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Compositional Craft and Theory Across Tonal Languages

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Compositional Craft and Theory Across Tonal Languages

1 – Introduction

Two of the major components of my honors project in the music major were the performance of a major recital and the composition of a piece for the Colby Symphony Orchestra – the *Genevan Overture*. Each was a major undertaking; both components of the project were different in their scope. However, both developed an overall extramusical theme: how the interplay between the tonal and the post-tonal musical languages constructs a discourse that both generates meaning and proposes questions. The most important question, to me, seemed to be how to move between the two idioms with purpose – this is an issue of compositional craft. Through preparing the voice recital, performing music from a broad spectrum of different composers in different styles showed a few different ways that composers have chosen to move between the two musical languages. But, because the *Overture* was dramatically different from the vocal pieces in both performing forces and musical materials, I had to develop my own solution to the problem of creating a piece that is both tonal and not. The approach I ended up settling on was using form to delineate sections of tonal or non-tonal music; however, this raised another question – *how can I move between the formal sections?* Specifically, *how should I cadence to achieve this compositional goal?*, because form requires cadence to be fully understood; each structural musical sentence requires a period.¹ This paper offers an analysis of the *Genevan Overture*, as

¹ William Caplin, “The Classical Cadence: Conceptions and Misconceptions,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 57, no. 1 (2004): 52.

well as an examination of other composers' musical languages to see how my piece address the problems of cadence, form and tonality in dialogue with previous composers.

2 – Brief Metatheoretical Considerations

However, prior to embarking on my analysis, it seems prudent to address a few concerns that precede the music theory – metatheoretical considerations. First among them is the corollary to my intended discussion: *how does the juxtaposition of tonality and non-tonality, constructed through form and cadence, generate aesthetic meaning?* After all, music is often written to evoke some kind of meaning.² I will briefly offer an overview of this discussion, with the conclusion up front: I am not going to comment on this analytical question.

In proposition 4.0141 of his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Ludwig Wittgenstein writes, “There is a general rule by which the musician is able to read the symphony out of the score, and... one could reconstruct the symphony from the line on a gramophone record and from this again—by means of the first rule—construct the score, herein lies the internal similarity between these things which at first sight seem to be entirely different.”³ Even though Wittgenstein is not explicitly a philosopher of music, he hits upon a point of major contention in musical aesthetics: whether the musical performance or the score of a piece is the foundation of its musical meaning.⁴ In *The Aesthetics of Music*, Roger Scruton argues that a musical work is “what we hear... *in* a sequence of sounds, when we hear them as music.”⁵ Roman Ingarden proposes an

² Marvin Minsky, “Music, Mind, and Meaning,” in *Music, Mind, and Brain: The Neuropsychology of Music*, ed. Manfred Clynes (Boston: Springer, 1982), 1-2.

³ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. DF Pears and BF McGuinness (London: Routledge, 1974), proposition 4.0141.

⁴ Zbigniew Granat, “Review: *The Aesthetics of Music* by Roger Scruton,” *Notes*, Second Series 56, no. 2 (1999): 364.

⁵ Roger Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 108.

alternate theory to Scruton's in his book *The Work of Music and the Problem of Its Identity*: for Ingarden, the musical work's foundation is in the score.⁶ However, a discussion of this academic conflagration, whilst interesting, would distract from the context of this paper: an accessory to a practical performance and composition. Therefore, I will simply assent to Ingarden's model of the musical score as a discrete (and worthwhile) object of analysis.

However, this metatheoretical direction brings an insistent question: what about performance, though? After all, Scruton makes it clear that performance is important for understanding music.⁷ The reason I am choosing to set aside performance is because I want to focus on the craft of composing music. Therefore, focusing solely on musical composition – as expressed in musical notation – avoids discussion of timbre, sound quality, acoustics, human error, etc.⁸ To do so, I will propose taking an adapted phenomenological approach to this essay. I will bracket the musical score, setting aside considerations of performance and letting me focus on the written music itself, which hold interesting theoretical questions.⁹

Another metatheoretical point to note is that musical understanding and meaning is culturally-situated.¹⁰ A perfect authentic cadence, for example, sounds like an ending point to Western ears; to a listener who has not been immersed in the Western art music tradition, however, the musical conclusion might still sound unfinished. Therefore, this discussion of how

⁶ Roman Ingarden, *The Work of Music and the Problem of Its Identity*, ed. Jean Harrell, trans. Adam Czerniawski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 9.

