

Williams Symphonic Winds

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DANCE MIX II: *The Influence of Folk and Popular Music*

Michael Torke: *Adjustable Wrench* (1987)

As a child, I used to be bored with sameness. I couldn't understand why anyone would want to keep to a daily schedule, waking up to the same alarm, eating lunch at precisely the same time, etc. I couldn't imagine why the Catholic Mass had to be the same every Sunday. When I was a pitcher on my cub-scout softball team, the coach instructed me to "walk" the batter in an attempt to halt our opponent's rally. This meant rolling four pitches in on the ground, but after the third one I began to feel frustrated: my childlike sense of creativity demanded that at least the fourth pitch should do something different. So I looped the ball twenty-five feet into the air (a huge humorous arch), and guess what—the determined batter gritted his teeth and connected with this wild pitch, hit a home run, and we lost the game. Of course, I was chastised: it would have been so simple, so straightforward, to roll four pitches in a row.

But later I began to develop an appreciation for things that repeat, things that stay constant. Repetition doesn't have to be an insult to the intelligence. It can be a form of ritual; it can be the very basis of life. The human heart beats in a periodic pattern, pumping vitality to every cell in the body. Would human beings be better people if their hearts beat unpredictably?

Music, like theatre, happens in time. Unlike a painting, which the viewer can understand in a flash, music must unfold through time, filling up time, and is a slave to time to make itself manifest. Yet, unlike theater, which is effective in storytelling, music has the capacity to suspend time, to make us forget time. Storytelling takes us from A to B with the anticipation of C. The ritual possibilities of music can dispense with narrative, and give us the pulse and perfume of meditative ecstasy.

Michael Torke

Although his exposure to popular music had been limited in high school, Michael Torke (b. 1961, Wisconsin) came under its influence while a student at the Eastman School of Music, studying composition with Samuel Adler, Warren Benson, and Pulitzer Prize winners Joseph Schwantner, Christopher Rouse, and Gunther Schuller. Torke began to incorporate pop and jazz elements into his music as early as 1984—his *Vanada* shows the influence of pop music and minimalism with its incessant pulse, repeated rhythmic figurations and instrumentation of electric bass, a pair of synthesizers, electric and acoustic keyboards, percussion and brass. After graduating from Eastman in 1984, he began composition studies at Yale with Jacob Druckman and Martin Bresnick; however, after only a year at Yale, Torke cut short his graduate studies to begin his professional career, moving to New York City where he became an exclusive recording artist with Argo/Decca Records and was signed by Boosey and Hawkes, the publisher of composers such as Stravinsky and Copland.

During his year at Yale, Torke gained instant notoriety for two early pieces, both written in 1985: the pop-tinged *Ecstatic Orange* (commissioned by ASCAP and "Meet the Composer") and the chamber work *Yellow Pages*. As the Los Angeles Times wrote, with these two pieces, which have become his best-known works, "Michael Torke practically defined post-Minimalism, a music in which eclectic young composers utilize the repetitive structures of a previous generation to incorporate musical techniques from both the classical tradition and the contemporary pop world." Music critic Mark Swed elaborated, writing:

Torque represents a generation of young American composers who take Minimalism for granted and who came of age in an environment where the distinctions between pop and so-called serious music did not have to be observed rigidly. It is a generation for whom the tonality and atonality wars had already been fought, a generation as unselfconsciously at ease with the metric complexities of Stravinsky as with the radiant harmonies of Philip Glass or with the brazen energy of Madonna. Torke's music is informed by, and accepting of, all these musics. But what separates Torke from the tradition of American eclectics from Ives to Bernstein and William Bolcom is that he does not dramatize the juxtaposition of styles nor does he write postmodern pastiche.... So a Madonna bass line, Glassian cadencing and sassy Stravinskian rhythms are all applied as part of a single-minded process of unifying the music and hurling it inevitably forward. And the result is a jittery and jazzy style that is almost Baroque in its non-stop manipulation of singular thematic material and its grounding in dance rhythms (only in Torke's case, the dance of his time may be rap rather than a gigue), but Minimalist in its propulsive beat.

Since winning a Rome Prize Fellowship in 1986, Torke has become one of the most performed and critically acclaimed composers of his generation. The American Record Guide wrote, "Torke is our Copland: the rare composer who combines staggering technical chops, a rigorous and uncompromising approach to the working-out of material, and the

guts to shape that material into music with broad appeal and without irony.” His oeuvre—described by Gramophone Magazine as “some of the most optimistic, joyful, and thoroughly uplifting music to appear in recent years—includes vocal, chamber, and orchestral works, as well as several chamber operas, the most recent of which, *Strawberry Fields*, was broadcast by PBS, receiving an Emmy nomination, and which was recorded and released by the Albany Symphony. He has also written three works for large wind band, including *Bliss*, commissioned and premiered by the Symphonic Winds in 2003, and several works for chamber wind ensemble, including *Overnight Mail* (1997), written for the Orkest de Volharding. In 1998 Torke was appointed the first Associate Composer of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, and in 2003 he acquired the rights to re-issue the complete Decca/Argo recorded catalog of his works on his own label, Ecstatic Records; later that year, the boxed set of these complete recordings was picked by The New York Times as one of the top Classical albums of the year.

Upon moving to New York City, Torke began an extended collaboration with Peter Martins, director of the New York City Ballet. Although it was viewed by critic Philip Kennicott as “odd that a ballet company known as the bastion of tradition in American dance would become Torke’s greatest champion,” Martins and the New York City Ballet became early champions of Torke’s music, Martins choreographing *Ecstatic Orange* in 1987, encouraging Torke to expand it into a three-movement ballet (with the also synesthetically-inspired *Green* and *Purple* [1987] as the other movements), and commissioning a number of other works; for the five-year period 1987-1991, Torke became as close to a house composer for the company as any since Stravinsky was for Balanchine. In the last few years, Torke has collaborated with James Kudelka of the National Ballet of Canada, creating two evening-length ballets *The Contract (The Pied Piper)* (2002) and *Italian Straw Hat*, which premiered in May 2005 in Canada. The suitability of Torke’s “non-dance” music for choreography has become apparent to many; recently, the American Ballet Theater and Cincinnati Ballet jointly commissioned a new ballet with choreography by Kirk Peterson, using as its final movement Torke’s *Javelin*—commissioned in 1994 by the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, and included on the official 1996 Olympics album, *Summon the Heroes*, conducted by John Williams—and this past November, the Nashville Ballet premiered choreography of their Artistic Director Paul Vasterling set to Torke’s ***Adjustable Wrench* (1987)**.

