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# A Child's Life (Symphony for Band) 

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# A Child's Life (Symphony for Band) 

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# A Child's Life (Symphony for Band) 

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A Child's Life (Symphony for Band) is a work for concert band in three contrasting movements. It is programmatic and the movements are compositionally linked by a network of motives and a large-scale tonal plan. The piece gravitates around the pitch center C , branching out symmetrically within each movement to explore neighboring key areas. Though tonal, the piece incorporates much chromaticism and features techniques of contemporary and jazz composition. The total performance duration is approximately 22 minutes.

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# Chapter 1: General Scope and Overview 


#### Abstract

A Child's Life (Symphony for Band) is a work for concert band in three contrasting movements. It is programmatic and the movements are compositionally linked by a network of motives and a large-scale tonal plan. The piece gravitates around the pitch center C , branching out symmetrically within each movement to explore neighboring key areas. Though tonal, the work incorporates much chromaticism and features techniques of contemporary and jazz composition. The total performance duration is approximately 22 minutes.


## Program Narrative

This work is a reflection upon several of my own childhood memories. I. "At Play" recalls feelings associated with long summer months of outdoor exploration, military games, and getting lost in my books. Outdoor adventure was a major theme of my youth, and I have attempted to evoke the excitement of these memories with a distinctive Adventure Motive, which is infused throughout all three movements and will be discussed in detail during the analysis portion of this paper. While exploring, my friends and I would often don military uniforms (which were comically oversized for us) and march around the countryside. The march music in this movement is a bit humorous and "over the top," identifying with the absurd spectacle we must have created. The next
section of this movement highlights a contrasting Reverie Theme, which is meant to reflect my deep fascination with the worlds of Mark Twain, Lewis Carroll, The Brothers Grimm, and many other great authors who fed my love for reading.
II. "Awakening" is a bit more abstract than the first movement, capturing in general the innocence of childhood and the anticipation of endless possibilities for each new day. The opening Innocence Theme is structured like a simple folk melody, hidden safely within shadowy hues of cluster voicings. The anticipatory nature of this movement is continued by an optimistic Hope Theme, an ascending gesture first appearing in the alto saxophone part.
III. "Spirit!" is a celebration of the immense energy one possesses during childhood. I wanted this movement to serve as an upbeat, fiery blast in direct contrast to the more rigid and/or pensive material of the former two. The only movement in triple meter, "Spirit!" effects a dance-like exclamation of "good-natured mischief." The Mischief Theme (derived from the first movement's Adventure Motive) is a playful, capricious element, and comes up against themes from the earlier movements throughout its course. Ultimately, as the mischief music succumbs to innocence and reverie, the large-scale work comes to a quiet rest in the key of C major.

## A Note Concerning the Analysis

It will be helpful to reference a copy of the score while reading chapters four through six of this paper. Though many notated examples are provided in a "piano reduction" format, it was impractical to include complete harmonic and melodic excerpts for each reference item. Thus, many examples are presented only as partial phrases or gestures, meant to guide the reader to a specific location in the score that is under discussion. Each example within the body of this paper appears in concert pitch and includes a title, measure numbers, and instrumentation.

## Chapter 2: Pre-compositional Strategy

## Research and Score Study

I began preparing for this composition by examining the large-scale formal structures of several late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century symphonic masterworks: the first, second, and fifth symphonies of Gustav Mahler; and, Dmitri Shostakovich's fifth symphony. While creating formal diagrams for several movements of these pieces, I traced the motivic and thematic elements, pitch center progressions, and relative intensity levels (dynamics and climaxes) in order to observe the effects of those elements on the drama of the overall form. I also made piano reductions for some movements to increase my understanding of both Mahler's and Shostokovich's sense of pacing and development, and as a step toward learning those scores on piano.

I chose the above works as my models for two main reasons. First, they are all excellent resources for the study of motivic connections both within and between movements (especially concerning the processes of motivic interplay, layering, variation, and transformation). Second, these pieces each provided a model for the use of adventurous tonal schemes within traditional symphonic forms (such as the sonata, aria, and scherzo forms). As this was my first large-scale symphonic work, I wanted to organize the Symphony for Band according to proven traditional formal structures, and to tie my musical material together with an economy of motives and a varied approach to developing them.

