



**Cambridge Assessment  
International Education**

Teacher's Guide to set works

**Cambridge International  
AS & A Level  
Music 9483**

Use this syllabus for exams in 2025 and 2026.

Exams are available in the June and November series.



Version 2

For the purposes of screen readers, any mention in this document of Cambridge IGCSE refers to Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education.

**Cambridge  
Pathway** 

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## Set Works (2025–2026)

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### Section A

Johann Sebastian Bach

*Orchestral Suite No. 1*, BWV 1066

Movements: 1 Overture, 2

Courante, 3 Gavotte I & II, 5 Menuet I & II.

Antonio Vivaldi

*Concerto in G minor* Op. 3 No. 2 RV 578 for two violins, cello, strings and continuo

### Section B

#### Journeys

Antonín Dvořák

Symphony no. 9 in E minor op. 95 '*New World*'

Two Songs:

Florence Price

*Travel's End*

Margaret Bonds

*Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*

Michael Nyman

MGV (*Musique à Grande Vitesse*)

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## Introductory comments

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These Notes for Guidance will suggest a model of exploration and investigation of the Set Works specified in the 9483 syllabus (2025–2026). They will offer teachers and candidates outlines and signposts, together with some more focused detail relating the music to the key concepts outlined on page 3 of the syllabus. The Notes will leave opportunities for teachers and candidates to make further investigations into sections of the work that require additional study.

The syllabus should be consulted as the comprehensive authority on what candidates should know and learn. These Notes for Guidance must be used together with the syllabus.

### What are Set Works for?

Throughout history, scientists, writers, artists, politicians – to name only a few professions – have learned through studying and building on the work of successful practitioners who have gone before them. A study of the work of composers shows this is also true of musicians.

By studying these Set Works, candidates will learn to describe the music they hear and develop skills to know what is important in the overall scope of the piece and how to identify and understand the role of the musical elements in closer focus.

By **repeated listening** to each of the works, real familiarity with the Set Works will be established. Knowledge of the sound of the music is essential in order to engage in the analytical process. Candidates will learn how to listen constructively and, as a consequence, will start to think and talk about the music with peers and teachers in increasingly knowledgeable ways.

In Section A, just five of the 35 marks available relate specifically to the Set Works. However, by studying the works carefully, candidates will learn about a range of devices and features that are typical of the works of this period and be able to apply their knowledge and understanding directly in the context of an 'unseen' piece/ recordings, which is the focus of the remaining questions.

### Relevance to other components

Study of the Set Works will establish connections with candidates as performers – score reading skills and interpretation of the musical information will resonate with the way candidates approach music they intend to perform.

Understanding how the music of the Set Works is constructed will include identification of a range of compositional techniques and candidates will find this is a substantial aid when they are working with their own compositional ideas.

### Recordings and scores

There are benefits to listening to a work for the first time without a score. It allows the listener to consider, 'What am I hearing?' and 'How can I make sense of this music through my ears?' Subsequent access to the music score enables the candidate to navigate the composition visually and gain insights into its construction.

Candidates should learn to identify sections of the music, often by tempo markings, and describe events simply and clearly enough for examiners to know which part of the music is being referred to in answer to examination questions. In this way, the order of events within the broad outline of each piece should become well-known.

Candidates are allowed to take their own recordings of the Section B Set Works into the examination, but scores for these works are not allowed. In their answers to examination questions, candidates should not make references to timings from their own specific recordings. The range and variety of recordings mean that such references are of little value to examiners. They also do not provide evidence of independent, in-depth familiarity with the music.

Teachers should aim to expose candidates to different performances and interpretations of music, and to discuss these; this will equip candidates to answer questions on different versions of previously unheard performances in Section A. It will also support the wider discussion of music that may be relevant to the broader questions of Section C.

## Specimen paper and past papers

Past and specimen papers are available from Cambridge and will enable teachers and candidates to anticipate the style of questions and practise the working of answers giving them confidence in what to expect in the exam setting.

Published mark schemes include the generic band descriptors; these are particularly useful for indicating the range of evidence examiners are looking for in each different section of the Listening Paper.

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## Section A: Compositional Techniques and Performance Practice

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Johann Sebastian Bach	Orchestral Suite No. 1, BWV 1066 Movements 1 Overture, 2 Courante, 3 Gavotte I & II, 5 Menuet I & II.
Antonio Vivaldi	Concerto in G minor Op. 3 No. 2 RV 578 for two violins, cello, strings and continuo

Five marks are directly related to a specific Set Work in Question 1, but it is the close familiarity with typical features of the music that are highly relevant in their application to unprepared listening in Question 2. Study of the Set Works will also support the development of music literacy.