Described as “a modern equivalent of a Mozart Divertimento, with all the skill and craftsmanship which that implies,” *Adjustable Wrench* is one of Torke’s most tautly intricate, logically organized scores. Torke has written the following about the piece:

Each group of four instruments combines with a keyboard: four woodwinds are matched with a piano, four brass with a marimba, and four strings with a synthesizer. The texture is simple – melody and accompaniment. After a melody is introduced, it is then harmonized into four note chords. The chords become an accompaniment for a new melody, which in turn is harmonized to work with the accompaniment. The old chords drop out, making the new chords become the new accompaniment for yet another new melody. The keyboard instruments, around which each family of four instruments is grouped, simply double exactly what is being played; the piano, marimba, and synthesizer add no new material. Instead, they provide an extra envelope to the four-note chords as well as reinforce the attacks. The music falls into the kind of four-bar phrases found in most popular music. Overall, the structure of the piece is arranged in four identifiable sections.

Despite this almost-clinical description, *Adjustable Wrench* may be Torke’s most successful venture into capturing the potency of pop music in a rigorous, sophisticated, classical setting: Vasterling describes it as “incredibly kinetic music with large amounts of energy and power,” the New York Times wrote that the “eccentric movement and spare chordal development implied...the relentless and ritual feel of jazz’s wavelike choruses,” while the Yorkshire Post characterized it as a “fusion of rock, jazz and classical elements.” Mark Swed writes about this piece:

Unlike other Torke scores, *Adjustable Wrench*, from 1987, does not begin with a bang. It opens coyly instead, with a simple, repeated, four-bar pop phrase in the winds, over which an easy swinging brass theme develops. But as the title suggests, wrenching adjustments are made, with the innocuous material taking on character when phrased in intricate ways between the three instrumental groupings (winds with piano, brass with marimba, and strings with synthesizer). And typical of Torke, the score’s twists and turns are always surprising, none more so than when an independent synthesizer part throws a monkey wrench in the proceedings about a third of the way through, adding a funky, jagged, chromatic bass line that seems as if it is about to take the innocent pop ostinato on the ride of its life.

Although it has been pointed out to Torke by several of his friends that the opening melody “sounds exactly like Van Halen’s *Jump*,” written in 1984, Torke maintains “the source inspiration for *Adjustable Wrench* was instead...an obscure

song by Jellybean (Madonna's one-time producer). I used the basic vamp, but I inserted my own triadic chords. I know it sounds improbable, but I had never heard any Van Halen until the 1990s." In an almost mechanistic fashion, then, Torke explores the melodic and harmonic implications of this simple, almost insidious motive. Throughout, as melodic fragments splinter and are either discarded or developed (often in fleeting canons), Torke's characteristic kinetic, syncopated style permeates, the raucous energy of *Adjustable Wrench* never for a moment lessening.

While much has been said about Torke's absorption of popular music into his work, Torke's compositions hardly sound like pop music and ultimately have very little to do with pop aesthetics. On the other hand, Torke's emulation of Brahms (a composer whose works were also steeped in the 'folk music traditions' of his time) has had a strong effect on his procedural sensibilities even if his music might not immediately sound like it.

Frank Oteri

Karel Husa: *Slovak Dance, movement IV of Divertimento for Brass and Percussion* (1959)

Perhaps no other composer has had such an impact on the development of the contemporary wind band than has Karel Husa.... It is clear that Husa's music has influenced composers, conductors, performers, and audiences like very few composers of [the twentieth and twenty-first centuries].... Perhaps Mr. Husa's biggest contribution has been the influence he has made on the thousands of young musicians who have either performed his music or have played under his baton. Every person who has met Karel Husa knows him to be a kind and gentle soul, whose music seems to radiate from deep within. His love and compassion for others is reflected through his music.

Rodney Winther, Music Director, CCM Wind Symphony

Sadly, for Karel Husa (b. Prague, 7 Aug 1921), the beginning of a life in music was neither kind nor gentle, as he deserved—his early education was under the shadow of the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia. A student protest in 1939 provided the Germans with the pretext they sought for closing all the universities in Prague, including the technical institute where Husa was then pursuing studies in engineering. Further, they ordered most of the students deported to Dresden for work in munitions factories. The conservatories of art and music were allowed to remain open, however, and in 1941 Husa barely escaped deportation by gaining admission to the composition class at the Prague Conservatory. While he developed rapidly, his studies at the Conservatory were carried out in an atmosphere of constant stress and uncertainty; in the final year of the war, all classes at the Conservatory were suspended until the liberation of Czechoslovakia in 1945. The following year, Husa was granted a fellowship by the French Government and traveled to Paris, where he studied with Arthur Honegger at L'École Normale de Musique, as well as unofficially with Darius Milhaud at the Paris Conservatoire and with Nadia Boulanger. Almost immediately, Husa's music began to attract attention: his lyrical *String Quartet No. 1* was awarded the Prix Lili Boulanger and won praise from influential Parisian music critics. Although in 1948 a music critic in Prague hailed Husa as "one of the greatest hopes for Czech music," by 1949 the newly installed Communist government revoked his passport when he declined to return to Czechoslovakia and serve an oppressive regime. Officially a refugee, Husa lived a precarious existence in Paris, earning an irregular income as a free-lance conductor. In 1954, at the invitation of the American musicologist Donald Jay Grout, Husa accepted a position at Cornell University—initially teaching music theory and conducting the university orchestra—where he would remain, teaching composition and mentoring countless young composers, until his retirement in 1992.

Through his long and distinguished career, Husa has received significant recognition for his musical contributions. In addition to winning the Pulitzer Prize (1969), Husa has been awarded: grants from the National Endowment of the Arts, Koussevitzky Foundation commissions, two Guggenheim Fellowships (1964, 1965), the Pulitzer Prize (1969), the Friedheim Award of the Kennedy Center (1983), the first Sudler International Wind Competition prize (1983) for *Concerto for Wind Ensemble*, the Grawemeyer Award (1993) for his *Cello Concerto*, and the Czech Academy for the Arts and Sciences Prize. He was elected to the Royal Belgian Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1974 and to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1994. He has received honorary doctorate degrees from more than ten schools, including the Cleveland Institute of Music, Ithaca College, New England Conservatory, and the Academy of Musical Arts in Prague. Karel Husa has conducted many of this country's most prominent wind ensembles (including performances in all 50 states) and the world's major orchestras including those in Paris, London, Prague, Zurich, Hong Kong, Singapore, New York, Boston, and Washington.

Husa is best known for a series of large scores that, according to biographer Byron Adams, "derive their considerable power from the combination of coruscating orchestration and formal invention with an emotional depth that reflects his political, ethical and humanitarian concerns." Foremost among such works are those Husa calls his three "manifests"

(scores intended to address serious issues of international concern): *Music for Prague 1968*, *Apotheosis of this Earth* (1971, rev. 1972), and the ballet *The Trojan Women* (1981). While the introspective *String Quartet No. 3* (1968) was awarded the Pulitzer Prize (1969), its success has been overshadowed by the “manifest” written the same year—*Music for Prague 1968* for concert band, which has received over 10,000 performances since its first performance. Inspired by the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, *Music for Prague 1968* is more than a memorial to a tragic episode in the history of one city; as Adams writes, “its cries of anguish and indignation are relevant wherever the innocent are crushed and victimized by the strong.”