My approach to the study of orchestration involved closely examining the abovementioned scores, as well as many additional fine band scores, and creating "distribution charts." These charts helped me to understand the relative frequency of activity for each contributing instrument (as a percentage of the measures played), the types of contributions each instrument might make toward a composite texture, and the ways in which these elements vary between different types of movements or pieces. Through this documentation process, I noted significant trends concerning both the instrumental colors or combinations favored by a particular composer, as well as those general combinations that are especially effective within certain stylistic contexts (lyrical writing, forceful tutti sections, etc.). For example, I noted that Shostakovich sometimes builds great momentum through the use of insistent, repetitive "galloping" rhythms combined with additive orchestration, and often contrasts these sections with poignant solo melodies (often appearing in the flute or other upper woodwind part) over an extremely transparent and stark texture. Mahler constantly shifts between tone colors, taking full advantage of available timbres for each instrument, such as muted brass, stopped horns, or large groups of instruments playing in combination at an extremely soft dynamic level.

The distribution charts also helped me to envision new color combinations and possibilities in my own piece, manifesting as variations of certain textures from the models. For example, the marching bass ostinato and its accompanying texture in my first movement was originally inspired by the opening of Mahler's second symphony, which also features a marching bass line underlying a composite of shifting colors.

## Symphony for Band

After the preliminary study tasks were completed, I began to expand my own ideas beyond the confines of the model scores. Following an analysis of the model motives and themes, wherein I traced their developments, interactions, and manipulations to create transitions, tonal shifts, and textural contrast, I began "fleshing out" my piece by sketching a journal of thematic and motivic ideas designed to function in various ways as the models did.

Once the motivic building blocks were in place, I looked for ways of developing them into themes that reflected the emotional characteristics required by my programmatic narrative. For example, the first movement march themes are designed to sound increasingly bombastic and martial; downbeat-oriented declamations are set against a highly-syncopated ostinato accompaniment for rhythmic variety. The second movement is more folk-like in phrasing and harmonic materials, evoking feelings of innocence and hope, and the final movement explores a mischievous, whimsical mood through its buoyant compound meter and frequent rhythmic flourishes of eighth-note triplets. These programmatic signifiers will be discussed in more detail under the heading "Compositional Techniques" in chapters four through six.

I also developed a tonal plan that would ground the piece and help to serve as a solid framework on which to hang the musical material. (The piece itself is generally
tonal, though its tonality is often obscured by chromatic inflection and linear inclinations.) The tonal plan is presented in Chapter 3.

The next step was to create a piano reduction that could serve as a vehicle for balancing and filling out the details of each movement. Finally, the reduction was expanded into a full band score, undergoing multiple drafts and revisions.

## Chapter 3: Key Center Diagram

"A Child's Life" (Symphony for Band) is anchored in the key of C (minor/major).

Each of its three movements orbits symmetrically around that pitch center, with the piece eventually exploring some version of every degree; i.e., A minor, Bb major, C minor/ C major, D major, E major, F minor, and G minor. The chart below indicates the key scheme for each movement.

| Symphony for Band: Key Center Diagram |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| G | A | B | c | D | E | F |
| 1. | a |  | c |  | E |  |
| II. |  | Bb |  | D |  |  |
| III. g |  |  | c/C |  |  | f |

# Chapter 4: The First Movement ("At Play") 

## Formal Overview and Tonal Trajectory

"At Play" is organized as a modified sonata form. It begins clearly in the key of C minor, introducing principal themes in that key before moving to one of the chromatic mediant key areas, E major, for a contrasting theme (m. 97). The "development section" begins immediately after the contrasting theme with a return to the minor mode ( m . 125), but dodges the original key of C minor and travels instead "to the other side of the tonic," the sub-mediant key of A minor. After some moments of tonal ambiguity and a visit to the minor dominant key (G minor), the movement returns to C minor for a recapitulation (m. 202), briefly feints at C major (m. 227), and finally comes to a close in C minor with an air of uncertainty.

