the fowls to us in care,  
On daily visits through the air.

He hangs in shades the orange bright,  
Like golden lamps in a green night;  
And does in the pomegranates close  
Jewels more rich than Ormus shows

He makes the figs our mouths to meet  
And throws the melons at our feet,  
But apples plants of such a price,  
No tree could ever bear them twice.  
With cedars, chosen by his hand,  
From Lebanon, he stores the land,  
And makes the hollow seas that roar  
Proclaim the ambergris on shore.

He cast (of which we rather boast)  
The Gospel’s pearl upon our coast,  
And in these rocks for us did frame  
A temple, where to sound his name.

Oh let our voice his praise exalt  
Till it arrive at heaven’s vault;  
Which thence (perhaps) rebounding, may  
Echo beyond the Mexic Bay.

Thus sung they in the English boat  
An holy and a cheerful note,  
And all the way, to guide their chime,  
With falling oars they kept the time.

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The text is introduced and concluded with a four-line narrative. The meat of the poem is found in the thanksgiving praise sung by the English rowers in the middle thirty-two lines. The entire work is made up of couplets and is an example of iambic tetrameter.3 The surrounding narrative gives context and placement, noting the exact location of the paradisiacal island (the beautiful Bermudas off the east coast of the Americas) and noting the kind of rowers (English), their position (in a boat), and their tone (cheerful). In thanksgiving and praise to God, the rowers embark upon a lengthy song detailing the splendid nature of the island’s exoticism. Some of the island features include its superior fruits, rich colors, tempestuous seas (representing power), and natural resources. The islands have been valued since then for similar reasons. According to a 1901 edition of the *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society*, the island has a “mild and delightful climate” and is “absolutely free from fevers.”4 Also valued and noted in the poem song is the potential for the spreading of the Gospel on the island. Biblical allusions abound in Marvell’s *Bermudas*.5 “Fowls sent in daily visits” is reminiscent of the account of the Israelites being fed quail daily in the wilderness in Exodus 16. The picturesque and sensuous language used to describe fruit and colors suggests the original paradise of Eden in Genesis and uses terminology from the Song of Solomon. Several phrases used by the rowers in their song seem like paraphrased versions of the Psalms, such as the “hollow seas that roar,”6 cedars “from Lebanon,”7 and “huge Sea-Monsters.”8

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6 Psalm 96:11.
7 Psalm 92:12.
8 Job 41.
It is important to give due notice to the various shades of ambiguity surrounding Marvell’s intent in writing the polemic Bermudas poem. In the literal interpretation of the text above, a simple and heartfelt praise from the rowers to the one who “led [them] through the wat’ry maze” to reach and claim the beautiful island is evident. But Marvell was a metaphysical poet, making use of satire in a witty and abstract manner, thereby communicating his actual views indirectly so as not to incur the wrath of politicians and religious authorities.\(^9\) A mere reading of the poem Bermudas may suggest that it is a form of Puritan propaganda, according to philosopher R. M. Cummings.\(^10\) But upon closer study and reflection, two major anomalies surface: the first being that Marvell’s descriptive prose mirrors Pliny’s pagan writings on the Gardens of the Hesperides (a comparison that does not jibe with Puritan ideals), and the second being that contradictions between the poetic description of the Bermudas and the historical record of the actual islands exist.\(^11\) Marvell’s exotic and sensuous description of the Bermudas is comparable to the classical mid-Atlantic paradises in Pliny’s writings with which Marvell would have been familiar, viz., the famed Gardens of the Hesperides. This fact would contain no irony were it not for the clearly pagan undertones evident in the sensuous vividness of his descriptive borrowings juxtaposed to his Puritan ideals.