⁷ Scruton, *Aesthetics*, 392.

⁸ Peter Kivy, "Review: *The Work of Music and the Problem of Its Identity*," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 45, no. 4 (1987): 413-414.

⁹ Sebastian Luft, "Husserl's Theory of the Phenomenological Reduction: Between Life-World and Cartesianism," *Research in Phenomenology* 34 (2004): 199-200.

¹⁰ Steven Morrison and Steven Demorest, "Cultural constraints on music perception and cognition," in *Progress in Brain Research*, ed. Joan Chiao (New York: Elsevier, 2009), 67.

to develop conclusive endings to the musical sentences of form must be grounded in the Western canon and does not much bear on compositions from composers in other parts of the world.

Before addressing the works themselves, there is one final meta-analytical point to make. For this project, I will develop a bivalent analysis of the cadence to accompany my discussion of form. In almost all Western music, there are cadences; however, not all cadences are equivalent – in fact, there are two main types. I shall expand upon Caplin’s discussion and call them *subsidiary* and *structural*. *Subsidiary cadences* are moments of rest, of harmonic closure – they appear at the ends of phrases, for example (they can also come in major and minor versions, where major subsidiary cadences appear at the end of important sections of music but not structural conclusions). However, I will define a *structural cadence* as a completion of a formal unit.¹¹ These are the cadences that are found at the end of an A section or at the conclusion of a whole piece, for example.

3 – Analysis: Form and Cadence Across Compositional Approaches

3.1 – Tonal and Post-Tonal Influences in Contemporary Composition

The first piece I shall examine is my *Genevan Overture*. This contemporary piece for orchestra is interesting both in terms of overall form and how it develops its own methods of cadence between the tonal and the non-tonal – it is both reflective of past composers’ solutions to the questions of form and cadence and is also unique.

The overall form of the piece is double binary (ABA’B’). The beginning through measure 72 is, for the most part, devoid of tonal harmonies (thus, it is non-tonal); but 72-107 is dominated by a tonal hymn tune. This pattern repeats, with 108-165 being roughly not tonal, and 166 to the

¹¹ Hurley, “Recomposed Return Arias,” 655.

end being a final, tonal chorale – the chorale at the end even utilizes functional diatonic harmony. The form, though, is a bit more complicated than this overall assessment implies. The hymn tune appears a number of times throughout the piece, even in a post-tonal harmonic landscape; the tune is a unifying strand, helping to form an organic whole. But also, in terms of form, within the A (post-tonal) sections, there are more tonal interjections (21-30; 112-122; and 146-165) that make the piece seem more broken up: aurally, it feels almost like a modified rondo, but in terms of harmony and structure, it is defined by the not-tonal/hymn tune distinction, making it double binary in form.

There are four particularly interesting cadences that I will consider: one is subsidiary and three are structural (Music Examples 1-4).¹² The first is in measures 18-19 (Music Example 1); this is a subsidiary cadence. This section is non-tonal, but the bass movement is particularly interesting. The F-centricity of the bass at the beginning gives way to a B-flat-E-flat progression at the cadence; this cadence looks almost like an authentic cadence in E-flat (in a more tonal setting, the B-flat would probably be the root of a common-chord modulation from F to E-flat), but it is certainly not tonal, indicating a play between the aural markers of the tonal soundscape and the actual post-tonal sonorities.

The second interesting cadence is found at measures 68-71 – this is structural, as it demarcates the non-tonal and tonal sections. The overall texture up to this point had been non-tonal, but this cadence closes the gap between the two idioms. It does so by reducing the number of distinct tones in the chord to a simple diatonic cluster of three pitches in the key of the hymn tune (Music Example 2). This important cadence sets the stage for the tonal hymn tune to appear

¹² NB: All Music Examples are included in the Addendum.

(though, because the B section retains some extended-tonality aspects, the non-tonal interruptions do not seem totally foreign).

The next structural cadence is found at the end of the B section, in bars 104-107 (Music Example 3). The diatonic tune and the primarily-tonal accompaniment set up the expectation of a significant V-I progression. However, the cadence subverts this expectation: even though the cadential chord includes the tonic tone (G), the chord is not a G-major triad; rather, it is a post-tonal collection of tones, which allows this cadence to bridge the tonal/non-tonal divide by subverting audience expectations of cadential resolution, allowing the piece to progress to the A' and B' sections, building up even more tension before the final cadence. This structural cadence functions quite like a deceptive cadence – by setting up tension that does not get immediately resolved, heightening the drama of the subsequent music.