## Melodic Materials

This movement begins with a three-note gesture that will form the basis for much of the symphony. This Adventure Motive was designed to be flexible yet distinctive, and appears in various forms throughout all three movements (see EXAMPLE 1 for a few of its incarnations). The opening gesture (1a) is a bold declamation containing the intervals of a tritone, a perfect fourth, and (between the outside pitches) a descending minor second. This figure is immediately followed by a reduced version (1b), which will also appear frequently throughout the work. A different arrangement of these pitches occurs on the second page of the score (1c), this time ascending, but still in counterpoint with the
reduced version (1b). Later in the first movement, the Adventure Motive will adapt to become background material, an example of which can be seen below (1d), and will expand to generate principal themes (such as the March Themes-see below).

EXAMPLE 1


1b: Adventure Motive, truncated (tuba, m. 3)


March Themes A and B (EXAMPLE 2) each explore different developmental possibilities of the Adventure Motive. March Theme A (2a) is based on the half-step/whole-step octatonic scale containing all three pitches of the opening gesture; its character is somewhat anticipatory and disquieting. Sultry outbursts from the upper woodwinds answer this theme (2b), both outgrowths of the Adventure Motive and largely derived from the same octatonic scale. March Theme B(2c) is generated directly from the Adventure Motive, but its pitch material comes from the C Phrygian scale rather than the octatonic collection, and its style is somewhat more gruff and declamatory than that of March Theme A. March Theme B returns several times later in the movement, adopting a more subdued and mysterious air (2d) and even a humorous disposition (2e). March Theme A also returns in various layers and transpositions (2f, for example).

## EXAMPLE 2



2b: Adventure Motive, development and variation (flutes, mm. 38-40)



Contrasting thematic material appears in the Reverie Theme (EXAMPLE 3). Much more uplifting in character than the March Themes, this idea (3a) is based on the major pentatonic scale and will connect closely with thematic material soon to appear in the second movement. The Reverie Theme is based on a striving upward and prolonged feeling of ascension. It represents an attempt to break free of the surrounding dark melodic and harmonic world. As with most material in the piece, this theme contains a reference to the Adventure Motive (3b). In contrast with its initial statement, the theme also appears in other guises, including a "corrupted version" (3c) based on a transposition of the same octatonic scale of the March Theme and an ascending sequential bridge (3d) connecting the March Theme with a transposed Reverie Theme.



Another significant base motive introduced during the first movement is the Falling Fifth (EXAMPLE 4). This appears initially in the second half of the Reverie Theme (4a), then as an extension of the reduced Adventure Motive in the bass instruments (4b). One important development of the Falling Fifth that is shared between the outer movements is its outward expansion from a perfect fourth through a tritone and into a perfect fifth (4c). In the second movement, this gesture will reverse melodic direction to become a Rising Fifth (c.f. Chapter 5).


Finally, a rhythmic Syncopation Motive (EXAMPLE 5) introduced in the first
movement (5a) will draw important connections to both of the following movements.
Here it is unveiled as a background to thematic material derived from the March Themes.

## EXAMPLE 5

5a: Syncopation Motive (trombones, mm. 150-151)


## Harmonic Materials

The harmonic world of the first movement is generally dark and heavy. This mood is achieved through the use of the minor mode in both $C$ and $A$, and its mutation into "parallel" octatonic and Phrygian pitch collections. The octatonic collection (one transposition of which is seen in EXAMPLE 3c: DEF G Ab Bb B C\#) is assembled into both melodic phrases and accompanimental tetrachords. For example, in m. 166 a tetrachordal ostinato appears in the saxophone parts (c.f. EXAMPLE 1d) which is based on this octatonic collection; a few measures later (m. 180, ff.) this figure shifts to the clarinets and the octatonic collection shifts to a Phrygian scale derivation (now centered on E: E F G AB). Relief from this heaviness comes during the Reverie Theme areas through a visit to the distantly related key of E major, and later, through a brief move to C major. This relief, however, is tempered by the juxtaposition of unrelated triads and a resultant sense of bitonality, as seen, for example, in mm. 99, ff.).

The Reverie Theme material also provides a move away from the formerly tetrachordal structures toward predominantly tertian sonorities (triads and seventh chords, with occasional tertian extensions). Jazz-like harmonies, such as the ii-V7 in mm. 234-235, appear in both statements of this theme.