Husa's creative strength derives from his uncompromising individuality, logically construed aesthetic principles, and firmly held ethical beliefs. His style is capable of assimilating and adapting such varied techniques as serialism, microtones, and aleatorism within a wide expressive range. He has composed for an impressive array of instrumental combinations, and has explored virtually every important musical genre except opera. When asked about his early musical influences in a 1990 interview, Husa responded:

Definitely the music of Czech composers—Smetana, Dvorak, Janáček, as well as Suk and Novak—otherwise I didn't know much music.... Also at that time in Czechoslovakia, French art and music were much admired. Martinu, for instance, studied with Roussel. We admired Debussy and Ravel as we admired impressionism in painting and poetry. So there was close contact between the Czechs and the French.

His early works are in a broadly neo-classical idiom, reflecting the influences of Honegger and Stravinsky, the Czech nationalists, and Czech and Slovak folk music. By the end of the 1950s, Husa began to move away from these styles—and the extended tonality on which they were predicated—towards a more austere, atonal idiom. He experimented with serial techniques, adapting them to his own expressive purposes, writing with characteristic vital rhythms and an unerring dramatic flair. Husa's mature style, then, is perhaps best described as a personal synthesis of all of these features: he retained the clarity and formal logic of neo-classicism, the expressive qualities and intervallic contours of the folkloric idiom, and the intricate motivic interrelationships derived from serialism—all combined with his ongoing fascination with exploiting new and unusual instrumental techniques and combinations.

Husa has written a number of works for wind ensemble/band, including *Music for Prague 1968* and *Apotheosis of this Earth* (1971), *Al Fresco* (1974), *Smetana Fanfare* (1984), and concerti for alto saxophone (1967), percussion (1970), and trumpet (1974). This past February, the Symphonic Winds performed his most recent work for winds, *Les Couleurs Fauves* (1995); this evening, they perform ***Slovak Dance***, the final movement from his first—***Divertimento for Brass and Percussion*** (1959), an orchestration of four movements of his *Eight Czech Duets* for piano four-hands (1955) and the precursor of his *Divertimento for Brass Quintet* (1968). Characteristic of Husa's early music, the primary thematic material in this charming miniature is derived from Slovak folk music. His treatment of this seemingly-simple melody, however, points to the emergence of what would become Husa's mature style. From beginning to end, *Slovak Dance* is a five-minute accelerando, the driving motor rhythms pressing until the very rhythmic structure seems to erode. Biting, dense harmonies punctuate the innocent, buoyant theme, while syncopations and metric shifts constantly undermine the stability of the tune. In 1992, Husa said that, to serve as a contrast to *Music for Prague 1968*, he “would like to write a piece about Prague that would be beautiful and happy, because [his] years there were beautiful;” perhaps the *Slovak Dance*—a playful romp which encapsulates Husa's belief that “music is excitement, enjoyment, exultation”—is it.

Henryk Mikolaj Górecki: *Kleines Requiem für eine Polka* (1993)

This was my world. The only way to confront this horror, to forget — but you could never forget — was through music.... The world today, it's the same. Also a nightmare, crushing us. Somehow I had to take a stand, as a witness, and as a warning.... The war, the rotten times under Communism, our life today, the starving, Bosnia—what madness! And why, why? This sorrow, it burns inside me. I cannot shake it off.

Henryk Górecki, recollecting a schoolboy visit to Auschwitz

[Górecki's music] builds bridges between the universality of folk song and liturgy and the terrors in historical time and in the “world-as-it-is.”

Wilfrid Mellers

While still a student, Henryk Górecki (b. 1933) made a name for himself in Poland as a leading member of the young, avant-garde generation of composers, with premières at the early Warsaw Autumn festivals that culminated in the *succès de scandale* of *Scontri* in 1960; although he had just begun composing, by the early 1960s, he was considered

not only on a par with his contemporaries (such as Panufnik and Szymanowski), but he was regarded as one of the leaders of the Polish modern school. Although one of Poland's most distinguished and respected composers, Górecki was practically unknown in the West during the first three decades of his compositional life, overshadowed by Lutoslawski and Penderecki. With the commission of chamber works by the Lerchenborg Festival and by the Kronos Quartet in the late 1980s, this began to change; fame—wholly unexpected and at an unprecedented level—arrived in the 1990s when the fourth commercial recording of *Symphony No. 3* ("*Symphony of Sorrowful Songs*"), by Dawn Upshaw and the London Sinfonietta conducted by David Zinman, became a worldwide phenomenon. Since its release in 1992, this recording has sold over a million copies and was recognized as Gramophone's "Best-selling CD in 1993." Maria Anna Harley, professor of music and director of the Polish Music Reference Center at USC, has written that the "success of *Symphony No. 3* has astounded many of his contemporaries, especially in Poland, where the work had been known for more than a decade. In his home country, Górecki's Third was perceived as one of a series of fascinating compositions, the result of a long and complex creative evolution." With this fame, though, came an increasingly controversial critical reputation; at its harshest, his music (esp. *Symphony No. 3* and the Kronos quartets) has been decried as "New Age"—a view dismissed by musicologist Bernard Jacobson:

"New Age" tendencies and minimalist elements have both been imputed to Górecki. Yet his powerful sense of concentration has nothing to do with the mental languor, the relentless relaxation, of "New Age" music.... And together with his ability to compress and concentrate the listener's experience of time to a point where all motion is suspended, the richness of musical character that Górecki draws from his sources of inspiration in folk art, village life, and pantheistic faith has prompted Andrzej Chlopecki to speak rather of "a certain maximalism" in his work.... What all Górecki's latest works...may have in common with "New Age" music is no more than a willingness to take its time and an unmistakably hypnotic quality.