The final structural cadence is actually not at the end of the chorale itself (that subsidiary cadence is a cadential 6/4 progression; because it is not the end of the tonal section of music, it is subsidiary rather than structural), but occurs at the final two bars of the piece (Music Example 4). This final, structural cadence is a IV⁻⁷-I progression in G major, which has two important implications: first, it emphasizes the hymn tune and its liturgical connotations (as the plagal cadence is associated with the sung “Amen”); second, it reiterates the animating tension in the *Genevan Overture*, between tonal and non-tonal, as the seventh in the IV chord echoes the cluster chords of earlier in the piece even as the work resolves in a tonal progression.¹³

Overall, the *Genevan Overture* grapples with the problem of moving between tonal and non-tonal musical languages through, for the most part, separating the two idioms into structural

¹³ Jason Terry, “A History of the Plagal-Amen Cadence,” DMA diss. (University of South Carolina, 2016), 1.

sections and creating cadences that play with tonal implications and transition between the sections – either smoothly or abruptly.

3.2 – Baroque Drama: Handel

Drawing on the recital that this paper accompanies, the historically-earliest piece that I shall examine is Handel’s aria “Revenge Timotheus Cries,” from *Alexander’s Feast*. This piece is like many of Handel’s other arias – it is a *da capo* aria. Thus, it is in ternary form – ABA, where the A section is the beginning through bar 48, the B is 49-78, and the return A is the same as the beginning. In some *da capo* arias, singers choose to make the return section more of an A’ through heavy use of vocal ornaments, but that is not in keeping with the score-only phenomenological approach (and, further, this aria is even less receptive to ornamentation due to its heavy use of vocal melismas, perhaps most dramatically shown in bars 36-42). Thus, the overall form is just ABA. Because the piece is an aria in a larger dramatic work, the narrative forms the main compositional issue with which Handel wrestles: how to construct a piece with differing emotional states. David Ross Hurley notes that the *da capo* forms allow for expression of different “voices” or characteristic states.¹⁴ In this aria, the contrast between the bombastic cries for revenge in the A section and the much more subdued B section – the tempo drops from *Andante Allegro* to *Largo* and the tonality switches from D major to G minor – where Timotheus is describing the deaths of the Greek soldiers provides a much more nuanced pronouncement by the character, lending credence to his argument for Alexander to burn down Persepolis; this is made possible through the structural delineation between the A and B sections.

¹⁴ David Ross Hurley, “Handel’s Recomposed Return Arias and Romantic Attraction in *Alexander Balus*,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 69, no. 3 (2016): 655

With that compositional goal in mind, “Revenge Timotheus Cries” exhibits clearly both subsidiary and structural cadences that help demarcate form. Music Examples 5 and 6 show the A and B sections of the aria, with Roman numeral analyses of the pertinent measures and labels of subsidiary versus structural cadences. For this piece, the major subsidiary cadences occur when the vocal line ends; in both sections, there is a cadential 6/4 progression (bars 44 and 73). The structural cadences occur in bars 48 and 78; the end of the A section is a perfect authentic cadence in D, and the end of the B section is a cadential 6/4 progression in G minor. These cadential formulations are fairly standard for the classical (or, in this case, pre-Classical) paradigm. Further, the emphasis given by a perfect authentic cadence allows Handel end his two contrasting sections with an aural finality, which makes concrete the disparateness of the two sections in the aria’s ternary form.

3.3 – *The British Tradition: Britten*

Even though Benjamin Britten is not typically considered a member of the British Romantic movement, some of his folk song arrangements reside in the same class of composition as other folk-inspired works by Vaughan Williams or Percy Grainger. However, even though Britten endeavors to keep in the style of the folk song, he illustrates his personal musical language – one that is beyond the romantic tonality of earlier composers like Elgar or Holst.¹⁵ A particularly good example of this synthesis is his setting of “The Salley Gardens,” which is included in the recital.