## Compositional Techniques

Thematic materials throughout the piece feature musical qualities that contribute to the various moods depicted in its program. The basic structural seed for the entire work is my Adventure Motive (c.f. EXAMPLE 1a). In the opening movement, that cell quickly develops into a declamatory march melody (c.f. March Theme B, EXAMPLE 2c) that is both military in character and also somewhat humorous. The martial element is achieved through the use of snare drum cadences and dotted rhythms in the melody, and the persistent emphasis of downbeats is meant to create a sensation that this theme is a bit "over the top."

In contrast, the Reverie Theme is designed to depict a dream of breaking free from the dark surrounding world. Its major-key tonality sounds uplifting compared with the surrounding minor-mode areas, and the melodic gesture itself ascends repeatedly through the use of sequences. In addition, the interval of a perfect $5^{\text {th }}$ plays a prominent role in this theme, lending it a sound of "purity" in contrast to the frequent tritone intervals of the outer minor-mode sections.
"At Play" also features extensive use of ostinato, a device appearing in three forms during the movement (see EXAMPLES 6a, 6b, and 6c).


## Orchestration Notes

As a preliminary step to orchestrating this symphony, I divided the various layers of my initial piano score into 3-4 parts (SAB or SATB, plus percussion) and created a complete list of available instruments within each range category. With the exception of melodies, which were mostly written with a particular instrument assignment in mind, this list allowed me to mentally "mix and match" various combinations of instruments
within each background layer until I found the balance and color combination that seemed to fit that particular texture.

Timpani, for example, were selected for the opening solo statement in the first movement because of their capability for dramatic intensity. Trumpets and high woodwind trills, combined with crash cymbals and a triangle roll, produce a very bright frame surrounding each of the timpani solo windows. For contrast, the following gesture is played by warm-sounding clarinets and horns over a soft vibraphone roll (though the high flutes carry over).

Horns were assigned the Reverie Theme melody when it first appears, because of their warm, flexible sound and ability to soar above the ensemble in their middle to upper registers. Under that melody, the low brass instruments provide a soft harmonic pad and all three clarinet parts undulate in the middle texture.

In particular, the percussion instruments serve important coloristic roles throughout the movement: vibraphone adds both articulation and sustain to the upper woodwind tetrachords (mm. 166, ff.); triangle, mark tree, and various cymbals add splashes of color throughout; bass drum undergirds the low woodwinds and brass with rolls and sforzandi; snare drum provides the rhythmic drive for a march style; glockenspiel helps to accent soft sustaining instruments like the flutes; and, tam-tam supports the main climax at the beginning of the development section.

# Chapter 5: The Second Movement ("Awakening") 

## Formal Overview and Tonal Trajectory

This movement is in a simple $A B A$ form. It begins in the key of $B b$ major, moves to one of its chromatic mediant keys, D major, for the middle section (m. 47), and returns to the original key (m. 116). As with the other movements, the key areas are in balance around C .
"Awakening" is modeled loosely on the "Adagietto" movement of Mahler's Fifth Symphony, with which it shares its ABA structure, motion to remote key areas during the middle section, and a melodic kinship with Mahler's Aspiration Theme: compare the Innocence Theme (c.f. Example 8a) with the first two measures of Mahler's theme (c.f. Example 8d).

## Melodic Materials

A depiction of innocence, "Awakening" begins with an optimistic Rising Fifth interval, the inversion of the Falling Fifth from movement 1 (EXAMPLE 7). This initial statement (7a) is followed by others embedded within the texture (two occurrences are shown in EXAMPLES 7b and 7c).


One of the two principal melodies in this movement, the Innocence Theme (EXAMPLE 8a) is based on a transposition of the major pentatonic scale from the Reverie Theme. It unfolds slowly at first, folk-like and in balanced melodic phrases, but always eventually dissipates into a more harmonically ambiguous linear/chromatic gesture (8b). This chromaticism finally takes hold (8c) and carries the melody into a transitional area toward the second theme.