Apparent contradictions in the poetic description to the actual Bermudas are evident in the imagery. The sailors magnify the joy of being landed on a “grassy stage” in the poem, whereas the Bermuda shoreline was known to be walled with rocks.\(^12\) (As an interesting counter-argument to this statement: aerial photos of the island justify such imagery. The rocks serve to

\(^12\)Cummings, “The Difficulty of Marvell’s ‘Bermudas,’” 334.
lift the greenery to a higher, stage-like plateau. Marvell, of course, would not have had access to such a view, though he could have imagined it.) Professor Rosalie Colie noted that the “eternal spring” Marvell mentions, although seemingly positive, perhaps suggests a less cheery truth: few plants ripen or mature. 

The “daily visits” from the fowls might have conjured memories of Elijah’s heaven-sent food in the Puritan mind. But this line could also have been a covert, ironic reference to the island plague of 1614, during which ravens multiplied.

Furthermore, the rowers seem to be emphasizing the island’s gifts to them more than the glory of God. The overall tone of the poem seems selfish and spiritually arrogant, with a touch of cloying sycophancy in the phrase “what shall we do but sing His praise.” These are just a few of the ironic references in the poem. English Professor Tay Fizdale notes that Marvell might have been striving to reveal the inadequacies of the rowers in their attempt at praise to God.

Their seas are “hollow,” island rocks are Temples instead of their hearts, praise rebounds from Heaven’s Vault (instead of penetrating), and as is stated in the preceding narrative, only the listening winds receive their song. Even if Marvell sympathized with Puritan views on God, his involvement in politics and his satirical slant suggest that he had little faith in mankind. His depiction of the rowers’ praise might very well reflect his view of proud, terrestrially-minded souls more than his acceptance of spiritual truths or lack thereof. Some might argue that Marvell’s poem is “too splendid for jest” despite all perceived discrepancies. Professor Rosalie Colie notes, “Marvell’s ‘Bermudas’ has metaphysical dimensions whose measure can be taken only by the poet.”

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that found in the poem *Bermudas* can only be described as a calculated and covert flippancy conjured by the satirical mind of Andrew Marvell.

Whether truly worshipful or subtly mocking, it will become apparent that Marvell’s views on the subject of his poem are not as important to composer Lee Hoiby as the expression of the descriptive words themselves from the perspective of the rowers. This does not mean that Marvell’s poetic irony is unimportant in this musical context. It is highly probable that Hoiby was aware of Marvell’s satirical nature and the poem’s less-than-pious undertones. The fact that Hoiby chose this particular poem with all of its intricacies and paradoxes for a sincere musical composition is a fascination all to itself.

In the midst of careful attention to textual accuracy and a literal interpretation of the poem, Lee Hoiby chooses to slightly alter two words in the text, and omit two lines. One might wonder why Hoiby chose to change the word “winds” to “waves” in the narrative phrase “The listening winds received this song.” This particular word change makes sense due to the fact that it is the winds that cause the waves. Yet it is still odd that Hoiby would change a text he seems so intent on observing and enhancing musically. The piano accompaniment supporting Hoiby’s word “waves” is a series of open third-related triads in second inversion, rolled by the pianist at regular intervals that abate in volume, creating a sound reminiscent of waves lapping against the side of a boat.
Musical Example 1: *Bermudas* by Lee Hoiby, mm. 19-21\(^{16}\)

This is the perfect accompaniment to Hoiby’s substitute word “waves” as opposed to “winds.” But when the piano enters in the following measure, the right-hand sixteenth notes billow upwards, imitating the wind stirring the waters. Thus this word change still seems arbitrary. Hoiby also changes the word “rebounding” to “resounding” in line thirty-one of the B section in the phrase “Which then (perhaps) rebounding may Eccho beyond the Mexique Bay.” “Resounding” carries more musical consequence and depth than the hollow “rebounding.” Hoiby seems to be creating more meaning for the sailors in this phrase, redeeming them from Marvell’s shallow portrayal of the extent of their praise. In consideration of textual accuracy, it is not clear why Hoiby chose poem lines fifteen and sixteen to excise from the *Bermudas* text (“And does in the pomegranates close Jewels more rich than Ormus shows”). Perhaps Hoiby felt that there was enough imagery related to food already, or it may have been purely for musical reasons such as timing and duration. These slight changes and omissions in no way impede a literal interpretation of the text, and may even enhance it on some level.