Question 3 requires candidates to demonstrate their skills of aural perception in the comparison of performances. Listening to a variety of performance interpretations and period-related practice in these Set Works is vital, giving opportunity to apply what has been learned to an unprepared context.

Both Set Works are taken from the repertoire of the Baroque period and teachers should ensure candidates gain a working understanding of relevant terms such as continuo, concertino, ripieno etc. during their studies.

### The principle of contrast

Large-scale design containing intricate small details point to contrast as an important idea. These structural details can also be found in Baroque architecture and art, for example.

In Baroque music, strong contrasts of tempo can be seen between movements or sections within a movement. Abrupt contrasts of forte and piano are often a characteristic feature of dynamic expression. The sound of a soloist or group of soloists provides contrast with the sound of the larger ensemble.

In the Baroque era we additionally notice a texture dominated by two parts in particular: a florid treble contrasting with a secure, steady bass part. They are both melodic in character with important motivic ideas likely to be evident in either part. Equal voice polyphony formed the basis of the dominant texture of Renaissance music [preceding the Baroque period].

### The continuo

A group of players are involved in the continuo part but only a bass line is given in the score. Learners should be able to recognise the range of instruments that might be used to play the bass line, including cello and/or double bass or bass lute, for example. Instruments capable of interpreting the harmonic implications of the bass line might include harpsichord or organ, or guitar/lute, depending on what is best suited to the character of the music. Keyboard players, for example, would be expected to fill in appropriate harmonies, sometimes indicated by the 'figured bass'. They had freedom to 'extemporise' in terms of constructing a harmonic texture.

Learners are not expected to have a detailed understanding of figured bass.

## Ornamentation

Ornamentation is a characteristic feature heard frequently in the performance of Baroque music. Terms for basic forms of ornamentation are given in the syllabus (trill, mordent, turn etc.) and candidates should be able to recognise these aurally when listening to recordings. The Baroque convention of starting a trill on the upper note should be known as well as the use of appoggiatura, often found as a decoration at cadence points or an ornamentation of the melody line.

Performance directions on the score may indicate where the composer requires a trill, for example, but performances may include ornamentation not indicated on the score. More decorative ornamentation is often reserved if a section is repeated. Where these elaborations combine or extend the basic forms, candidates should be able to describe what they hear in a recognisable and convincing way.

## Tonality and the Use of Harmonic Language

It is important that some rudimentary harmonic principles are learned for answering questions on the Listening Paper. A chordal analysis of the Gavotte and Menuet, for example, will be useful exercise. Learners will be able to see the use of root position and first inversion chords and how to achieve a modulation from one key to another. They will learn to recognise the way in which cadential progressions lead the music to moments of repose or conclusion.

Understanding of harmonic practice will benefit those choosing to compose in a tonal idiom in other components of the course.

## Johann Sebastian Bach

J S Bach was the most successful of a large family working as musicians in central Germany across almost two hundred years. He learned his craft by copying manuscripts and making arrangements of the music of Corelli, Vivaldi and others. Indeed, Bach made keyboard arrangements of a number of Vivaldi's Opus 3 concertos.

From 1708 Bach worked as organist to the court of Weimar, and organ music dominated his composing output. In 1717, he accepted a post of musical director at the court in Cöthen and in 1723 moved once more, this time to Leipzig as Cantor of the Lutheran Church of St Thomas and then director of the Collegium Musicum there.

Bach is famous for his genius in contrapuntal writing and fugal forms. This was a time when the major- minor scale system of tonality was becoming firmly established in musical practice and his harmonic writing is frequently regarded as exemplary for the training of music students.

Johann Sebastian Bach

Orchestral Suite No 1, BWV 1066,  
Movements 1 Overture, 2 Courante, 3 Gavotte I & II,  
5 Menuet I & II.

**Important note:** Candidates are **not** required to study the complete work of seven movements, only the four movements specified above/in the syllabus.

Dating this work is difficult as there is no 'autograph' score for any of the orchestral suites. Research suggests that much of the music belongs to the 'Leipzig' period. This corresponds with the evidence of confident contrapuntal writing, heard in an orchestral context in Suites 2 and 3. The earliest source for this work is a set of copied parts (1723–4) dating from early in Bach's 'Leipzig' period but it is possible that the work originates a little earlier towards the end of his time in Cöthen.