The second principal melody in this movement is the Hope Theme (9a), which begins with an ascending gesture in contrast with the descending Innocence Theme (c.f. 8a). The first three pitches are an inversion of the Adventure Motive from the first movement. This idea develops impressionistically over freely shifting modal backgrounds (see 9b and 9c for examples of variations of this theme).


The second theme area features a prominent backdrop of rising and falling thirds harmonized diatonically in (mostly) perfect intervals: the Churning Motive (EXAMPLE 10a). This idea functions mainly as background material, lending motion and energy to the middle section. Beginning in the flutes, it spreads to the rest of the upper woodwinds before moving down to the trumpets and finally into a tenor register in the horns for the climax of the movement.


As in all three movements, the Syncopation Motive appears here (EXAMPLE 11a). This layer is added to help build toward the main climax of the movement, in combination with modal woodwind runs, undulating clarinets and saxophones, and the Churning Motive. Here it forms a low undercurrent in the bottom sections of the woodwinds and brass instruments.


## Harmonic Materials

"Awakening" builds upon optimism inherent in the first movement's Reverie Theme. Both the Reverie Theme and the Innocence Theme share a similar pentatonic construction, but the latter proceeds to increasingly "brighter" harmonic material, including washes of major and Lydian harmonies during the middle section (which are framed with other, contrasting modal clusters in the Dorian and Mixolydian modes). The pentatonic collection introduced in the opening melody contains the following pitches: Bb CDFG; this melody is supported by clusters of pitches from the same scale collection, and later by more open-sounding quintal structures of the same collection (m. 25, ff.). As in the Reverie Theme, a pervasive sense of consonance is tempered by occasional whims of chromaticism. An ambiguity of mode persists through to the ending, as the final measures close on a G-minor chord, vi in the key of Bb .

As in the first movement, occasional elements of both traditional and contemporary jazz harmony are present. For example, half-cadential "ii7-V" progressions
close the first half of each Innocence Theme (c.f. mm. 13-14 and mm. 122-123). In addition, the middle " B " section contains a succession of modal harmonies reminiscent of a harmonic language developed by composers such as Gil Evans and Miles Davis in the 1950s (known as "modal jazz") then further explored by many contemporary jazz composers.

## Compositional Techniques

Thematic characteristics throughout the second movement continue to support elements of the programmatic narrative. The Innocence Theme (c.f. 8a), for example, is built to sound like a folk melody, featuring a simple balanced four-bar phrase construction, harmonic derivation from the major pentatonic scale collection, and the use of a "drone" of slowly changing cluster chords.

The Hope Theme (c.f. 9a) extends these features. Clusters remain in the texture, but more adventuresome harmonic ground is broken with the succession of modal pitch collections. The melodic gesture itself rises optimistically, and the perfect fifth reappears as a structural element (as in the Reverie Theme of the first movement), lending to the theme a sense of purity.

Perhaps the most striking feature of this movement is the ubiquitous use of cluster voicings. These thick yet vaporous sonorities help to set "Awakening" apart from the outer movements by softening its texture in order to highlight the melodic material.

The intended effect is one of reflection and repose, a moment of serenity between the march and the dance movements.

## Orchestration Notes

Solo oboe was selected to play the opening melody because of its folk-like quality (enhanced through combination with the clustery drone); in m .21 , the euphonium takes over, providing a contrasting dark, rich flavor. These melodic roles essentially reverse in tone color toward the end of the movement, as the corresponding phrases are covered by horn and bassoon, respectively. During the contrasting modal " B " section, alto and tenor saxophones assume the bulk of the melodic material because of their superior penetration and flexibility in the midst of increasingly thick textures. Upper woodwinds, especially the flutes, are combined with glockenspiel accents at times for clarity of articulation.

Various percussion instruments are employed to highlight the colors of shifting wind sonorities, including splash and sizzle cymbals, tubular bells, vibraphone, and several others. Remnants of the march themes from the first movement are occasionally heard in the soft snare drum (now with snares turned off).