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\(^{16}\) All musical examples in this paper were obtained from portions of the following score: Lee Hoiby, *Bermudas* (New York: G. Schirmer, Inc., 1984).
Structure

The structure or form of Hoiby’s musical interpretation of the Bermudas emphasizes the natural flow of the words in the text. The overarching form of the work is aBa, with the “a” being the four-line narration coming before and after the song of the rowers in the poem and the “B” being the thirty-two-line song of the English sailors. As stated earlier, Hoiby excises lines fifteen and sixteen, creating a “B” musical section of a more manageable thirty lines. Just as Marvell’s text of praise for the island is introduced and concluded with a narration of the mariners rowing an English boat, so Hoiby introduces and concludes his duet with a single vocal line. This line is accompanied by a sparse and distant piano accompaniment written to suggest the movement of the boat towards and then away from the listener. Fizdale states that “by framing the moment of the [sailors’] song, freezing it in the past by means of a prologue and epilogue, Marvell distances us from the event.” In like manner Hoiby creates a distinct musical “distance” between the narrative sections and the song of the English rowers in this use of one vocalist for the narrative and two for the song. Within the lengthy praise-song passage (the “B” section) Hoiby plays with texture on a phrase-by-phrase basis, and sometimes on a word-by-word basis in order to accentuate the text as much as possible.

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17 Fizdale, “Irony in Marvell’s ‘Bermudas,’” 205.
Table 1: *Bermudas* by Andrew Marvell

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BERMUDAS</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Tempo</th>
<th>mm</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Marvell</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHERE the remote Bermudas ride,</td>
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<td>In the ocean’s bosom unespied,</td>
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<td>From a small boat, that rowed along,</td>
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<td>The listening winds* received this song :</td>
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<td>&quot;What should we do but sing His praise</td>
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<td>That led us through the watery maze,</td>
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<td>Unto an isle so long unknown,</td>
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<td>And yet far kinder than our own?</td>
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<td>Where He the huge sea-monsters wracks,</td>
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<td>That lift the deep upon their backs;</td>
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<td>He lands us on a grassy stage,</td>
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<td>Safe from the storms, and prelate's rage.</td>
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<td>He gave us this eternal spring,</td>
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<td>Which here enamels everything,</td>
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<td>And sends the fowls to us in care,</td>
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<td>On daily visits through the air;</td>
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<td>He hangs in shades the Orange bright,</td>
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<td>Like golden lamps in a green night,</td>
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<td>Jewels more rich than Ormus shows:;]</td>
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<td>Proclaim the ambergris on shore;</td>
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<td>He cast (of which we rather boast)</td>
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<td>The Gospel's pearl upon our coast,</td>
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<td>And in these rocks for us did frame</td>
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<td>A temple where to sound His name.</td>
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<td>Oh! Let our voice His praise exalt,</td>
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<td>Till it arrive at Heaven's vault,</td>
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<td>Which, thence (perhaps) rebounding, ** may</td>
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<td>Echo beyond the Mexique Bay.</td>
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18 Poem extracted as accurately as possible from combined sources:
Poem of Quotes, “Bermudas by Andrew Marvell,” and “Bermudas,” Poetry by Heart, accessed June 4, 2014,
http://www.poetrybyheart.org.uk/poems/bermudas/.
As is evident in Table 1, the “B” section can be loosely subdivided into seven sections based on important tempo changes, textural altering, or key modulations. Sometimes all of these aspects change at once, creating an obvious sectional transition. Other transitional points are less clear. Section I begins with a soft rumbling in the bass register of the piano at a slow-to-moderate tempo. Section I is the longest, lasting for twelve lines of the poem before the second section marked *Lento* enters. The *Lento* portion is characterized by its lush harmonies and suspended quality. The unique beauty of the *Lento* section seems to suggest a small moment of joyous revelation rather than a simple transition, and arouses the dance-like grace-notes in the following *Allegretto* entrance in section III.

