

SYMPHONY NO. 1: "FOR JEAN"

A CREATIVE PROJECT

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE

MASTER OF MUSIC

BY

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## Introduction

The composition that serves as the creative project for my master's degree is a single-movement—but multi-sectional—symphony for a mostly standard orchestra. This is my first foray into symphonic composition. I view it as both a learning opportunity and a means of showcasing my personal style. For guidance and inspiration in writing this piece, I looked back to the masters who, over the last two centuries, developed the symphony into what it is today.

Since the time of Haydn, the symphony has been among the most revered musical genres. The standard ensemble for symphonies is the symphony orchestra, which developed specifically to play them. For over two centuries, many Western musicians have regarded the symphony as the pinnacle of compositional achievement and artistry. The symphonies of Haydn, Beethoven, Schumann, Tchaikovsky, Brahms, Mahler, and many others are testaments to the significance of the genre and the musical quality that it can exhibit. The twentieth century saw a rapid expansion of styles and aesthetics. Yet many composers, including Sibelius, Copland, and Bernstein, returned to the symphony. It has become an essential part of the art music world.

The symphony has continuously evolved since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Composers explored many ways to manipulate form, such as combining movements or employing cyclic themes. Indeed, there is a tradition of innovation within the symphonic repertoire. From Beethoven, to Schumann, to Sibelius and Bernstein, the definition of “symphony” has been stretched and reshaped. Being such a prominent genre, it helped to guide the progression of musical ideals over time.

The structure of symphonies evolved from Baroque forms.<sup>1</sup> Early symphonies contained three movements, each with distinct characters. As years passed, composers experimented with

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<sup>1</sup> Louise Cuyler, *The Symphony* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), 8–10.

that form. A fourth movement became standard, and some added more.<sup>2</sup> More importantly, symphony composers explored ways that they could unify the disparate movements of their works. Specific key relationships, recurring motives, cyclic themes, single movement forms, and others were all employed to create a greater sense of cohesion in symphonies—even as these pieces were also growing in size of ensemble and length of work.

Because of these variations and experiments, the symphonic genre has displayed a great amount of flexibility and adaptability. As the standard structure expanded, it allowed for more component parts to be manipulated, while others remained the same.<sup>3</sup> For instance, sonata-allegro form might still be used for a movement, but the tonal relationships within that movement might be divergent from the norm.

My symphony follows in the footsteps of those innovators. I incorporate elements found in many symphonies, but focus primarily on Jean Sibelius's (1865–1957) Seventh Symphony (1924) for inspiration regarding structure and texture. The structure and neoromantic style of my piece hark back to traditional models. However, I also use more modern materials and techniques, including symmetrical scales and pitch-centricity. My style thus tends to blend the traditional and the modern. I value music that is accessible to most audiences, but also creative and original. It is a difficult balance.

One technique that I use to help make my music accessible is incorporating known elements, like quotations of popular songs or common tropes. In this case, the entire symphony is based on the Christian hymn of Swedish origin, “How Great Thou Art.” It provides all of the melodic material, as well as the basis for the harmonic structure of the piece. Using this tune provides listeners with a foothold, a place to begin understanding the music that might be outside

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>3</sup> Julian Horton, “Introduction: Understanding the Symphony,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Symphony*, ed. Julian Horton (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 2–3.

of their normal aesthetic. That is, of course, provided that the listener knows the song beforehand. This technique is not new with my composition, nor is it even novel within the symphonic genre. Brahms used a hymn tune in the finale to his first symphony, and the method of using motivic elements throughout a work is found from Liszt to Bernstein.<sup>4</sup>

As I have stated, two ideas inspired my piece, both of which contributed to the dedication, “For Jean.” My grandmother, who is named Jean, has been an important figure in my life. For some time now, I have felt the urge to write a piece for her. Her Christian faith is a significant aspect of her identity, so I decided to base my work on her favorite hymn. The other side of the dedication is homage to Jean Sibelius, whose music had a profound impact on my musical perspective and development as a composer.

In the chapters that follow, I will discuss in more detail the form and compositional style of Sibelius’s Seventh Symphony, the principal inspiration for my piece. I will also examine elements from his Fourth Symphony (1911), and Robert Schumann’s (1810–1856) Fourth Symphony (1851), both of which contribute to the structure of my work. Then, I will discuss my compositional method and provide an analysis of my symphony. The analysis will show the connections between my piece and those that inspired it. It will also explain how materials found throughout the work are derived from their sources.

As an aspiring composer, it is important for me to contribute to the continuation of the symphonic tradition. This is my entry to the storied ranks of composer who have come before, and a humble attempt to make my mark.

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<sup>4</sup> Mark Evan Bonds, “Beethoven’s Shadow: The Nineteenth Century,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Symphony* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 340.