# Chapter 6: The Third Movement ("Spirit!") 

## Formal Overview and Tonal Trajectory

This movement was designed to be a "scherzo" and a "finale" rolled into one. The traditional symphonic scherzo (for example, in Beethoven's earlier symphonies) is in triple meter and based on the Classical "minuet and trio form," though usually the scherzo is more energetic than its ancestor. A minuet and trio of the Classical period might have been structured as follows: Minuet [AABB]-Trio [CCDD]-Minuet [AABB or AB] (with the trio calling for a reduction of instrumental forces in order to allow for greater contrast with the outer sections).

I chose this concept as the basis for my design because the form, the triple meter, and the dance-like character all worked well to balance out the earlier movements (though my dance feel is far from that of a minuet). I decided that because my third movement also needed to function as a capstone to the piece, certain modifications would be necessary. I added a significant "coda" during which some of the themes from the earlier movements appear. I also developed a fugal section to begin the trio, paring down to just two instruments at first (which would probably justify the more accurate labeling of this section as a "duo"). Finally, the restrictiveness of the minuet form outlined above seemed to suggest that a certain liberty might be taken with regard to the order of themes, a suggestion which I explored. In summary, my resulting form preserves the tripartite structure, triple meter, dance-like character, and pared-down middle
section of the traditional scherzo, while discarding some of its other formal characteristics. The structure could be diagrammed as follows:

```
SCHERZO #1
Opening Gesture / Trans. (mm. 1-18) - False A (mm. 19-30) - AA'BA'' (mm. 31-89)
TRIO
Fugal Intro (mm. 90-101) - CC' (mm. 102-179) - Fugal stretto / Trans. (mm. 180-195)
B' (mm. 196-224) - Trans. (mm. 225-232)
SCHERZO #2
Opening Gesture Repeated / Trans. (mm. 233-250) - False A (mm. 251-262) - AA'C'\prime}(mm
251-324)
CODA
Combination of thematic and motivic materials from all three movements (mm. 325-385)
```

As illustrated in the above diagram, this movement contains some unusual structural characteristics within the scherzo form. First, the principal scherzo melody (The Mischief Theme-c.f. EXAMPLE 13a) appears in abbreviated form, a "false" beginning that is interrupted almost immediately by the accompaniment figure introduced just a few measures earlier. Following this interruption, the theme is finally allowed a full statement and a variation. The "false A" phrase also occurs at the return of the scherzo proper (m. 251), and in both cases serves to regulate the pace at which new material unfolds and to balance the melody with the accompanimental elements of the texture.

Second, the trio section begins with a brief but formal-sounding fugue exposition. The intent behind this approach was to develop the Falling Fifth motive within the context of a contrapuntal texture (see Melodic Materials, below); but, in order to avoid
an overly "academic" fugal treatment the exposition quickly dissolves into free counterpoint over a slowly rising and falling bass line. This contrapuntal flow eventually solidifies into alternating gestures between the slow bass line and overlapping lyrical lines in the upper woodwinds, before culminating in a stretto (mm. 180 ff .) and combining the slow ascending bass line with an overlapping "expanded Falling Fifth" gesture at onemeasure intervals.

As in preceding movements, the tonal centers of "Spirit!" all orbit symmetrically around the pitch C. In this case, the initial scherzo section is in C minor, the trio begins in the dominant key of $G$ minor and moves to the sub-dominant key of $F$ minor, the second scherzo section (featuring material from both the first scherzo and the trio) stays in C minor throughout, and the coda finally brings the symphony to a close in C major.

## Melodic Materials

This movement opens with an energetic version of the Syncopation Motive (EXAMPLE 12a). Downbeats in the low instruments are given to provide a context for the syncopation.


The third movement's principal melodic element is the Mischief Theme (EXAMPLE 13). Its original form is based on a compressed arrangement of the intervals found in the Adventure Motive (13a), but later in the movement this theme expands into the actual interval structure of that motive (13b). The character of the Mischief Theme is much more bawdy and dance-like than that of themes in the former movements; part of the reason for this increased energy is the use of compound meter ( $3 / 4$ felt in 1 ), and the even further compounding of the meter by the incorporation of eighth-note triplets within it. In addition, the theme's quirky accompaniment figures (13c) combined with its minor scale derivation seem to evoke an Eastern-European folk dance flavor.