Many of the “sections” designated above are intricately connected, with the final word or phrase of the previous section entering in first measure of the next section. This kind of connection between parts enables Hoiby to create an almost cyclic forward momentum: no section actually ends or begins, but all are blended into one beautiful image. The fourth section, *Allegro*, is noted with an abrupt meter, texture, and dynamic change to enliven a poetic line concerning the ocean’s power. Section V is *Calmo*, mysteriously quiet to create an aura around the mention of the “Gospel’s Pearl.” Section VI returns to *Moderato*, giving the illusion of winding down. It then builds into an unexpected outburst of *Allegro*, the seventh and final section of the rowers’ song. The familiar narrative then resumes, and the rowers disappear into the distance.

The piano motive heard at the beginning recommences, as though nothing had happened. The entire song seems like a dream. Perhaps there was no boat after all, and no song from hearty English mariners. Colie states that “earthly paradises are always static. Marvell’s oarsmen go about no special business, do not arrive anywhere, are ‘In the oceans bosom unespy’d’ and seem
to worship God wherever they are.” 19 Their Puritan paradise is more reminiscent of the Garden of Eden than an actual place on earth. This fleeting, ethereal quality of the poem is reflected in Hoiby’s use of the cyclic aBa’ form. The question is raised in the listener’s mind as to whether the rowers actually travelled anywhere, or whether the narrator simply imagined the entire episode B for their enjoyment. Hoiby’s cyclic formal design and melding of sections add to the mental state of eternal other-worldliness, the perfect complement to Marvell’s metaphysical undertones and exotic prose.

**Theme and Motive**

One main theme and one main motive in Hoiby’s *Bermudas* serve to unify the piece by emphasizing the idea behind a literal reading of the poem: singing praises to God. Both the theme and the motive are heard in the voices as well as the piano accompaniment. As with the formal design, it seems that Hoiby is more interested in staying true to the text than in creating a neatly organized musical score. The motive flits here and there within the texture of the accompaniment, in keeping with the mood of the poem and morphing as necessary to enhance and color the text. This recurring motive is a sixteenth-note vacillation of varying lengths on a major or minor 2nd interval.

Musical Example 2: Sixteenth-note motive, mm. 25, 28 and 44

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This motive serves to unify the work by entering almost everywhere. Snippets of it are heard in the piano accompaniment of the narrative, connecting the “a” section to the “B” song of the rowers. This motive propels the piece forward, along with the scalar passages. It is sung in the soprano and mezzo voices on the words “echo beyond,” and it recurs often within the texture of the piano. It is most prevalent when coloring phrases concerning speech or song, such as “echo,” “voices,” and “guide their Chime.” If the pun can be forgiven, perhaps this wave-like piano motive is meant to reflect a different form of waves, namely, sound waves.

The main theme, unlike the sixteenth-note motive, is lyric and less frequently used. It is briefly anticipated in the piano and then enters solidly in the soprano vocal line on the words “What should we do but sing his praise.” It is made up of a lyric, repeated three-note descending major chord.

Musical Example 3: *Bermudas* by Lee Hoiby, mm. 27-33

This theme melds into the fabric of the piano accompaniment seamlessly and is not evident again until m. 103. Here it acts similarly, and the rowers’ attention is once again on how
they can sing God’s praise (“And in these Rocks for us did frame a Temple where to sound his Name”). It was not an accident that this memorable and tonal theme of Hoiby’s *Bermudas* only appears when the rowers are thinking about singing. Both the sixteenth-note motive and the lyric theme serve to bring the text alive through emphasizing the importance of the song of the rowers.

**Voicing**

Hoiby utilizes two voices, the soprano and the mezzo-soprano, in the musical composition *Bermudas*, using them to enhance the mood of the poem. The voice that narrates the “a” section at the beginning and the end is the mezzo-soprano. The two voices are able to weave together and apart in a wave-like fashion, enhancing the poetic imagery of waters and sailing. Sometimes the voices move in parallel motion, most notably in mm. 27-33 and 104-112, where the main theme is displayed and where the rowers speak of singing praises.