“The Salley Gardens” is a song in strophic form – that is, AA’. The first A is from bars 1-20, and the A’ extends from 21-39; in the last 5 measures of the piece, the piano repeats the

¹⁵ Arnold Whittall, *The Music of Britten and Tippett: Studies in Themes and Techniques* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 104.

opening introductory material in a brief coda. The formal structure is repetitive, allowing Britten to play with both the juxtaposition of two phrases of text (which play upon each other to emphasize the overall thematic message) and the voicing in the piano – Britten enriches the piano accompaniment in the second strophe with octaves in both hands. Then, because Britten's goal is to construct two slightly-different musical sentences, he has to construct cadences that both indicate the conclusion of one idea and emphasize the overall unity of the piece.

Britten is able to address this compositional issue through the use of a structure that includes a piano interlude and a vocal melody over piano accompaniment. The piano interlude-vocal melody structure naturally implies a difference in the values of the piece's cadences: the subsidiary cadences set the stage for the major musical ideas (melody, harmonic progression), which are the components of the form that the subsequent structural cadences close. The major subsidiary cadences are at the closes of the piano interludes (bars 4 and 23) (the cadence at bar 4 is shown in Music Example 7). However, due to the sparseness of the piano accompaniment, the way the cadence is constructed is not immediately clear. In the first two bars, Britten plays with inversion and unresolved chromaticism to complicate the I chord implied in the right hand of the piano. Then, when the piano interlude comes to a close in bars 3-4, the analysis again becomes murky: the continued D-flat-F dyad in the right hand is a pedal motive, under which the left hand seems to outline more conventional chords: it implies a ii with the E-flat-F-G-flat motion, and then a V-I-V-I authentic cadence. But, because the A-flat-D-flat movement occurs underneath a D-flat-F dyad, the more conventional Roman numeral analysis would imply that Britten is cadencing in a ii-I progression, with the I expanded through inversion. The instability of this cadence is likely due to the subsidiary cadence's function as an intermediary between one small part of the overall strophe and the rest. The structural cadences, on the other hand, are

much clearer – which is in keeping with the structural cadence’s function of indicating the end of major formal units. In bar 20 (and bar 38), the vocal line descends into an expanded perfect authentic cadence where the V^7 chord includes a D-flat that is an unresolved pedal tone in the chord, in the progression ii^7-V^7-I (cadence at bar 20 shown in Music Example 8). This makes sense as Britten’s solution to his compositional problem – the continued D-flat pedal tone maintains the continuity of the piece even at the end of a formal section, fitting with the repetitive nature of the strophic song.

However, Britten also composed in his own specific post-tonal idiom, as illustrated in works like his opera *The Rape of Lucretia*. In this major work, the aria “Within this frail crucible of light” in the second act is an example of this less-tonal way of cadencing. The aria has three sections, making up an ABA form (A is from Rehearsal A to C; B is from Rh C to D; A’ is from Rh D-E).¹⁶ Like Handel, Britten explores different moods in the A and B sections: the A and A’ sections are Tarquinius’s cogitation on Lucretia’s beauty and his desire, whereas the B section is defined by Tarquinius’s attempts to awaken Lucretia and her opposition to his advances. Similarly, Britten’s music in the A sections is an expanded E-major (E major with minor 7ths and other added tones that would not be part of a diatonic E-major with with classically functional harmonies), whereas the B section is much more C-flavored. There are three structural cadences, one at the end of each section of the aria; the cadences at the ends of the A and A’ sections are related, whereas the cadence at the end of the B section is different. Also of note is the fact that the first A and B cadences function both as section endings and transitions into the sections that follow. Music Examples 9 and 10 show the structural cadences at the ends of the A and B sections. The first structural cadence, in the two measures before rehearsal letter C, show

¹⁶ Benjamin Britten, “Within This Frail Crucible of Light,” in *Benjamin Britten Opera Arias: Baritone* (New York: Boosey and Hawkes), 16-19.

how Britten ends the first section: rather than having a functional progression, the harmonic motion descends into stasis – the strings and timpani are emphasizing a single E-major harmony, whereas the bassoon and voice have melodic motion that clashes with that chord (but do not imply a harmonic progression). Then, the melody accomplishes the transition to the B section through addition of a D, leading to an E⁷ chord that, to Western ears, signals impending tonal resolution; Britten plays with this expectation by abruptly switching to C major (with a healthy dose of chromaticism).