The Falling Fifth (EXAMPLE 14) plays an important role in this movement.
Beginning with its chromatic expansion into a perfect fifth (14a) as encountered before in the first movement, it becomes the basis for a fugal section (14b), expands into larger intervals (14c), plays a background role (14d), spawns a derivative (the Inside-Out Motive-see EXAMPLE 15), and eventually closes the entire piece, complete with an abridged gesture of the outward chromatic expansion (14e).



The Inside-Out Motive (EXAMPLE 15) is designated as such because it expands a perfect fifth interval outward by a half step in both directions, creating a diminished seventh; the aural effect is that of the perfect fifth turning "inside out." Introduced toward the beginning of the fugal section (15a), the Inside-Out Motive appears prominently throughout the rest of the movement (see 15b for an example). In addition, this motive will eventually appear in juxtaposition with returning themes and motives from the previous movements (see below).



As this symphony is cyclical, the third movement incorporates several thematic and motivic references to the first and second movements (EXAMPLE 16). The first such examples refer to the Adventure Motive in various ways (16a, 16b, 16c, and 16d). There also follows a background treatment of the opening motive from the second movement's Hope Theme (16e); this simple iteration accompanies a return to the Mischief Theme introduced in the third movement. The Innocence Theme returns for a distant and haunting moment (16f) as the nature of that material is filtered through the events that have transpired during the intervening span. Also, the Reverie Theme appears in fragments (with its beginning and ending reversed), adapted into the world of this movement's compound meter ( 16 g and 16 h ). Finally, the Inside-Out Motive reconciles with the Falling Fifth toward the end (16i), eventually bringing the symphony to a close with the latter.




## Harmonic Materials

"Spirit!" mostly dwells in the world of melodic minor scales, traveling between several key areas. In order to avoid becoming "stuck" in this restrictive harmonic landscape, however, the minor keys are occasionally tempered with chromaticism (for example, the horns in mm. 13-14) and polychordal structures (for example, m. 163 ff . and m. 290 ff .). The polychords are simply unrelated triads that move within independent layers to create "simultaneities," or successions of composite harmonies that are tonally unrelated.

As in the preceding movements, traces of jazz harmony appear throughout "Spirit!" For example, use of the ascending form of the melodic minor scale without regard to voice leading tendencies is common in minor-key melodies throughout the jazz and contemporary music repertoire. This harmonic treatment is present in both forms of the Mischief Theme (m. 19, with the raised seventh scale degree; and, m. 275, with the raised sixth scale degree). The dominant chord, especially in a minor-key jazz context, often receives embellishment with the addition of extended tertian chord tones derived from the natural minor scale. An example of this can be seen in mm. 231-232, where the G major triad has been embellished with the pitches Ab and Eb (the respective sixth and third scale degrees in the key of C minor). Finally, a more contemporary jazz approach appears in the use of shifting polychordal structures over a fixed pedal point (c.f. the trio section, mm. 142-174). This device is an important element in the style of contemporary jazz composers such as Maria Schneider and Alan Baylock.

A choice was made to end the symphony in C major in order to show the triumph of hope over the more anxiety-laden elements of the piece, and of course this idea follows many precedents (use of the Picardi Third during the Baroque era, or the ending of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, to name a couple of examples).

## Compositional Techniques

The Mischief Theme (c.f. EXAMPLE 13a) achieves programmatic significance through a combination of whimsical syncopation, rhythmic flourishes, and its harmonic
derivation from the ascending melodic minor scale collection. The latter feature lends to this theme a "quirky" character, perhaps due to its downward leaps to the raised sixth and seventh scale degrees in the minor key (c.f. EXAMPLES 13a and 13b).

The fugal section begins with a traditional exposition, but quickly abandons that formal structure in favor of freely flowing counterpoint. In addition to this section's role in motivic development, it was intended as a diversion from the surrounding dance-like textures.

## Orchestration Notes

Oboe was again chosen to provide the opening melody, as in the second movement, though for a different reason-here, its light and flexible quality serves to maximize textural contrast between the opening tutti gesture and this intimate melodic statement. As the melody begins to develop, the oboe is reinforced with additional woodwinds (saxophones, flute/bassoon) to support a crescendo before the trio section. When the brass instruments begin playing full-voiced chords, extensive woodwind doubling is employed on the melodic figures (for example, see mm. 158, ff.).