Musical Example 4: *Bermudas* by Lee Hoiby, mm. 104-106
This parallel motion seems to represent the united purpose of the rowers in giving God praise. Contrary motion in the soprano and mezzo lines is evident in m. 34 on the phrase “so long unknown,” emphasizing the mystery of the Isle before it was discovered.

Musical Example 5: Bermudas by Lee Hoiby, mm. 33-35

Hoiby paints the text vividly in the voice parts on words such as “Melons” (8ve leap upwards) and “Ambergris” (highest note sung). Marvell makes a textual note of the English mariners fleeing the “Prelat’s rage,” a potential reference to their Puritan heritage and their dissatisfaction with the authority of the Church of England. This phrase is set in the lowest notes for both voices, suggesting how little the rowers might have valued the church authorities they were trying to flee from. Text painting occurs as the vocal lines imitate the ideas being presented. “Eccho beyond” is sung in imitation between the two voices in mm. 118-123, with crescendos and dynamic waves from forte to piano and back to forte. “Heaven’s Vault” is reached with a scalar ascent. On the words “Oh let our Voice his Praise exalt,” it is as though the

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20 Fizdale, “Irony in Marvell’s ‘Bermudas,’” 204.
sailors can hear their own voices bouncing back to them off of the rocks of the Mexique Bay. In this passage, the soprano and mezzo voices take turns leaping from one accented note to another. There is considerable imitation between the voices, often led by the soprano line.

Musical Example 6: *Bermudas* by Lee Hoiby, mm. 118-119

Musical Example 7: *Bermudas* by Lee Hoiby, mm. 124-126
Hoiby emphasizes certain words by placing them in metrically unusual places. In the first “a” section before the word “unespy’d” Hoiby places an obvious rest, emphasizing the word that signifies the seclusion of the rowers. The “or” or “Orange” is held unusually long, while the word “bright” is barely touched at the end of the phrase “He hangs in shades the Orange bright.” Syncopation is evident in the phrase “But Apples, plants of such a price.” In the final “a” section, the vocal line descends on the word “falling.” It is interesting to note where Hoiby places the last vocal sixteenth-note flourish: on the word “holy” instead of the expected and more apt word “cheerful.” This seems to suggest that Hoiby considered the sacredness of the rowers’ song to be more enlivening than anything else. The fact that he descends on the word “cheerful” after this upward flourish on “holy” leaves room for speculation concerning his motives in painting the text in this particular manner. Perhaps at the very end, Hoiby was adding a hint of his own irony—very well disguised—to Marvell’s satirical slant.

Musical Example 8: *Bermudas* by Lee Hoiby, mm. 140-142
Harmony

One of the most captivating aspects of Lee Hoiby’s musical setting of the poem *Bermudas* is his use of rich and tonal harmonies with a refreshingly contemporary sound. It is Hoiby’s harmonic setting more than any other aspect that brings to life Marvell’s seventeenth-century description of the exotic island. The opening and closing narratives rest in the modal key of B Phrygian. Repeated fourths and fifths in rocking triplets in the piano bass create a lulling ostinato. Just as ocean waves are often unpredictable, so the meter of the narrative section changes from $\frac{9}{8}$ to $\frac{6}{8}$ at rather random intervals. Long pauses create a feeling of suspense and dreaminess.

Musical Example 9: *Bermudas* by Lee Hoiby, mm. 8-12

The pensive mood of the beginning of the piece is interrupted by an extreme dissonance in m. 21. The piano chords of g# minor and f minor clash jarringly with the vocal line’s sustained D. Eventually, the piano texture sinks by thirds, g#-f-d-B\(^b\)-G, finally settling on A\(^b\). If the beginning of the narrative was characterized by waves, winds, and dreams, the end of it seems to sink the listener to the bottom of the ocean. The less exotic key of A\(^b\) major replaces B
Phrygian in order to portray the earthy reality of the rowers and their song. As the $A^b$-major section commences, the piano texture bubbles upwards, raising the listener to the surface to hear the rowers as they enter with their song. The key signature changes to all naturals in order to prepare for the extreme chromaticism in the description of sea monsters in m. 42. Major-minor 7ths, minor-minor 7ths, and half-diminished 7ths move in parallel chromatic motion up and down on the phrase “that lift the deep upon their Backs” (describing the sea monsters).