## Historical Context

The symphonic repertoire is a vast and varied body. It represents the value that composers place on innovation. Throughout two-and-a-half centuries, composers have used symphonies to expand the orchestra and experiment with form, harmony, and program.

One particular means of experimentation concerned the nature of symphonic structure. The standard structure established by the end of the eighteenth century was a large form consisting of four movements, each with its own complete form. This structure was a result of the Baroque tradition of combining individual pieces into larger works. Typically, the first movement of a symphony used sonata-allegro form. The second movement was usually slow, and did not have a standard form. The third movement tended to be a minuet and trio, becoming scherzo and trio in the early nineteenth century. The fourth movement became an expected part of the symphonic form late in the eighteenth century. Since it was not typical for many early symphonies, it did not appear in any regular form. However, by the time Beethoven was composing, inclusion of fourth movements had become standard.

Given that each movement had its own distinct form, and usually its own distinct thematic material, it was natural for movements to be written separately, and for silence to separate them in performance. As the genre progressed, composers considered symphonies more and more as singular, unified pieces, rather than four individual movements. This unification manifested in a variety of ways. A composer might remove the space between movements, proceeding *attacca* from one to the next, like the fourth and fifth movements of Beethoven's Sixth Symphony.<sup>5</sup> A composer may also restate thematic material from the first movement in

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<sup>5</sup> Peter A. Brown, *The Symphonic Repertoire*, vol. 2, *The First Golden Age of the Viennese Symphony: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 500.

later ones. This can appear as a literal restatement or in variation, such as the motto theme in Schumann's First Symphony.<sup>6</sup>

Soon, these ideas of unification came together themselves, and the concept of the one-movement symphony was born. Schumann's Fourth Symphony is a prime example. Naming it a "one-movement" symphony is indicative of the piece lacking separation between movements. However, it still has four identifiable sections, which act like the movements of a typical symphony. The first and fourth sections showcase modified sonata forms. The second section is a slow ternary form, and the third is a scherzo. In addition to imitating four typical symphonic movements, the whole piece also exhibits a large sonata form. Schumann achieves this by using a method called "cyclic form."

Cyclic form refers to "music in which a later movement reintroduces thematic material of an earlier movement."<sup>7</sup> In Schumann's Fourth Symphony, the most notable manifestation is the link between the first and fourth sections. The first section seems to follow a fairly standard sonata form, establishing a primary and secondary theme like any normal sonata form. A development section follows, varying the themes. However, the development moves directly into a coda, skipping the expected recapitulation. The coda ends with a statement of the primary theme, leading into the second "movement," which is a slow *romanze*.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Peter Brown, *The Symphonic Repertoire*, vol. 3 part A, *The European Symphony from ca. 1800 to ca. 1930: Germany and the Nordic Countries* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 229–31.

<sup>7</sup> Hugh Macdonald, "Cyclic Form," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed May 28, 2016. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.

<sup>8</sup> Brown, *European Symphony*, 249–59.

**Figure 1.** “Schumann. Symphony No. 4 (1851 Version): Interlocking Cyclic Structure” (Brown, 248).

<b>TABLE V/5</b>			
Schumann. Symphony No. 4 [2] (1851 Version): Interlocking Cyclic Structure			
Introduction	Introduction: Ziemlich langsam 3/4 - D Minor 1 <i>I-0</i> 22 <i>P</i> adumbrated		
	Exposition	Exposition: Lebhaft 2/4 - D minor 29 $\parallel$ : <i>P</i> 43 <i>T(P)</i> 59 <i>S(P)</i> -F major 83 <i>K(P)</i> : $\parallel$	
		Development	Development 87 <i>P+1N, 2N, 3N</i> 265 Brass Pyramids Coda - D Major 313 <i>N</i> -Transformed 323 Brass Suspensions 337 <i>P</i> <i>Romanze: Ziemlich langsam 3/4</i> 359 A <i>a-b(1-0)-a</i> -Epilogue A minor-major 385 B $\parallel$ <i>I-0</i> $\parallel$ : : $\parallel$ A major/D major 401 A <i>a</i> -cpilogue A minor-major <i>Scherzo: Lebhaft 3/4</i> 412 Scherzo $\parallel$ : : $\parallel$ : : $\parallel$ D minor 476 Trio : : $\parallel$ : : $\parallel$ B-flat major 524 Scherzo D minor 588 Trio B-flat major 621 Coda 637 transition <i>Finale</i> 644 Introduction: Langsam 4/4 B-flat major/D minor <i>HP+N</i>
Recapitulation			Exposition: Lebhaft 4/4 660 $\parallel$ : <i>P(HP+2N)</i> D major 670 <i>T</i> 682 <i>S</i> A major 710 <i>K</i> -Brass Pyramids : $\parallel$ 721 Development 725 <i>Ppy</i> -Fugato 747 <i>I-0</i> Heroic Transformation 754 Brass Suspensions Recapitulation 758 <i>T</i> 770 <i>S</i> D major 800 <i>K</i> -Brass Pyramids 811 Coda (= Development Beginning) 815 <i>4N</i> 831 Schneller $\phi$ → Presto