The cadence of the B section is drawn out over the 4 measures preceding rehearsal letter D. The held sonority comes from an unstable C-related sonority, with added tones of F and A in the outer voices of the accompaniment, leading to a pitch cluster that does not give the immediate cadential resolution common to tonal music; instead, Britten chooses to use the bass to proceed from that F in a stepwise fashion down to an E which is held, a point of stasis – at rehearsal letter D, that E is used for another abrupt transition back to E major through the introduction of the tonal triad (with an added C-sharp, or 6th scale degree). Thus, again, the moment of stasis marking the structural cadence also serves as a point of elision with the subsequent material, causing these first two important cadences to also be transitions, letting Britten generate an organic composition with transitions that do not feel extremely abrupt. Finally, the third structural cadence, in the two measures before rehearsal letter E, is similar to the first structural cadence – the accompaniment (and then the voice) repeat the same chord over and over until the end of the vocal line (though in the full score the music again shifts dramatically under the held E, the aria ends with Tarquinius's solo note). Thus, Britten is able to clearly mark sections of the aria, but maintain a sense of organicism that makes sense – the song is an exchange between Tarquinius and Lucretia, so Britten's compositional question is different

from Handel's: the sections are intended to be aurally distinct, but, unlike the Baroque aria that expresses one or two emotive states, Britten's aria is meant to progress the plot.¹⁷

Post-Tonal Chorale Constructions: Stravinsky

The *Genevan Overture* that this essay is accompanying prominently features a chorale surrounded by post-tonal music; therefore, it makes sense to include an analysis of other post-tonal chorales. Stravinsky extensively explored the chorale outside of its original tonal surroundings; in particular, he incorporated the idea in his *The Soldier's Tale* and *Requiem Canticles*.

A chorale is a relatively straightforward form: it is a phrase or number of phrases exploring one musical or thematic idea.¹⁸ Though chorales are typically thought of in the tonal tradition – and, particularly, in the Baroque liturgical music of JS Bach – they have expanded in meaning as music theory has developed away from the tonic, pre-dominant, dominant model. Thus, the chorale can now be understood as a musical piece (or section of a piece) that utilizes independently-moving lines that align to generate harmonies. Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale* includes two chorales – the “Little Choral” and the “Great Choral.” I will use the “Little Choral” to explicate how the chorale functions in a non-tonal context, then progress to a more in-depth analysis of the “Great Choral.”

The “Little Choral” (Music Example 11) shows particularly well the subsidiary/structural cadential relationship outside of traditional tonality in the chorale form. In the first 4 bars of the “Little Choral,” Stravinsky dramatically introduces an initial sonority, then explores a post-tonal

¹⁷ Michael Robinson, “Review: Baroque Opera As Drama,” *Early Music* 31 no. 4 (2003): 609.

¹⁸ Hermann Hild, Johannes Feulner and Wolfram Menzel, “HARMONET: A Neural Net for Harmonizing Chorales in the Style of J.S. Bach,” *Neural Information Processing Systems* 4 (1991): 268.

aural landscape using the moving lines in the clarinet, bassoon, cornet and trombone, particularly. In measure 5, the movement comes to a halt as the ensemble arrives at a chord; however, this is only a momentary pause, and the contrapuntal activity continues for the last two bars before a final arrival chord (bar 8). This brief analysis is useful because it shows that a through-composed chorale like this will only have a formal, structural cadence at interruptions of sound; even though there are moments of arrival or pause prior to these, those cadences are only subsidiary. Stravinsky references the tonal world through his counterpoint, and through his constructions of the structural cadences as much more closely-related to triads (and, like Bach, through emphasizing the cadences by extension of note values).¹⁹

This understanding of the subsidiary/structural will animate my analysis of the “Great Choral” of *The Soldier’s Tale*. In this movement, there are two subsidiary cadences: one in the bar before rehearsal number 1, and another two measures after rehearsal number 3. Though these moments of arrival are interesting, more important for our purposes are the cadences that dictate the form of the movement: the major arrival chords prior to the musical breaks and vocal interjections. Thus, the piece has the following form: ABCDEF, with the first section ending at rehearsal 1, the second at rehearsal 2, the third ending before rehearsal 3, the fourth after rehearsal 4, the fifth ending before the penultimate held rest, and the last section taking up the remainder of the piece. Music Example 12 shows a reduction of these sonorities, as well as their pitch set classes. What is particularly interesting is the way that Stravinsky both plays with these cadence chord constructions and how he moves between them. Owen writes, “[the Great Choral] is a caricature of a Bach chorale. It is in four parts... has the same quasi-polyphonic textures, and

¹⁹ Harold Owen, *Modal and Tonal Counterpoint: From Josquin to Stravinsky* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1992), 345.

has a hymn-like melody in the top voice, which is divided into several short phrases.”²⁰ Thus, Stravinsky is playing with tonal references, but thwarting them: the compositional question he is addressing is how to utilize tonal signposts that anchor the listener in a post-tonal musical landscape.