Musical Example 10: *Bermudas* by Lee Hoiby, mm. 42-43

Another exotic scale meanders itself into mm. 54-55. It seems to be C Lydian in the right-hand piano section, A Dorian in the left hand, then some form of A Lydian in m. 55. The delicate *Lento* section is characterized by luxurious sweeping 9ths, 7ths, and cluster chords. The dense yet harmonious sound these chords create is suspended by half-notes until a moment of bubbly ecstasy expands and intensifies in rolled chords in the piano section in m. 63 on the word
“green.” This culminating joy erupts into dancing grace notes in m. 64 on the word “Night” in the key of E♭ major.

Musical Example 11: Bermudas by Lee Hoiby, mm. 53-55

In preparation for the tumultuous description of the roaring seas, Hoiby gives the tritone interval to the voices on the word “Land.” This disturbing interval crescendos for an entire measure until the piano enters in the Allegro section. Both the voices and the piano accompaniment roll up and down on the musical score, both looking and sounding like tempestuous waves on the sea, and displaying swift changes from sforzandos to fortes to pianos. This section is disturbing harmonically, with cluster dissonances including the combination of E♭ and D♭ with an A-major chord in m. 83, and a G-diminished chord next to D and E natural, etc.
The terror of the sea is still audible in the phrase “He cast the Gospel Pearl upon our coast” in the form of piano tritones and key ambiguity. The tritones resolve to a perfect fourth in m. 96 on the word “Pearl,” perhaps suggesting that the beauty and truth of the Gospel can somehow dispel the fears of the sea. The main theme enters once again after the tumult is entirely over. Peaceful etherealness is restored via the ascent to a high register in the piano on an A\textsubscript{b}-major chord. If this was a truly cyclic form, one might expect the narrative section to enter presently. But later in the same section, the piano and voice parts rise and crescendo for the joyous outburst of the rowers’ desire to have their song “echo beyond the Mexique Bay.” Unlike the outburst of the tempestuous seas, this overflowing joy is characterized by a stable A\textsubscript{b}-major key followed by a solid B-major key signature.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{21} See Musical Example 7 on page 15.
The texture of the piano accompaniment sparkles like sunlight on water on the long-held word “Vault” in the voices. B Phrygian does not immediately return to the narrative at the beginning of the “a’” section as it did in the beginning. Rather, the voice sings and ends quietly in B major. The piano resumes the B-Phrygian mode a lengthy five measures after the voice has finished. The piano line wafts into the stratosphere of the high piano register at the end of the piece. It slowly disappears on open fifths. One is left with the sense that the rowers have also disappeared with their song. The listener is left feeling distanced from the tempests and the beauty of the rowers’ song. By ending the piece in the same style and key as the beginning, Hoiby begets a sense of tranquility and motionlessness. It is as though nothing happened; nothing changed. Everything returns to the way that it was in the beginning.
The poem *Bermudas* is a study in spirituality, mankind, paradise, and journey. Lee Hoiby manifests these ideas in grand and expressive ways using his compositional skills, two human voices, and the piano. In his focus on an accurate interpretation of the text, Hoiby gives musical credence to the sincerity of the English rowers and the beauty of their exotic island descriptions. Even if one adheres to the idea that Marvell’s poem is subtly sarcastic, there is no doubt that Hoiby’s musical interpretation of *Bermudas* enriches the literal text and is a beautiful accomplishment. It is my hope that this study will aid music students in developing a deeper understanding and appreciation of the text and the accompanying musical setting will enable musicians to perform the work more accurately and with greater appreciation.
Bibliography