Even though the development and coda sections are part of the sonata form of the first “movement” of the piece, they are also part of the development section of the overarching sonata form. The exposition serves as the exposition for both the small form and the large form. Skipping the recapitulation in the first “movement” leads to the finale “movement,” when the

themes return, acting as the recapitulation. Using the same thematic material at the beginning and end of the work makes it cyclic. Schumann used cyclic themes to create his four-movements-in-one hybrid sonata form.<sup>9</sup>

Another technique used to connect thematic material throughout a piece is melodic integration. Melodic integration is the process of taking motives or melodic fragments from various points and synthesizing them into one complete melody. Typically, that melody occurs at the end of the piece, after all of the components are stated in isolation.<sup>10</sup> Many composers use melodic integration to unify large works, including Liszt, Bernstein, and Sibelius.<sup>11</sup>

Sibelius's Fourth Symphony demonstrates integration in its finale. It brings together elements from each of the previous movements. The tritone is the most prominent interval in the work, and can be considered a melodic generator.<sup>12</sup> It appears in all the movements. The primary and secondary themes from the first movement span the range of a tritone. When motives from those themes return in the finale, the tritone is still emphasized.<sup>13</sup> The second movement also builds its melodies around a tritone, which allows the finale to combine and overlap elements from both movements seamlessly. The third movement focuses less on the tritone, though it is present. Instead, it brings the perfect fifth (C-sharp to G-sharp) to the foreground. C-sharp and G-sharp are emphasized by lush chords, with particular voicings. The finale uses those same voicings in multiple places, connecting back to the third movement. Although the notes or rhythmic content are not the same, the quality and structure of the chords remind the listener of earlier music. These elements from each movement are integrated to form one cohesive finale.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 248.

<sup>10</sup> Jack Gottlieb, "The Music of Leonard Bernstein: A Study of Melodic Manipulations" (DMA diss., University of Illinois, 1964): 115.

<sup>11</sup> Julian Horton, "Cyclical Thematic Processes in the Nineteenth-Century Symphony," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Symphony*, ed. Julian Horton (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 190.

<sup>12</sup> Brown, *European Symphony*, 642.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 652.

Sibelius expands on the hybrid form concept with his Seventh Symphony. Schumann's Fourth exhibits a fairly clear overarching sonata form, with distinct sections designated by different tempi, meters, and thematic content. Sibelius's Seventh is also a single-movement symphony, but its form is not so cut-and-dried. Musicologists have posited various analyses of its structure, shown in Figure 3. Some view it as a large sonata form, others as a rondo, and others still as a unique construction.<sup>14</sup> Ultimately, it seems most likely that Sibelius purposely blended multiple forms. Sonata-rondo form, a seven-part rondo in which the middle section acts as the development, is a common structure. However, it began as an experiment, blending two existing forms. The structure of the Seventh Symphony follows in that tradition of innovation.

It seems that Sibelius intentionally obfuscated the form of the symphony. There are no silences, no breaks to designate movements' beginning or ending. All of the tempo changes are gradual, and often hidden by slowly shifting ostinato patterns. In fact, the entire piece can be characterized by gradual changes. Instrumentation, dynamics, and rhythmic activity all change incrementally over time, rather than suddenly. This gradual evolution keeps the listener from noticing when a particular section ends and another begins.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 682–4.

Figure 2. "Sibelius, Symphony No. 7: Five Approaches to Structure" (Brown, 683).

TABLE IX/15									
Sibelius, Symphony No. 7: Five Approaches to Structure									
MEAS.: TEMPO:	1	22	60	93	134	156	208	220	222
Abraham	Adagio 3/2			Un pochett. meno adagio $\downarrow = \downarrow$ 6/4	$\downarrow = \downarrow$ 6/4	Vivacissimo 6/4	rallentando	3/2 ( $\downarrow = \downarrow$ )	Adagio
Parment	Exposition			Development	Trans.	Scherzo I	Trans.		Development
Whittall	Introduction		1st Cornerstone	Working out Section					Minore
	Exposition								Development
Howell	STATEMENT 1st Acceleration								COUNTERSTATEMENT 2nd Acceleration
	Intro.			trans.		Scherzo I			DEVELOPMENT
Brown	EXPOSITION non-recurring passage								<b>A</b>
KEY:	Intro. C major		<b>A</b>			<b>B</b>			C minor
MEAS.: TEMPO:	242	258	285	314	375	403	449	476	496
Abraham	( $\downarrow = \downarrow$ ) 6/4	Allegro molto moderato 6/4	Allegro moderato			Vivace	Presto	Adagio 3/2	Largamente
Parment	Trans.					Scherzo II	Trans.	Recapitulation	
Whittall	Bridge	Central Allegro (m.262)				Coda		2nd Cornerstone	
Howell			(intro.	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>a</i>		Recapitulation	
		Episode							
Brown		<b>IC</b>				Scherzo II		RECAPITULATION	
KEY:	E major	C major		E-flat major		<b>2C</b>	<b>A</b>		C major