Górecki has worked with great determination to develop his own compositional voice, through assimilating the techniques of his predecessors (Bartók, Szymanowski) and those active around him (Boulez, Xenakis, Nono), and then paring away all elements extraneous to his personal expression. These processes were carried out through the 1950s and 1960s, the most radical and dissonant period in his output. As Harley has written, "Together with Penderecki, Serocki, and others, [Górecki] established a pattern for new music: the more dissonance the better, the harsher the sounds, the better.... In order to reduce music to pure sound, these composers stripped away all elements, except tone color." His works from this period were filled with clashes of vertical and horizontal sound patterns, often organized serially. By 1963, though, his style was changing, moving toward what Jacobson described as "extreme simplicity and untrammelled emotional directness." In two 1960s interviews, Górecki spoke of "subjecting [him]self to strict self-control" and of "putting the most stringently restricted material to maximum use." There were two separate but related outcomes from this ruthless self-examination: a formal and technical clarity and an absorption of cultural icons from the past. Górecki's shift to a fully diatonic and modal language, in which melody plays the supreme role and in which the repetitive element is essentially rooted in folk and church music, represents his search for personal authentication in both Polish and broader musical terms. Nourished by the folk music of the Tatra Mountains, he evolved what has been called his "elemental" style, with an apparent simplicity that defied the modernist musicians' rule that music should be complicated. But that simplicity can be deceptive, because Górecki's music stretches toward extremes. (Commentators on Górecki's music are quick to point out that "simple" has two antonyms: complicated and complex; that Górecki's music is both simple and non-complicated does not preclude it from being complex—which it most certainly is.) Jacobson sees this move toward apparent extreme simplicity as a necessity because "Górecki, like Penderecki, is a composer intent on the elemental, on the inner core of the universe and man's relationship with it. But in his case, this concern produces more light than darkness. Some of that light may come by reflection from the transcendental musings of Oliver Messiaen, with whose Catholic mysticism, reverence for nature, blend of sensuality and asceticism, preoccupation with rhythm, and taste for extremes in tempo and dynamics he has much in common."

Adrian Thomas describes Górecki as "a man very much rooted in his native environment [who] has a passionate commitment to the folk culture of Poland.... He is a man of trenchant views, for whom the Church and Polish music are of fundamental significance." It is no surprise that traces of folk and religious music are found in his work; as Jacobson writes, in Górecki's music a "sophisticated Polish intellect and peasant Polish faith are fused under the banner of an understandably comprehensive national pride." Thomas goes further, stating that "Górecki's music demonstrates that sacred and folk influences are essentially one and the same." His revealingly uncomplicated approach to harmony and rhythm suggest a sublimated interest in Polish folk music; Jacobson believes that "the taste for simplicity led to a new

willingness to let folk materials speak for themselves." In fact, Górecki seems to lay aside most, if not all, of the concerns that have dominated Western art music over the last four hundred years.

As Thomas notes, Górecki's music "tends to move in lengthy blocks of tonally static and motivically reiterative material in which contemplation of the present is more absorbing than obviously goal-directed ideas." Stasis is emphasized over momentum, reiteration over development; Górecki is more interested in the presentation and insistent—indeed, positively obsessive—repetition of a limited set of emotionally-charged motives rather than creating any sort of drama or progression. His music has engendered such comments and descriptions as: "from the guttural to the ethereal," "brutal and uncompromising," "stunning fusion of futurist energy and nervous repose," "stripped-down muscularity," "stubbornness and aggressive intensity," and "powerful antithesis between unmitigated aggression...and almost total passivity." Perhaps the most fundamental characteristic of all of Górecki's music is its juxtaposition of extreme contrasts, be they of texture, dynamics, or tempo. Even his own performance tends to the extreme. In a recent biographical video, Górecki plays a new work on the piano, treating the slow parts, where time nearly stops, with rapt attention. Then, when the music gets faster, he attacks it with almost shocking ferocity. "Everything with him has to be maximum," Harley says, "played with maximum passion." The work that he played: *Kleines Requiem für eine Polka*.

One of the most substantial pieces that Górecki has composed since writing his Third Symphony in 1976, *Kleines Requiem für eine Polka* (1993) is "at once a profoundly serious work and a curiously elusive one, a blend of warm expressive directness with almost Brechtian alienation" (Jacobson). Górecki himself won't speak about the deepest meaning of his work, though he did once quote Pope John Paul II, for whom he had written his *Beatus vir*: "[Artists] know that what they do is only a distant echo of God's word." Originally intending to name the piece "Nachtserenade," Górecki has kept largely private the reasons for the curious title *Kleines Requiem für eine Polka*. He has hinted that it reflects his sadness at the break-up of Czechoslovakia, where the polka is indigenous; Richard Rodda has written that "the music suggests that this work is a sad, perhaps even tragic commentary upon the modern world's loss of innocence from the simpler, retrospectively happier time of the polka's efflorescence during the decades surrounding the turn of the twentieth century." There is also, as Polish speakers recognize, another meaning to the word "Polka" (i.e. Polish woman); the work's original Polish title—*Małe Requiem dla Pewnej Polki*—is ambiguous, and implies that this might also be a "Little Requiem for a Polish Woman." (Górecki has never given the slightest clue on this matter, choosing instead to allow the title's multiple associations to remain, at least for his Polish compatriots. The composer himself supplied the unequivocal German title.) While Górecki's expressive intention in writing *Kleines Requiem* may remain an enigma and its meaning hidden, its roots in both folk- and church-song are much more explicit. As Harley writes, Górecki drew "inspiration from the colours and rhythms of folk music: the strong accents, harsh timbres, and relentless ostinati of mountain dances from the Tatras and Podhale region, the melancholy clarinet tunes of Silesia, the impetuousness of the Czech—or Silesian—polka." Sandow agrees, commenting that the *Kleines Requiem* is "fierce and wild, hammering and screaming what might be a plea, a demand or a lament.... The sound is torn by dissonance and can seem primitive."

Almost half an hour in duration, composed in four movements played without pause, *Kleines Requiem* is in no hurry to unfold; as Thomas has written, it "possesses a meditative restraint of great potency, it reveals itself like a slowly opening bud." There is a static quality to the entire piece, as if time has been suspended; this is music that does not *evolve*, but rather *revolves*. The sorrowful, introspective quality of the outer movements fixes the dominant expressive sphere of the *Kleines Requiem*, for which the shorter, faster central movements provide a stylistic and emotional foil. While the work opens in an air of reflective tranquility, the insistently tolling bells, as if from a distant church, remind us of the work's funereal, if timeless, tone. The mood is irreparably sundered, though; as Rodda described, "the music turns angry, venting some nameless grief, which is magnified by the pounding bell and piano sounds," before the movement fades away with a solemn benediction from the strings. The aggression so characteristic of Górecki's early music explodes in the second movement, whose thrusting repetitive phrases and hammered piano chords create an atmosphere of frenzied, overwhelming terror—described by Thomas as "music and spirit from the world of the grotesque." This intensely driven music abruptly slows to a menacing, mechanistic march, against which the trumpet hurls wild, demented fanfares, before this music, too, slowly unwinds. Like the first movement, quiet once again prevails, and the clarinet sings a mournful, folk-like threnody before the tolling bell and softly consoling strings provide another momentary glimpse of peace. Breaking the silence in a rowdy, clumsy, irreverent manner, the third movement is the only one obviously indebted to the musical style of the polka, though here the dance is transformed into a strident, manic, demonic parody. As Thomas writes:

Górecki captures the whirl of the dance without becoming naïvely figurative: his angle of view is cubist.... It is a sequence of melodic ideas with dancing accompaniment.... The piano thumps out, with little respect for decent conventionality, an “oompah-oompah” accompaniment in A major.... This is carefree recreation of popular music-making, be it from the village hall or the circus. But the emphatic rhythms—is this the polka of the title?—are weighed down by the static harmonies and, invigorating though it is, the passage is not a resolution of the tensions created in earlier movements.