Interestingly, the structural cadences have a pattern: the structural chords imply (or are) tonal, triadic sonorities. Music Example 12 shows a reduction of these sonorities. Looking at the bass, the tones are G-E-C-D-A-D-D, which seems to indicate a tonal progression. Looking at the rest of the tones in the chords, Stravinsky seems to be outlining (in G) a I-vi-IV-V-V/V-V-I progression; the only issue with this is that the VI chord is actually major – an example of Stravinsky’s play with tonal expectations. The other not-quite-tonal component of the structural sonorities in the “Great Choral” is the construction of the final chord as in second inversion – a less-stable sonority that does not quite give the tonal security that landing on a root-position I would cause. Thus, the whole chorale makes sense: Stravinsky is intentionally playing with a chord progression that could even be found in a Bach chorale, just obscuring it with slightly-modified cadence chords and intervening non-tonal counterpoint (as well as spoken text interjections). Owen offers an alternative analysis, with Stravinsky writing the piece in G major with temporary modulations to the key areas of V, ii, IV and II.²¹ Regardless of this difference in harmonic analyses, the two interpretations concur in how Stravinsky constructs cadences in his pandiatonic piece – through subverting tonal arrival points ²² Stravinsky is deriving meaning from his non-tonal composition by placing it in context with its tonal predecessors, being both

²⁰ Owen, *Counterpoint*, 345.

²¹ Owen, *Counterpoint*, 345-346.

²² Owen, *Counterpoint*, 346.

just close enough to a tonal chorale to raise the listener's expectations, yet just far enough away to frustrate them.

Stravinsky pushes the idea of the chorale further in the last movement – “Postlude” – of his *Requiem Canticles*. Straus describes this movement, writing:

The movement consists of two distinct and separately evolving musical strands. The first involves three twelve-chord chorales... The second involves five widely spaced chords presented before, between, and after the chorales. These chords... have been referred to as “chords of death.” The two strands are separated by silences...”²³

Therefore, the “Postlude” includes all three elements of the earlier “Grand Choral” contrapuntal movement, moments of major arrival and moments of silence, set up roughly in the same sequence as in the “Grand Choral.” However, this piece pushes beyond *The Soldier's Tale* through almost completely forsaking triadic, functional harmony. Stravinsky's compositional problem to solve is how to emphasize the aesthetic value latent in the *Requiem* text through his music: he does that through his cadences, which include non-tonal chords, the motif of bells tolling and silence.²⁴

Like the “Grand Choral,” the “Postlude” has a starting sonority and structural cadences at the widely-spaced block chords between silences and the chorale interjections (the break at measure 291 is a subsidiary cadence because it is not accompanied by an arrival chord). Music Example 13 shows Straus's analysis of the “chords of death.” Most interesting, from a large-scale, formal standpoint, is the directionality of this progression. Even though there is no overt tonal progression in the chords, there is an interesting trend. In the first three chords of the

²³ Joseph Straus, *Stravinsky's Late Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 243.

²⁴ Robert Craft, *Stravinsky: Chronicle of a Friendship 1948-1971* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1994), 415.

progression, all 12 of the notes in the chromatic scale are filled in – the whole 12-tone set is not realized until the third chord, at which point all of the 12 chromatic notes have sounded at least once. Then, the trend reverses: there are fewer tones in the last few chords, leading to an almost-tonal chord, which Straus argues is a triad with a segment of the circle of fifths, or a triad-plus one note (note the similarity to the triad-plus one note approach used in the “Grand Choral.”²⁵ Therefore, Straus’s conclusion that the chords are not a movement towards diatonicism is correct; of course diatonic triads may be found in the whole chromatic scale set.²⁶ Rather, the motion is from more tones to fewer tones in the cadence chords.