Typically, the form of a piece helps to give that piece an identity. It provides a way for listeners to understand the music, a unifying factor to hold onto. When forms are unclear, as in Sibelius's Seventh, other elements must create that identity. In this case, there are two melodic features that create cohesion throughout the symphony. One is more overt, the other more ubiquitous. The first is a recurring trombone solo, which appears three times. Each iteration can be considered a signpost, possibly marking a new section of the work.<sup>15</sup> They occur along with changes in tempo and instrumentation, lending credence to the idea that they signify structural events. The other feature is the way that the melodies are generated. Gerald Abraham identifies "melodic germs," or motives, that appear in the introduction. He argues that they provide the basis for the melodies that occur in the rest of the piece.<sup>16</sup> Even though the structure of the symphony is not easily understood, the melodic content provides unity throughout.

The symphonies discussed above impacted my understanding of the genre, and my approach to composition. Sibelius's works in particular speak to me as a listener, musician, and composer. It is clear that he is continuing a tradition in symphonic writing that reaches back to Schumann and Beethoven. Yet his music is so personal and characteristic that it cannot be mistaken for the work of any other. In writing my symphony, I take components from both Sibelius's Fourth and Seventh. I use melodic integration in a single-movement symphony. The form is more similar to Schumann's Fourth, but the style and texture points to Sibelius's Seventh. The ways that I implemented these elements are discussed in the next chapter.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 684–5.

<sup>16</sup> Gerald Abraham, *The Music of Sibelius* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1947), 36–7.

## Compositional Method

As I mentioned above, the music of Jean Sibelius was part of the inspiration for this work—specifically, his Seventh and Fourth symphonies. The Seventh is a fascinating example of a single-movement symphony. Not only did the form of Sibelius’s piece influence me, but also the motivic development apparent in it. Gerald Abraham describes the thematic “germs” that appear in the introduction of the symphony. He identifies their initial statements, then where they recur later on. Often these germs are the material from which larger themes and melodies are derived.<sup>17</sup>

My symphony combines the formal and motivic elements from Sibelius’s Seventh Symphony with the melodic integration found in Sibelius’s Fourth. The result is a single-movement symphony, in four parts. The melodic material is developed from motives found in “How Great Thou Art,” which eventually come together in a complete statement of the hymn tune itself. “How Great Thou Art” is a Christian hymn based on a Swedish folk tune, the composer of which is unknown. In 1885, a Swedish pastor named Carl Borberg wrote the lyrics and set them to the folk melody. Since then, the hymn has seen some slight alterations through arrangement and translation.<sup>18</sup>

Before I explain the structure of each section, I will summarize the overall structure, and how I developed it. The symphony is divided into four sections, with an introduction. The whole piece reflects a hybrid structure—a mixture of sonata form and four-movement structure—like Schumann’s Fourth Symphony. The first section is the exposition, when the primary melodic ideas are introduced. The second and third sections develop those melodic ideas, by altering the motives they are based on. The hymn acts as the finale of the four-movement structure, but also

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<sup>17</sup> Gerald Abraham, *The Music of Sibelius* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1947), 36–7.

<sup>18</sup> Robert J. Morgan, *Then Sings My Soul* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2003), 213.

unifies the motives into the actual hymn tune. In this way, it is also the recapitulation of the sonata form, though not in the traditional sense. The finale is in the key of D major, while everything before is based on a Phrygian-octatonic scale, which is discussed below.

In order to determine the motives I would use for this piece, I dissected the hymn melody. I identified seven distinct motives, shown in Example 1. Each of these motives appear in the three main sections, though they are rearranged, inverted, combined, or otherwise varied.

**Example 1.** “How Great Thou Art” melody, with motives identified.



I analyzed the pitch, rhythm, and contour of each motive. I found that the pitch-class content of motives 1 and 2 combined creates an [0135] tetrachord.<sup>19</sup> The verse, from which these motives come, is the first half of the hymn (measures 1–8). I then crafted a scale based on the pitch-class content of the verse; my combination of two [0135] tetrachords a tritone apart results in an atypical octatonic scale [0135679e]. When the scale starts on A, its pitch-classes are (A, B-flat, C, D, E-flat, E, F-sharp, G-sharp).

<sup>19</sup> [0135], in square brackets, specifically denotes a tetrachord that is transpositionally equivalent to pitch-classes B-C-D-E. It does not denote any member of set class (0135), by excluding the sets that are related by inversion.