Górecki himself commented upon hearing this movement in preparation for its premiere by the Schönberg Ensemble at the 1993 Holland Festival, “God, what have I made now? Such circus music!” Instead of the brief “Amen” that end the first three movements, when the polka finally breaks-off, a true coda of slow, quiet reflection—the final movement—begins, the tolling bell ushering in an ethereal string chorale. With the obbligato horn offering a chant-like prayer and the piano and chimes intoning soft, dissonant tones, harmonic resolution is finally, blissfully attained in the final gesture, the faintest echo of the work’s opening. Ivan Moody has described this piece as, “music with an almost unparalleled physical immediacy...possessed of the most astonishing tension, precisely built up to an almost unbearable pitch and then released...into a post-penitential meditative calm.” While it is unknown if Górecki intentionally patterned the form of this work after the Catholic Requiem Mass, perhaps this “Little Requiem”—complete with *Requiem*, *Dies irae*, *Sanctus*, and *Agnus Dei/Libera me*—is more sacred and more powerful than the title seems to indicate.

Igor Stravinsky: *Circus Polka* (1942)

Stravinsky: What kind of music?	Balanchine: A polka.
Stravinsky: For whom?	Balanchine: Elephants.
Stravinsky: How old?	Balanchine: Young.
Stravinsky: If they are very young, I'll do it.	

The original commission for this ballet came to George Balanchine from the Ringling Brothers of the Barnum and Bailey Circus, and he was entrusted with the choice of music. It is said that he immediately telephoned **Igor Stravinsky** (1882-1971), resulting in the conversation above, as retold in Eric Walter White’s *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works*. The elephants *were* indeed very young, so Stravinsky agreed to write his ***Circus Polka*** (1942). The piano score was completed by February 1942, and then orchestrated for the Barnum and Bailey band by the young composer David Raksin (1912-2004), known for his work on Charlie Chaplin films, under the close supervision of Stravinsky. By October of that year, Stravinsky had completed an arrangement for orchestra that he premiered with the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Sanders Theater at Harvard.

At the start of World War II, Stravinsky fled his home in France, arriving in New York City by the end of September 1939. After giving his Norton lectures at Harvard University (which would be published as *The Poetics of Music*), Stravinsky moved to Hollywood, where he would live for the rest of his life, becoming a naturalized American citizen in 1945. Because of copyright issues—specifically that the United States was not a signatory to the Berne copyright convention, and therefore Stravinsky’s Russian copyrights were not honored in the U.S.—Stravinsky found his American royalties insufficient to supplement his now-diminished European royalties. Stravinsky related a now-infamous copyright-related incident, involving his *Rite of Spring* and Disney’s *Fantasia*, in his *Expositions*:

In 1938 I received a request from the Disney office in America for permission to use *Le Sacre* in a cartoon film. The request was accompanied by a gentle warning that if permission were withheld the music would be used anyway. (*Le Sacre*, being “Russian,” was not copyrighted in the United States.) The owners of the film wished to show it abroad, however (i.e., in Berne copyright countries), and they therefore offered me \$5000, a sum I was obliged to accept.... I saw the film with George Balanchine in a Hollywood studio at Christmas time in 1939. I remember someone offering me a score and, when I said I had my own, the someone saying, “But it is all changed.” It was indeed...

Not only did he revise many of his earlier works to secure American copyright and thus extend his royalty fees, Stravinsky was forced to agree to accept “potboiler” commissions to make a living, one such being for the *Circus Polka* of which he thought surprisingly little, referring to it as a “journeymen job.” (These commissions, all of which were still written to his usual high artistic and technical standard, include: *Tango* of 1940; the *Scherzo à la russe* written for a broadcast by the Paul Whiteman Band in September 1944; and the *Scènes de ballet*, a 15-minute dance-revue composed for a Broadway show that same year.) At least one critic, Charles Joseph, agreed with Stravinsky’s assessment of *Circus Polka*, describing it as “sheer musical lunacy” and “commercially inspired twaddle.” Wind music expert David Whitwell, though, disagrees, describing it as “a brilliant satire on band transcriptions of orchestral works;”

Andre Boucourechiliev added, "*Circus Polka* should not be thought unworthy, for it is excellent Stravinsky, nearer to *Petrushka* than to neo-classicism.... The real charm of the piece [is in] its archetypical character as circus music."

The most scathing criticisms, however, came from the circus—from Merle Evans, long-time bandleader and solo cornetist for the Ringling Brothers Circus, and from the elephants themselves. Evans apparently had little respect for the piece, referring to it as "Harvard music" and not "what the elephants needed or deserved;" he noted that the piece had to be "sandwiched" between Weber's *Invitation to the Waltz* and Ponchielli's *Dance of the Hours* because the trainers "had to run those elephants in with music they knew or they'd never get started." George Brinton Beale, program annotator for the BSO in the 1940s, related this story (retold in White's book) concerning the difficulties involved in training and rehearsing the elephants:

The first time Merle Evans, veteran bandmaster of the Big Show, put the music up on his rack and started tooting away on his cornet, he knew there was trouble ahead.... Polite, as elephants always are, the big performers listened to the circus band, as it played their working music through. They listened, but with growing distaste and uneasiness, according to both the bandmaster and the superintendent of bulls.... Aside from the dancing of Old Modoc ["the best loved and most widely known elephant"] in center ring, the circus place of honor, "Display No. 18" was not a pretty act. The ballet skirts made the bulls appear ridiculous. The music didn't suit them. In spite of some of the stunts which they are made to perform, elephants are dignified animals. They respond instantly to waltz tunes and soft, dreamy music, even to some military numbers of a particularly circusy tempo. The involved music of Stravinsky's "Elephant Ballet" was both confusing and frightening to them. It robbed them of their feeling of security and confidence in the world about them—so alien to their native condition of life. It would have taken very little at any time during the main performances of the ballet music to cause a stampede.

David Raksin retells a story about the work's "critical reception":

[Stravinsky's wife] called to ask me to come over at once; and when I did, he read me (presumably from a telegram) a message from Balanchine in which George related that when, at the dress rehearsal, the elephants (led by Modoc) heard the music for the first time they stampeded! We roared with laughter. "What an endorsement!" I said. "Fifty elephants! Can you think of another composer whose work has aroused such acclaim?" (Or something like that. It seems that I had forgotten that he himself had precipitated something similar in Paris, May 26, 1914!—among people, though, not elephants.)