Drawing Connections and Conclusions

Even though some connections between the pieces analyzed in this essay have already been drawn, I want to take a moment to crystallize the ways these pieces are similar and different. First, differences are easy to identify: the tonal Handel aria and almost-tonal Britten song are quite different from the expanded-tonality Britten aria or Stravinsky chorale, which are, in turn, unlike the atonal “Postlude;” the *Genevan Overture* is different from all of these other works because its idiom is not entirely tonal, expandedly-tonal or post-tonal – instead, it fuses these dialects together.

But, more interestingly, how are these pieces similar? First, these pieces all have aspects of repetitive form. The ABA arias and strophic song certainly are repetitive, and the *Overture* is, in the large, a repetitive ABA’B’ form, too. But what of the chorales? Because they are through-composed, the material is not repeated; because of the chorale’s identity as a self-contained kind of piece, it does not lend itself to structural repetition. However, the Stravinsky “Grand Choral”

²⁵ Straus, *Stravinsky’s Late Music*, 248.

²⁶ Straus, *Stravinsky’s Late Music* 248-249.

and “Postlude” are, in their ways, repetitive: the emergence of striking structural cadences and moments of silence are repeated in each of these movements, developing a sonic unit that *is* repeated. The repeated elements provide a way for the piece to gel together and be unified. Additionally, there are similarities in how the pieces cadence, showing how the compositional lineage stretches over hundreds of years and across styles.

The *Genevan Overture* emulates different cadences that are found in the earlier composers. The *Overture* includes the cadential 6/4 progression found in the Handel, but even in the context of the chorale harmonization at the end of the B’ section, there are still held, non-structural tones in the strings that are pedal tones, like in “The Salley Gardens.” Then, like in “Within this frail crucible of light” and *The Soldier’s Tale*, the *Overture* includes cadential chords that play with tonal expectations, either in terms of the harmonic progression or the intervallic content of the chords. Like the *Requiem Canticles*, the *Overture* utilizes the technique of reducing chord tones as a way of cadencing.

However, the *Overture* includes all of these methods of cadencing, rather than just one or another. The piece, then, seems to be an amalgam of cadential techniques both old and new – which fits with the central compositional issue I was trying to address: how a composer can juxtapose the tonal and the non-tonal and move between them. Therefore, the *Genevan Overture* seems to fit between Britten and Stravinsky, in that it does not forsake tonality completely, but still moves beyond triadic harmonies and cadences at points. My solution to this compositional problem, even though it is novel in some ways, is just an expression of centuries of developments of ways to cadence and depict form in music, regardless of idiom.

Addendum: Music Examples

Music Example 1. First chord and subsidiary cadential figure, measures 1 and 18-19 from the *Genevan Overture*, piano reduction.

Music Example 1 shows the first chord and subsidiary cadential figure from measures 1 and 18-19 of the *Genevan Overture*, piano reduction. The score is in 4/4 time and features a piano reduction. Measure 1 shows a first chord. Measures 18 and 19 show a subsidiary cadential figure. The notation includes a treble and bass staff with a grand staff bracket. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The tempo/mood is marked 'Piano'.

Music Example 2. The chord outlined in measures 31-32 and the structural cadential progression in measures 68-71 from the *Genevan Overture*, piano reduction.

Music Example 2 shows the chord outlined in measures 31-32 and the structural cadential progression in measures 68-71 from the *Genevan Overture*, piano reduction. The score is in 4/4 time and features a piano reduction. Measures 31-32 show a chord. Measures 68 and 69 show a structural cadential progression. Measure 70-71 shows a structural cadential progression. The notation includes a treble and bass staff with a grand staff bracket. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The tempo/mood is marked 'Pno.'.

Music Example 3. Hymn tune and cadential figure at the end of the first B section, *Genevan Overture*, piano reduction.

Music Example 3 shows the hymn tune and cadential figure at the end of the first B section from the *Genevan Overture*, piano reduction. The score is in 4/4 time and features a piano reduction. Measures 104, 105, and 106 show the hymn tune and cadential figure. The notation includes a treble and bass staff with a grand staff bracket. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The tempo/mood is marked 'Pno.'.

Music Example 4. Final subsidiary cadence and structural cadence, measures 182-185, *Genevan Overture*, piano reduction.

182 183 184 185

Pno.