The “typical” octatonic scale alternates semitones and whole steps. This yields two possible models: Model A (0134679t) and Model B (0235689e). Assuming the next note is the octave of 0, their respective interval series are <1,2,1,2,1,2,1,2> and <2,1,2,1,2,1,2,1>.<sup>20</sup> Though their interval order, and thus their pitch-class content, is different, both are based on the same alternation of intervals 1 and 2. These scales are symmetrical at the tritone, as well as pitch-classes 3 and 9.<sup>21</sup> My scale is similar to this conventional octatonic scale in that it has eight notes in an octave, and is symmetrical at the tritone. However, its interval series highlights the difference: <1,2,2,1,1,2,2,1>. Intervals are still limited to one and two semitones, but here they repeat before switching.

I constructed my scale by combining two [0135] tetrachords. In a similar manner, the typical octatonic scale model, beginning with a whole-step interval, can be considered a combination of two [0235] tetrachords. This octatonic scale is found notably in the music of Stravinsky, as well as other twentieth-century composers. Both octatonic Model B and the Dorian scale, with the octave of the tonic included, contain two [0235] tetrachords.<sup>22</sup> The difference is the interval between the tetrachords in the scale, either a semitone or whole step. Stravinsky played on this parallel between the two scales, suggesting tonality in the midst of octatonic music.<sup>23</sup> The Dorian scale on C has pitch-class content [023579t(0)], with a whole step between the first and second tetrachord. If the latter tetrachord of the scale, including the octave 0, is shifted down by a semitone, the resultant collection is [0235689e]—the octatonic scale. My [0135] tetrachord is the initial tetrachord in the Phrygian scale, which is [013578t(0)] if it starts on C. Following the same process of shifting the second tetrachord of the Phrygian scale,

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<sup>20</sup> Pieter C. van den Toorn, *The Music of Igor Stravinsky* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 48–49.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 52–23.

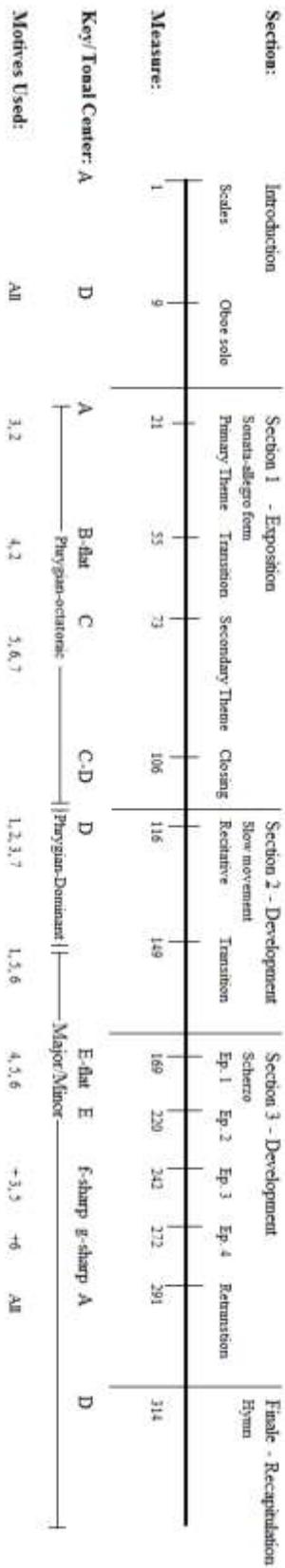
<sup>22</sup> Arthur Berger, “Problems of Pitch Organization in Stravinsky,” in *Perspectives on Schoenberg and Stravinsky*, ed. Benjamin Boretz and Edward T. Cone (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 143–144.

<sup>23</sup> van den Toorn, *Stravinsky*, 54–56.

including the octave 0, down by a semitone results in [0135679e]. My scale has the same relationship to the Phrygian scale that the typical octatonic scale has to Dorian. Therefore, since the term “octatonic” is indelibly tied to the alternating interval scale, I will refer to my scale as “Phrygian-octatonic.”

The Phrygian-octatonic scale is the scale that I use for the primary theme, and for the tonal framework of the first three sections of the symphony. Although much of the work does not use diatonic sets, every section features pitch-centricity of some kind. The tonal centers progress from A to A, through the Phrygian-octatonic scale, before moving to D in the finale. Figure 1 shows the formal structure of the symphony, with tonal centers of the various sections.

**Figure 3.** Formal outline of Symphony no. 1 – “For Jean”.



The introduction (measures 1–20) is in two parts: it opens with a bold gesture of ascending scales from the lowest register to the highest. This passage serves a dual purpose. First, it clarifies the homage to Sibelius, since a similar figure begins his Seventh Symphony. Second, it establishes A as the primary tonal center. As the scales ascend, and the texture thickens, what began as A Aeolian gradually transforms into the Phrygian-octatonic scale discussed above. Once this scale establishes itself, the introduction moves into its second part.