Raksin also commented on his working relationship with Stravinsky:

I would bring a few pages at a time every few days. He approved of everything—until the day I pointed out a *rather* high note (for the first time) in the first cornet. "Mr. Stravinsky," I said, "are you sure you want this note on that instrument? Because the fellow who will play that part is the leader of the band, a man named Merle Evans. He is a very good cornetist...but when he sees this note, he may have a stroke!" Stravinsky was amused. [Evans at one part did, in fact, write: "The cornet part was too high, the clarinet had more notes than anyone could blow. It took my boys quite a while to master it. Once we rehearsed it for nine hours to play it three minutes. In all my years, I never memorized it."]

A popular act, this Ballet of Elephants was performed no fewer than 425 times by the circus band and has been choreographed for *human* dancers numerous times, including by Paul Taylor (1955), Alan Carter (1960), and Jerome Robbins (1972). Stravinsky once admitted that he suffered from a "rare form of kleptomania," stealing musical ideas from other pieces and other times. Conductor Michael Tilson Thomas believes that "[Stravinsky's] approach to his music was dance-like, witty, energetic, delighting in elegant surprise.... Hearing new music of whatever century or country was essential for him and he liked to 'try on' a bit of different musical styles in his own witty way." The charm of *Circus Polka* is that it *is*, in the truest sense, circus music—whimsical, funny, and meant to entertain; Stravinsky was able to write a piece that is simultaneously "pure Stravinsky" and undiluted circus music—a synthesis only he could have created. It is certainly one of the "squarest" of all of Stravinsky's works—only 9 measures (out of 165) are of a time signature other than the prevailing polka meter 2/4. In its deliberate parody of the form—in addition to containing a quotation from Schubert's *Marche Militaire*, how many measures of the work *actually* feel in 2/4?—*Circus Polka* succeeds in a manner that only an irreverent, post-modern art work can.

David Kechley: **BANG!** (2005)

Tonight marks the premiere performance of David Kechley's **BANG!**, commissioned by a consortium of schools led by the Williams Symphonic Winds and including Franklin and Marshall College (Brian Norcross, conductor), the University of Washington (Timothy Salzman, conductor), Indiana University of Pennsylvania (Jack Stamp, conductor),

Southwestern University (Lois Ferrari, conductor), the University of Texas at Tyler (Jeffrey Emge, conductor), the University of Michigan-Flint (Robert Southard, conductor), and Towson University (Dana Rothlisberger, conductor).

Prof. Kechley has offered the following about the piece:

BANG! begins with a strong percussive statement and this alone is sufficient justification for the work's title. In fact, the entire first section of the piece is generated by repetitions of this opening cluster of drums as it continues to trigger the woodwinds into creating ever expanding and contracting lines before they finally begin to fragment as new explosions emerge. Beyond this literal reference, the musical ideas and structure of this work are, in fact, inspired by the concept of the "big bang" theory in which the universe is constantly expanding, having started from a single point. It seems that, like a rubber band, it may also begin to contract some time in the distant future, all the way back to that single point and even beyond! It is impossible to truly wrap one's mind around this, but it's quite fascinating to try.

Above all, this is a piece of music with melodies, harmonies, timbres, and rhythms that will hopefully excite, delight, frighten, amuse, and perhaps even give comfort at times; it is not an attempt to represent such cosmic ideas as the "big bang"—how futile would that be? However, these ideas do provide interesting musical analogies that can be heard in the outer sections of the piece. There are harmonic progressions that begin as widely spaced chords and contract into tone clusters, and others that move in the opposite manner, from the densest possible aggregate of notes to expanded structures that are more sonorous due to the open spaces between the notes. Chords and melodies throughout the piece are constantly moving toward or away from each other at similar rates. Even the opening lines which provide the thematic basis for much of the work are always presented as at least two lines in mirror image which continue to move both higher and lower simultaneously. Percussive explosions are often the impetus for the bursts of energy created by the winds and brass.

Although the work is continuous, there are clearly three primary sections. The middle section is perhaps more humanly-inspired as it features a full flute choir—including bass and alto flutes—playing a modal chorale interspersed with various solo instruments which play more expressive versions of the material that opens the work. However, this tranquility becomes more restless as external forces continue to bombard and undermine it. The pent up emotion of the flute choir's plaintive song does reach full fruition, however, before the drum cluster once again triggers an explosion, which this time expands even further in displays of musical fireworks and intensity. The closing bars bring new meaning to the title of the work as they reflect upon the final stanza of T.S. Eliot's poem "The Hollow Men":

*This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang but a whimper.*

Chair of the Music Department at Williams College, **David Kechley** was born in Seattle, received a Bachelor's Degree in 1970, his Master's in 1974 from the University of Washington, and completed a DMA in Composition at the Cleveland Institute of Music in 1979. Since the 1968 premiere of *Second Composition for Large Orchestra* by the Seattle Symphony, Kechley's music has been given performances by many of the nation's most prestigious ensembles, including: Cleveland Orchestra, Colorado Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, North Carolina Symphony, Louisville Orchestra, Seattle Symphony, Memphis Symphony, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Boston Pops, Kronos Quartet, Lark Quartet, Amherst Saxophone Quartet, Vienna Saxophone Quartet, and the United States Military Academy Band. Most recently *The Sea of Stones: A Concerto for Guitar and Saxophone* and *RUSH*, for saxophone quartet were premiered at World Saxophone Congress XIII at the University of Minnesota in 2003.

In addition to winning the 24th Annual NBA/William D. Revelli Memorial Band Composition Contest in 2000 for his *Restless Birds Before a Dark Moon*, Kechley has won numerous other awards. He has received two grants from the National Endowment for the Arts (1976, 1979), a Guggenheim Fellowship (1979), and continuous ASCAP awards for over twenty years; additional recognition for his work includes: Winner of the 1995 Lee Ettelson Composer's Award, First Prize Winner of the 1980-81 Shreveport Symphony Composers' Competition, and First Prize and Winner of the 1979 Opus I Chamber Orchestra Contest for Ohio Composers. Kechley has received grants from the North Carolina Arts Council, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Barlow Foundation, and recent commissions from The American Composers Forum Commissioning Program and the New England Orchestra Consortium. In 2002 he was an artist resident at Bellagio, a retreat for artists and scholars funded by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Percy Aldridge Grainger: *Lincolnshire Posy* (1937)

I am a complete enigma to myself, a riddle which I do not in the least wish to solve.

I am merely...an *imaginative* and *experimental musician*, not a practical one.