G:V⁴⁻⁶ 5/3 I IV⁷ I

Subsidiary cadence Structural Cadence

Music Example 5. Roman numeral analysis of subsidiary and structural cadences of A section of “Revenge, Timotheus Cries,” measures 42-48, piano-vocal reduction.

42 Subsidiary Cadence

Baritone and the spark - les that flash in their eyes!

Piano

5 D: V₂ I⁶ IV V⁴⁻⁶ 5/3 I

Bar.

Pno. (Fine)

D: vii⁷ IV⁶ V⁷ I IV I⁴ IV V I

Structural cadence

Music Example 6. Roman numeral analysis of subsidiary (a) and structural cadences (b) of B section of “Revenge, Timotheus Cries,” measures 72-78, piano-vocal reduction.


72 **A. Subsidiary Cadence**

Bar. 

Pno. 
gV⁴ 3 i


77 **B. Structural Cadence**


Bar. 

Pno. 
gII⁴ V⁷/iv iv V iv V⁴ 3 i
Da capo al fine

Music Example 7. The major subsidiary cadence (in the first piano interlude) of Britten’s “The Salley Gardens,” with implied Roman numeral analysis, measures 1-4, full score.

1 **Flowingly** **Major Subsidiary Cadence**

Voice 

Piano 
Db: I ii (imp) I⁴ I 4 I
(V I V I imp)

Music Example 8. The structural cadence at the end of the end of the first strophe of “The Salley Gardens,” with implied Roman numeral analysis, measures 18-20, full score.

This musical score excerpt shows measures 18-20 of "The Salley Gardens." The voice part (treble clef) has the lyrics: "fool - ish with her did not a - gree." The piano accompaniment (piano, Pno., grand staff) features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a more active bass line in the left hand. A box labeled "Structural Cadence" encompasses measures 19 and 20. Below the piano part, Roman numeral analysis is provided: D♭: I, 6/4, I, ii♭6, V⁷, and I.

Music Example 9. Structural cadence at the end of the first A section in “Within this frail crucible of light” (*The Rape of Lucretia*), 2 measures before rehearsal letter C, piano-vocal reduction.

This musical score excerpt shows measures 18-20 of "Within this frail crucible of light." The voice part (bass clef, labeled B.) has the lyrics: "If not en-joyed, it is just waste." The piano accompaniment (piano, Pno., grand staff) features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a more active bass line in the left hand. A box labeled "A Structural Cadence" encompasses measures 19 and 20. Rehearsal letter C is marked at the beginning of measure 21. The score is a piano-vocal reduction.

Music Example 10. Structural cadence at the end of the B section in “Within this frail crucible of light,” cadence is one measure before rehearsal letter D, full score.

14

B. wake up, Lu - cre - - - tial!

Pno.

Wake!

B Structural Cadence

D

D

As

F to E descent

Music Example 11. “Little Choral” movement from Stravinsky’s *The Soldier’s Tale*, full score. Subsidiary cadence is measure 5; structural cadence is measure 8.

PETIT CHORAL / KLEINER CHORAL / THE LITTLE CHORAL

Embrassement / Umarmung / the embrace

Largo (♩ = 54)

Clarinetto in La

Fagotto

Cornet à pistons in La

Trombone

Violino

Contrabasso

niente

niente

Enchaînez

Music Example 12. Piano reduction of initial chord and structural cadences of “Great Choral” of *The Soldier’s Tale* with pitch set classes defined. Voice leading from Owen, *Modal and Tonal Counterpoint*.²⁷

Piano reduction of selected chords, "Great Choral"

Piano

[7E] [48] [04] [269] [19] [26] [27E]

Music Example 13. Straus’s analysis of the “chords of death” in Stravinsky’s “Postlude” (*Requiem Canticles*).²⁸

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Stravinsky’s late music

Example 5.32 Moving toward an F-centered diatonicism
in the *Requiem Canticles*, Postlude

(a) harmonic summary of the five “Chords of Death”

(a) meas. 289 294 299 304 305

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

[G, G#, A#, B, C, D#] [G#, A, A#, C, E]

[C, D, D#, F, F#, G#, A] [A, A#, B, C, C#, D#, E, F] [B#, C, D#, F]

²⁷ Owen, *Counterpoint*, 339-340.

²⁸ Straus, *Stravinsky’s Late Music*, 244.

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