Percussion instruments are often incorporated for specific color highlights (especially during the quirky dance sections). Each "A" section is accompanied by a percussive counterpoint of cymbal scrapes, glockenspiel, bass drum, and snare drum. Martial snare drum cadences echo through parts of the trio, and other elements of percussion appear from the prior movements (for example, the splash cymbal and
glockenspiel return for a reprise of the Innocence Theme from movement 2 in mm. 333, ff.). In general, a lighter texture is employed to allow for a graceful dance-like motion, with the exception of the opening gesture and climax points.

## Chapter 7: Observations and Conclusions

Creating "A Child's Life" (Symphony for Band) was an enormous undertaking. I feel that the process has helped me to gain some insight into methods for composing in large forms, and as my first major piece for concert band, has stretched my orchestration skills. One of the elements of writing this work that I most enjoyed was the opportunity to fuse "Classical" and jazz harmonic approaches, bringing my background in both areas together with some of the compositional techniques I have been honing in this degree program. My next large-scale composition will definitely benefit from the ideas I've gained while completing this project, particularly with regard to techniques for motivic development and orchestration. I will continue working on my ability to balance and maximize a dramatic trajectory within the context of a large form.

# Symphony for Band "A Child's Life" 

## Instrumentation

Piccolo
Flute 1
Flute 2
Oboe 1
Oboe 2
Clarinet 1
Clarinet 2
Clarinet 3
Bass Clarinet
Contrabass Clarinet

Bassoon 1
Bassoon 2
Alto Saxophone 1
Alto Saxophone 2
Tenor Saxophone
Baritone Saxophone
Trumpet 1
Trumpet 2
Trumpet 3
Horn 1

Horn 2
Horn 3
Horn 4
Trombone 1
Trombone 2
Bass Trombone
Euphonium
Tuba
Timpani
Percussion 1-4 (see below)

Percussion Parts:

## First Movement

Percussion 1: Snare Drum, Suspended Cymbal, Triangle, Crash Cymbals, Mark Tree
Percussion 2: Bass Drum, Crash Cymbals, Triangle
Percussion 3: Glockenspiel, Suspended Cymbal, Crash Cymbals, Triangle
Percussion 4: Vibraphone, Triangle, Large Tam-Tam

## Second Movement

Percussion 1: Snare Drum, Sizzle Cymbal
Percussion 2: Bass Drum, Suspended Cymbal
Percussion 3: Glockenspiel, Tubular Bells, Crash Cymbals, Splash Cymbal, Sizzle Cymbal
Percussion 4: Vibraphone, Triangle

Third Movement
Percussion 1: Snare Drum
Percussion 2: Bass Drum, Splash Cymbal
Percussion 3: Glockenspiel, Suspended Cymbal
Percussion 4: Glockenspiel, Xylophone, Suspended Cymbal, Crash Cymbals, Triangle

$$
\text { Duration - Approx. } 22 \text { Minutes }
$$

I. At Play-8:30
II. Awakening - 5:45
III. Spirit! - 8:00

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I. At Play - Soldiers' March and Reverie
A. $=140$ Allegro Drammatico
Christopher Alan Sclmmitr














 Timp. .

| Perc. 1 | $\#$ | Y | ${ }_{3}$ | ${ }_{p}$ |  | 浆 |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Perc. 2 | \#\# | , | - | - | - | - | - |
| Perc. 3 | $2$ |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | $6$ |  |  |  | . |  |  |




Perr. 1




$l$



J Tempo primo $\quad=140$


Timp.
!
Ato C, EtoF
































## A Child's Life (Symphony for Band)

II. Awakening



























|  |  |  |  |  | Snare Drum (snares off |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Perc. 1 | \# |  |  |  |  | $\operatorname{mp}_{3}$ |  | $\#$ |
| Perc. 2 | \#2?: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | $f f$ |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Perc. 3 | $\frac{8}{6}$ |  |  |  |  | - |  | - |
| Perc. 4 | $6$ |  |  |  |  |  |  | . |











Symphony for Band
III. Spirit!

















































































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