A solo oboe introduces all of the melodic motives that will serve as the basis for the thematic material of the entire symphony (Example 2). The oboe cadenza is not a rendition of the hymn. Rather, motives are recognizable as fragments of the hymn, but the purpose of the solo is less to hint at the source material, and more to plant motivic seeds. The motives are reordered and transformed in the solo. For example, motives 2 and 5 are rhythmically augmented. Motive 6 is incomplete, as it is missing the last note. Motives 3 and 7 are elided.

**Example 2.** Oboe solo, mm. 9–18. Numbers at the upper left of each box indicate the original motives that the given examples are derived from (refer to Example 1).

The musical notation for Example 2 is presented in two staves of music. The first staff contains measures 9, 10, 11, and 12. The second staff contains measures 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18. Motives are indicated by boxes and numbers: Motive 1 (measures 9-10), Motive 2 (measures 10-11), Motive 4 (measures 11-12), Motive 3 (measures 12-13), Motive 7 (measures 13-14), Motive 6 (measures 14-15), Motive 5 (measures 15-16), and Motive 5 (measures 16-18). Dynamics include *mp* and *accel.*

The first main section of the symphony, beginning at measure 21, serves as the exposition of the larger sonata form. As such, it introduces the main themes of the whole piece. The primary theme is built with the Phrygian-octatonic scale centered on A, using variations of motives 2 and 3 (Example 3). Motive 3 begins the phrase, maintaining the original rhythmic content, but with

intervallic diminution. What was an ascending perfect fourth followed by a major third is now two ascending minor thirds. Motive 2 follows, with its intervals inverted and expanded. The second phrase transposes the melody down by a step within the Phrygian-octatonic scale. Motive 3 gets the same treatment as in the previous phrase, but motive 2 is altered further. The repeated eighth notes combine into quarter notes, and the final interval disappears.

**Example 3.** Primary Theme, mm. 20–26. Transformations of motives 2 and 3 are shown in boxes.



Outlining a diminished triad at the beginning of the theme destabilizes the sense of tonal harmony created in the introduction. The Phrygian-octatonic scale is symmetrical and contains four semitone intervals. These characteristics foster a sense of tonal ambiguity, since there are not the typical markers designating tonic. For the primary theme, I chose the note A to be the center, and focus the melody around it. Thus, the initial phrase begins and ends on A.

A transition (measures 55–72) follows the primary theme. That transition begins with an overlapping scalar pattern, similar to that of the introduction. This figure advances the tonal progression from A to B-flat. The scales gradually shift the Phrygian-octatonic scale from one starting on A (A, B-flat, C, D, E-flat, E, F-sharp, G-sharp) to one starting on B-flat (B-flat, B, C-sharp, D-sharp, E, F, G, A), effecting a transposition up by a semitone. The transition continues with a short contrapuntal section, based on an inverted variation of the primary melody (Example 4). The rhythms are also diminished by half, and the contour is altered. The first four notes are

not only from the theme, but also a statement of motive 1. This section continues the tonal shift, moving the Phrygian-octatonic scale up a whole step to C, D-flat, E-flat, F, G-flat, G, A, B.

**Example 4.** Primary theme (a), mm. 20–22, compared to transition (b), mm. 62–63.



The secondary theme, beginning in measure 73, remains stable, using the Phrygian-octatonic scale, now centered on C. The melody consists of variations of motives 5, 6, and 7. As example 5 shows, these motives overlap. The contour of motive 5 is the same, but the ascending third is filled in, and the rhythm is altered. Motive 6 is almost an exact transposition, except that an appoggiatura is inserted between the last two notes. The phrase ends with an altered retrograde of motive 7. The characteristic semitones of motive 7 are maintained, but their order and direction are switched. Since the hymn itself does not exhibit much rhythmic variety, I had to experiment with the placement and interaction of the motives to develop new and different melodic content.

**Example 5.** Secondary theme (a), mm. 72–77. The relation to motives 5, 6, and 7 is shown with extra staves above and below.

The image displays a musical score for Example 5. At the top, two staves in treble clef show motives 5 and 7. Motive 5 consists of a sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. Motive 7 consists of: B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4. Below these, a central staff in bass clef, labeled '(a)', shows the secondary theme. It begins with a 3/4 time signature and contains several measures. Three boxes are drawn around specific segments of this theme, with lines connecting them to motives 5, 6, and 7. Motive 6 is shown in a separate staff at the bottom in treble clef, consisting of: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The central staff (a) changes to 2/4 time and then 4/4 time.

At this point, all seven motives have been heard in some form. Thus, the exposition has stated all of the material that the piece contains. The secondary theme morphs into closing material that prepares D as a tonal center, leading into the second section of the symphony. The second and third sections represent the development portion of the sonata form, while also being the slow movement and scherzo of the four-movement structure.