Percy Grainger, letters to Alfild Sandby (1936) and Bernard Heinze (1947)

Grainger was a visionary. He was also a maverick, an outsider, an anarchist with a thousand bees in his bonnet and in thrall to no “cause” or leadership but his own. He was obstinate, spectacularly inconsistent, uncompromising, obsessive, relentlessly inquisitive, a man who courageously sought perfection on his own terms and a man who never let the flame go out.

John Bird, author of *Percy Grainger*

The Australian-American composer, pianist, and folk-song collector **Percy Aldridge Grainger** (1882-1961) was, without question, one of the most singular individuals in all of Western art music; in fact, the word—polite, if judgmental—that is most used to describe him is *eccentric*: Harry Began wrote that “Grainger stood out in a crowd as the individualist and eccentric that he was;” Gillies contends that an examination of Grainger’s life “encourages an interpretation of eccentricity, if not mental instability;” while Lyndon Jenkins describes Grainger as “one of the most extraordinary musical figures of [the twentieth] century, a man ahead of his time in his thinking as much as his approach to music. He was an innovator, a man of original genius mixed in with a touch of madness, whose destiny it was to be viewed as an eccentric who composed novelty pieces that became hugely popular.” By his late teens, the three defining elements of his personality began to emerge, detailed by Bird and listed in Grainger’s own order of priority: “his unorthodox and colourful sexual appetites,” “his highly idiosyncratic personal philosophy based on the concept of ‘racial charactology,’” and “the maturing of an individual musical style.” While musically he is best known for his settings of British folk music and for his acclaimed performance as a concert pianist, his greatest notoriety lies in his controversial and unconventional—and often repugnant—views on race, nationality, and sex. As Grainger wrote, trying to reconcile these seemingly disparate predilections:

I live for my lusts and I don't care if they kill me or others. Now (as when I was sixteen) I live only for fury and wildness. I feel that a hot parched wind from the Australian desert has entered into my soul and with a fury of heat I must go through, burning up myself and others. But what joy! That is how I live: following my lusts, and composing now and then on the side.... Out of this World of violence, war, cruelty, and tragedy, my longing to compose arose. Many children are cruel to animals and many little boys harsh to little girls, but this fierceness wanes as they grow up. But I never grew up in this respect and fierceness is the keynote of my music...The object of my music is not to entertain, but to agonize—to make mankind think of the agony of young men forced to kill each other against their will and all the other thwartments and torturings of the young.

As proposed by Bird, perhaps the only activity which brought any measure of true happiness to Grainger was folk-song collecting. Pursuing the activity with the kind of fanaticism that would be his trademark, Grainger became intensely involved with English folk-song collecting between the years 1905-1909—the halcyon days of what has since become known as the “First English Folk-Song Revival”—doing his part to try to rescue the English folk song from extinction. As Frederick Fennell (founder of the Eastman Wind Ensemble in 1951 and the editor of Grainger’s *Lincolnshire Posy*) has written, “It bothered [Grainger] that he could not immediately chart the subtleties of inflection that fascinated him so much in the highly personal interpretation of each singer. He was struck by their individuality, excited at their unfettered flights of creative fancy, and admired their freedom from those shackles sometimes forged in conservatories and opera houses.” To alleviate this bother, when he returned to the Lincolnshire countryside in 1906 for the second time, he came with an Edison bell cylinder phonograph, becoming the first folk-song collector in the British Isles to make live recordings of his singers. He was thus “able to collect a greater quantity of songs and also play the cylinders back as many times as he wanted, which removed much of the guesswork when it came to the job of transcribing them. Sometimes he played them back at greatly reduced speed in order to unravel the intricate problems of ornaments, slides, irregular rhythms, and so on” (Bird). As Grainger wrote in his essay “The Impress of Personality: Unwritten Music is not Standardized” (1915):

The primitive musician unhesitatingly alters the traditional material he has inherited from thousands of unknown talents and geniuses before him to suit his own voice or instruments, or to make it conform to his purely personal taste for rhythm and general style. There is no written original to confront him with, no universally accepted standard to criticize him by. He is at once an executive and creative artist, for he not only remoulds old ditties, but also weaves together fresh combinations for

more or less familiar phrases, which he calls "making new songs." His product is local and does not have to bear comparison with similar efforts imported from elsewhere.

I once let an old Lincolnshire man (a perfect artist in his way) hear in my phonograph a variant of one of the songs he had sung to me as sung by another equally splendid folk-singer, and asked him if he didn't think it fine. His answer was typical: "I don't know about it's being fine or not; I only know it's *wrong*." To each singer his own versions of songs are the only correct ones.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the extent to which such traditional singers embellish so-called "simple melodies" with a regular riot of individualistic excrescences and idiosyncrasies of every kind, each detail of which, in the case of the most gifted songsters at any rate, is a precious manifestation of real artistic personality, so much so that a skilled notator will often have to repeat a phonographic record of such a performance some hundreds of times before he will have succeeded in extracting from it a representative picture on paper of its baffling, profuse, characteristics.

Unlike most of the other folk-song collectors of his day, Grainger did not believe that a "normalized" version of any of the folk songs that he collected actually existed—to force the variant readings he heard and recorded into a "standard" model was to him a complete misrepresentation of the active performance tradition of this music. While he believed that conventional notation was wholly inadequate when it came to the needs of the folk-song material he had collected, he recognized that, in an attempt to be as accurate as possible, his notation often presented a "regrettably disturbing picture to the eye; whereas the impression of the actual performance is rhythmically smooth and flowing, though quaint and wayward." When he was commissioned in December of 1936 by the American Bandmasters Association for two original compositions to be premiered at their convention in Milwaukee the following March, Grainger "dished up" his *Lads of Wamphray March*, and provided them with his masterpiece that remarkably combined this passion for folk music and his love of the wind band medium, ***Lincolnshire Posy***. As Jenkins writes, "*Lincolnshire Posy* may be based entirely on folk-songs, but it is much more than merely a collection of them turned with Grainger's customary tonal adroitness. He had such an obviously abiding love for this music, and in the way that he approached its composition and in the care he lavished on its scoring, *Lincolnshire Posy* strikes one as being in the nature of an homage to the whole folk-song movement."