The second section begins at measure 116 with a solo euphonium, and accompanying drones (Example 6). Again, I use a solo instrument as a signpost, signifying a new section. The euphonium plays a variation of the primary theme, but now the Phrygian-octatonic scale has disappeared. Instead, the melody uses the Phrygian-Dominant scale on D for the first nine measures. The “Phrygian-Dominant” scale (which is also called the “Spanish Phrygian” scale, “Spanish Gypsy” scale, or “Freygish” scale in Hebrew prayer music) is the fifth rotation of the harmonic minor scale. The rotation places a semitone and an augmented second as the first two

intervals in the scale. These intervals, and their proximity to the tonic, give the scale its characteristic sound.<sup>24</sup>

The first phrases of both the primary theme and the solo are very similar in contour. However, I incorporate motives 1 and 7 into the second phrase of the solo. The phrase begins with three eighth notes, as before, but now they are a reordered version of motive 7. The contours of the phrases then line up more clearly. I repeat the note A three times, before descending by a leap, which is a variation of motive 1.

**Example 6.** Primary theme (a), compared to euphonium solo (b), mm. 116–124.

The image displays two musical staves. Staff (a) is in treble clef and staff (b) is in bass clef. Both are in 4/4 time. Staff (a) contains a melodic line with two boxed phrases. The first box covers measures 1-4, and the second box covers measures 5-8. Staff (b) contains a bass line with two boxed phrases. The first box covers measures 1-4 and is labeled with a '7' below it. The second box covers measures 5-8 and is labeled with a '1' below it. Lines connect the boxes in (a) to the corresponding boxes in (b), showing the relationship between the two phrases.

After these two phrases, the drones move up by a major third, and the scale follows suit. The melody transposes from D to F-sharp, centering on F-sharp for three measures. Then, another transposition, this time up a minor third to A, completes the harmonic motion of the solo. I outline a D major triad with the tonal centers of the three phrases in order to firmly establish D as the tonal center for the entire section. Additionally, ending the melody on A allows for a strong dominant-to-tonic resolution to begin the following statement.

Variations of the solo phrases come next, set heterophonically in the woodwind section. The harmonic content is unchanged, and the melodic content imitates the euphonium solo. After

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<sup>24</sup> Herman Rechberger, *Scales and Modes around the World* (Fennica-Gehrman, Finland: Herman Rechberger, 2008), 72.

the heterophony is a long transition that uses variations of motives 1, 2, 5, and 6 (Example 7). Here, the iterations of motives 1 and 5 vary only slightly from their original forms. However, the rhythm of motive 2 transforms into all quarter notes. Motive 6 continues the quarter notes, and exhibits another added appoggiatura between the last two notes. My intention here is to restate some motives more obviously. The previous two sections diverge from the tonal source, and I want the listener to be reminded of it.

**Example 7.** Transition, mm. 157–159.

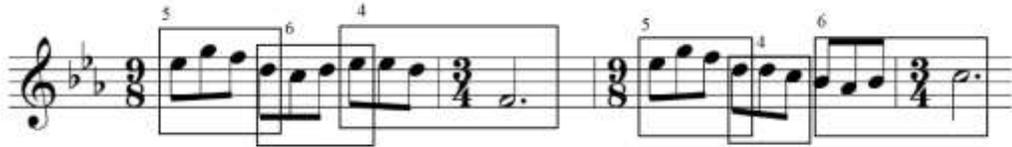
The image shows a musical score for a piano accompaniment in 3/4 time. The score consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The music is divided into measures 157, 158, and 159. Motives are highlighted with boxes and labeled with numbers: Motive 1 is in the treble staff, measures 157-158; Motive 2 is in the bass staff, measures 157-158; Motive 5 is in the treble staff, measures 158-159; and Motive 6 is in the bass staff, measures 158-159. The music features a mix of eighth and quarter notes, with some rests and a fermata in measure 159.

The transition (measures 149–168) leads away from the slow movement, and into the scherzo, by accelerating the tempo and shifting the meter from three-four to six-eight. The tempo and meter shift occurs in the midst of the transition, blurring the clarity of the form, and making the beginning of the scherzo section less obvious. Once the meter changes, the harmony alternates between D minor and E-flat major, preparing the new key center and introducing the main melodic motive for the new section.

The solo clarinet, entering at measure 169, introduces the full scherzo melody in the key of E-flat major. Once again, a solo instrument marks the beginning of another part of the four-movement structure. I use a new combination of motives 4, 5, and 6 to create the scherzo melody

(Example 8). However, since every motive was introduced in the first section, the scherzo is still within the development. It is simply another developmental possibility of the material from the exposition.