When a young child, Grainger planted a garden of weeds and wild flowers, discarding the flower and vegetable seeds from his parents, saying, "What's the difference? I think the weeds are just as pretty as other flowers." Years later, he would regard his folk-song collecting and compositional activities in much the same way, as he writes in his program note to *Lincolnshire Posy*:

This bunch of "musical wildflowers" (hence the title *Lincolnshire Posy*) is based on the folksongs collected in Lincolnshire, England (one noted by Miss Lucy E. Broadwood; the other five noted by me, mainly in the years 1905-1906, and with the help of the phonograph), and the work is dedicated to the old folksingers who sang so sweetly to me. Indeed each number is intended to be a kind of musical portrait of the singer who sang its underlying melody—a musical portrait of the singer's personality no less than his habits of song—his regular or irregular wonts of rhythm, his preference for gaunt or ornately arabesqued delivery, his contrasts of *legato* and *staccato*, his tendency towards breadth or delicacy of tone. For these folksingers were kings and queens of song! No concert singer I have ever heard approached these rural warblers in variety of tone-quality, range of dynamics, rhythmic resourcefulness and individuality of style. For while our concert singers (dull dogs that they are—with their monotonous mooing and bellowing between *mf* and *ff*, and with never a *pp* to their name!) can show nothing better (and often nothing as good) as slavish obedience to the tyrannical behests of composers, our folksingers were lords in their own domain—were at once performers and creators.

Sadly, the premiere performance did not go well. Grainger had only completed five of the six movements ("The Brisk Young Sailor" was not a part of the original suite), feverishly writing out the parts on the train from New York to Wisconsin—he did not even have time to write out a full score for himself! The band, sponsored by the Local #8 of the Musicians Union, was made up primarily of members of the band from the Blatz Brewery American Legion Post and for the occasion was called the Milwaukee Symphonic Band. These players were unaccustomed to the complex harmonies and rhythms that "Rufford Park Poachers" and "Lord Melbourne" presented; in fact, these two movements, too, had to be omitted from the performance. Frustrated by the difficulties the band had with his music, he later wrote that the band was "keener on their beer than on the music." While the work is now acknowledged as a true masterpiece, an early review in the *Milwaukee Journal* did not see it that way: "There is much to be said for the virility and honest directness of the old school band music. When composers attempt too much, as Percy Grainger unmistakably did in the pieces he presented Sunday night, there is no gain, but rather a loss." Fortunately, three months later, the Goldman Band performed the five

completed movements in New York City—and the piece was on its way to becoming the cornerstone of the wind ensemble/band repertoire.

Described by Bird as “sublime, powerful and agonizingly expressive music,” *Lincolnshire Posy*, with its powerful aesthetic logic, may actually be closer to a symphony than to a mere suite or divertimento; if Mahler’s definition that “the symphony must be like the world: it must contain everything” is believed to be accurate, then *Lincolnshire Posy* seems to qualify. Starting in crude block chords which transform into complexly sophisticated counterpoint, “**Lisbon**” is a “variation around the tune, not on it” that tells the story of an irresponsible sailor boy who uses a royal summons—alluded to by Grainger’s deft incorporation of the “Duke of Marlborough” fanfare—as an excuse for skipping town and avoiding the fettering consequences of an unwanted pregnancy. “**Horkstow Grange**” is an intimate, compassionate movement which, as described by Fennell, “tells a tale of brutal violence suddenly erupting against an oppressive overseer by ‘his man’ who obviously just couldn’t take it any more; one market day, he rose up and with club released his long-pent emotions—‘a local tragedy,’ indeed. Reading the full lyric and recoiling from its horrors, it is difficult perhaps to lay those words on top of Grainger’s completely un-violent and sonorous setting of the tune. Obviously, he chose to set it as a kind of requiem to both men and their ‘falling out’ rather than to react creatively to the violence in the words.” Grainger was so bewitched by the folk singer Joseph Taylor and his expressive performances of “**Rufford Park Poachers**” that he was unable to choose between versions for his setting; so, in his characteristic uncompromising way, Grainger set half of the movement in two versions, leaving the choice to the performers. (This evening’s performance is of the first version, which features the flugelhorn.) David Groza describes this movement—concerned with social injustice in the same manner as Victor Hugo’s *Les Misérables*—as being “as terrifyingly surreal as any that 20th-century art has to offer,” combining moments of palpable fear with outbursts of grief and moments of gentle resignation. “**Brisk Young Sailor**” brings us back to the world of the first movement—our young sailor has, after seven years away, returned to wed his True Love; movement #4’s sequel, “**Lord Melbourne**” shows our sailor boy grown-up—a self-important braggart! Retelling to Fennell how he collected this particular folk song, Grainger said, “The first time I went to Brigg, I was urged by locals to go to a pub where one of its regulars was considered to be the best singer of ‘the Lord,’ as he called it. As you know, my dear Frederick, I have always been free of the habits (Grainger was vegetarian, never smoked, offered me a light red wine at dinner) and I just could hardly make my way into that smelly, evil place – but I did – and I’m glad. This day all the poor man could bring himself to remember was the first phrase which he fairly bellowed-out in hesitant, if gleefully inebriated joy.” In an attempt to capture the inebriated—and utterly unpredictable and spontaneous—“joy” of the performance, Grainger sent over half of the tune in “free-time”: pitches, but without rhythm. The only true “dance song” in the set, “**Lost Lady Found**” tells a story of betrayal, abduction, exoneration—and eventually rejoicing and celebration. Stolen by gypsies from her uncle, a fair maid was found fortuitously years later by “a young squire who loved her so.” They returned to town at the moment the unjustly-accused uncle was about to be hung for her disappearance. With the “lost lady found,” the uncle is saved and “their bells they did ring and their music did play, ev’ry house in that valley with mirth did resound.”

David Groza has summarized one possible interpretation of the work as follows:

“The emotional plan of the first half of *Lincolnshire Posy* concerns the gradual unfolding of “man’s inhumanity to man”: injustice first raises its head in the person of an irresponsible sailor boy who, having gotten his girl in a family way, abandons her in favor of the life of the footloose and fancy-free; it widens in scope (but it is still a “local tragedy”) to take into its malignant embrace not only John Bowling and Steeleye Span, but a whole marketplace full of people who “see him suffer” (and who, by implication, do nothing to stop the suffering); it threatens to engulf the world in the gloom of Rufford Park by night, where a gallant but terrified band of forty poachers and an unspecified number of gameskeepers spill each others blood over the fundamental question of who does and does not get to eat. We can imagine, without difficulty, Grainger’s large work ending here. To this point he has established in art the principle of acceleration of evil that can easily be seen as reaching its logical conclusion in the butcheries of Hitler and Stalin during the years immediately following its composition. [The last] century has not lacked in artists who conduct their audiences into the Slough of the Depressed and leave them there to fend for themselves...But, one also has to recognize that a steady diet of unrelentingly despairing (some would say “nihilistic”) art can have the unfortunate effect of draining the very energies and idealism that might be put to use in righting the wrongs that such art damns. Thus, one admits a converse and equally important function of art: to edify, to energize, to galvanize to right action. It is this function that *Lincolnshire Posy* fulfills so admirably, for the *Posy* does not end with “Rufford Park Poachers.” The second half of the work complements and balances the first half perfectly...The last three movements of *Lincolnshire Posy* are, among other things, a manifest of alternatives to the abuses documented in the first three.