**Example 8.** Scherzo melody, mm. 187–188.



This third section of the symphony alternates between the scherzo melody and returning transitional material. Each episode of the scherzo melody adds a new element, and advances the tonal progression along the Phrygian-octatonic scale established in the first section. The first episode features solo clarinet. The next expands the orchestration, and changes key. The third and fourth episodes add variations of the primary and secondary themes, concurrent with the scherzo melody (Examples 9 and 10).

**Example 9.** Third episode (a), mm. 246–249, with primary theme reference (b).



**Example 10.** Fourth episode (a), mm. 272–274, with secondary theme reference (b).

The image shows a musical score for Example 10. It consists of two staves, (a) and (b). Staff (a) is the main melody, written in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 3/4 time signature. It begins with a series of eighth notes and quarter notes, followed by a long note. Staff (b) is a secondary theme reference, written in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. It features a melodic line with a long note at the end. The two staves are connected by a brace on the left side.

The first statement of the scherzo melody, in E-flat, furthers the tonal progression defined by the original Phrygian-octatonic scale. Each subsequent statement continues that progression. Thus the scherzo moves from E-flat major, to E major, to F-sharp minor, to G-sharp minor. The last part of the section acts as both a transition from the scherzo to the hymn, and as the retransition of the sonata form, which prepares the recapitulation. It completes the Phrygian-octatonic tonal progression by centering on A. Using A as the tonal center also allows the retransition to function traditionally, acting as a large, prolonged dominant to D, which is the key of the hymn finale.

The finale, beginning at measure 314, is the fourth part of the four-movement structure, and also the recapitulation of the sonata form. It is the goal of the entire piece, as every motive within it has been explored and varied. It is not a typical recapitulation, in that it does not restate the themes from the exposition. Instead the finale presents the original source material, which has been hinted at and suggested throughout the piece, beginning with the first oboe solo.

My goal with the finale was to clearly and strongly present the hymn, so that it is unmistakable. Enough cacophony and complexity exists earlier in the symphony. I wanted the audience to have a sense of conclusion at the end. Thus the hymn is set polyphonically, in D

major. The final measures of the work gradually diminish both the energy and thematic material. They contain descending scale patterns, balancing the ascending scales from the introduction. Also, the last cadence is simply a C-sharp/D dyad resolving to unison D—an allusion to Sibelius's Seventh Symphony, which ends with a similar figure, resolving on C (Example 11).

**Example 11.** Final cadence (a), mm. 338–339, compared to the last two measures of Sibelius's Seventh Symphony, string section (reduction) (b).

Example 11 consists of two musical excerpts, (a) and (b), presented in piano reduction. Both excerpts are in the key of D major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. Excerpt (a) shows the final cadence from measures 338–339, featuring a descending scale pattern in the right hand and a similar pattern in the left hand, resolving to a unison D. Excerpt (b) shows the last two measures of Sibelius's Seventh Symphony, string section reduction, which also features a descending scale pattern in the right hand and a similar pattern in the left hand, resolving to a unison D.

## Conclusion

The process of composing this symphony was educational. I gained a better understanding of how composers, past and present, approach writing for symphony orchestra. My research was guided by pieces and composers that have influenced me. In studying them further, I achieved deeper understanding, which in turn aided my writing. When I found myself stuck during composition, returning to those works continually gave me inspiration and guidance.

I also discovered difficulties and shortcomings in my own compositional knowledge and process. General aspects of the work, such as source material and form, were predetermined. However, my approach to writing music tends to be fairly intuitive, or improvisatory. By limiting melodic options to variations of motives from the hymn, I avoided the trouble of creating entirely novel melodies. This practice allowed me to work more consistently, which in turn helped the piece to have a sense of cohesion. The major difficulty I faced was orchestration. My compositional experience is almost entirely limited to chamber and solo works. My lack of familiarity with the medium made the compositional process more strenuous. Still, it was well worth it, and I now have a better understanding of large ensemble writing.

In terms of my original intentions, I am satisfied with the symphony. I had a clear plan for the structure and content of the work from the beginning, and it guided my composition. Both the integration of the hymn tune motives and the connection between sections were successful. Initially, I imagined the textures and sonorities would be more similar to those found in Sibelius's music. However, the nature of the Phrygian-octatonic scale that I used for nearly half of the piece distances my work from his more tonal vocabulary. I am not dissatisfied, though. The resulting aesthetic is very effective in conveying the character of the piece.

This is my first symphony, though I do not intend for it to be my last. It is likely that I will continue working on this piece, mostly to refine the orchestration. I will also probably transcribe it for wind symphony, since there is a greater demand for new music among wind ensembles than among symphony orchestras. I have ideas for other symphonic works. This symphony, however, was a significant undertaking, and I plan to take some time before my next one. In that time, I will focus on smaller pieces, both in length and instrumentation, to practice specific techniques and styles. Ideally, my next symphony will challenge and enlighten me as much as this one did.

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