## The Suite – an important Baroque form

The 'dances' in the Baroque suite are 'stylised' – meaning that they are instrumental forms, not intended for dancing. The suite had its origins in the popular music of social dancing in the 16th century with its strong rhythms and clear phrasing. The dances in the Baroque suite often shared the same key, with contrast achieved in tempo, metre or character. In keyboard and orchestral music, Baroque dance movements associated with certain countries can be found.

In this Set Work, for example, the Menuet was a dance that originated in France in the mid-17th century.

## Movement I Overture

### Overview:

Bach's four Orchestral Suites are sometimes known as 'Overture' taking their name from the substantial opening movement of the form. The word means 'opening' or 'introduction' to a longer piece. The first movement in this work is in a style often referred to as a French Overture. It was developed by Lully and others on the model found in Venetian opera in the mid-17th century.

Some general features of the French overture in Bach's day are:

- First section – slow with 'stately' dotted rhythms in a duple or quadruple metre; fast scalar runs
- Second section – lively, often using fugal texture

Bach's Overture is somewhat reduced in its orchestration (2 oboes, bassoon, strings and continuo) compared to others in the set of four but it is his varied use of the woodwind that provides interest.

### A structural overview may be summarised as:

#### Bars 1–16

- A** Ceremonial, elegant, slow opening, repeated.  
C major – G major (tonic – dominant).

#### Bars 16–99

- B** Faster section characterised by flowing imitative textures.  
Modulation to a range of related keys.  
[The change of speed is indicated with a duple time signature.]

#### Bars 99–114

- A<sup>2</sup>** Return of opening tempo and altered material from A.

Although the score contains an indication of repeat of the section from b.16, in practice, some interpretations may omit this.

### Further detail:

#### First section (A) (b.1–16/17)

This stately opening is full of harmonic dissonance and resolution, with suspensions, passing notes moving against sustained notes in the bass part and various types of decoration adding to the harmonic intricacy of the texture.

This opening section provides many additional features that will enable candidates to apply their understanding of 'rudiments' in this musical context:

- A 'mobile' bass line constructed of chords mainly in root position and 1st inversion with passing notes to generate a flowing line
- The use of running semiquavers (sixteenth notes) in the outer voices of the texture
- Ascending and descending scalar passages (e.g., bar 5, ascending G major scale)
- The use of repeated rhythmic figures (with slight variation) to provide unity across the texture of this section:



- The characteristic **dotted notes**, (often performed 'double-dotted') adding to the stately, ceremonial elegance
- Cadences of various types that can be recognised aurally and identified in the score
- Instrumentation and texture: identifying doubling, independent parts, contrary motion between parts, etc.
- Identify and describe decoration / ornamentation in different performances.

### Second section (B) (b.16b–99)

There is a significant change of texture now. As each instrumental 'voice' enters there is imitation of the initial melodic idea, called the **subject**, creating a contrapuntal texture.

The structure of this section is **fugal**. Whilst textbooks provide typical formulations for **fugue** writing, in practice Bach is highly individual in the way he works with his ideas in this context.

The following description refers to the fugal concepts of **subject**, **countersubject**, **free-flowing counterpoint**, **exposition** and **episode**.

The concept of fugue is easier to hear than it is to describe. The music of this section is dominated by the recurring first 13 notes of the subject that learners will soon recognise aurally as they become familiar with the music.

A significant feature of Bach's fugal writing here, is the way he generates contrast by alternating the role of the woodwind instruments. Sometimes they double the string parts and sometimes Bach uses them as an **independent trio** of double woodwind timbres, two oboes and bassoon. (e.g., bars 27–32<sup>3</sup>).

### Bars 16b–27<sup>1</sup> Exposition

The fugal **exposition** is the passage where the subject and its variants are each presented in turn. They overlap, with each subsequent entry beginning before the subject statement is complete, resulting in a 'dovetailing' of materials in the texture.



- The main theme or **subject** is presented in G, (dominant relationship to the tonic key of C) in the treble 'voices'.
- The next 'voice' to enter, a fourth lower on C (Violin II, bar 17<sup>3</sup>) is altered slightly to keep the music in the tonic key and is sometimes known as a **tonal answer**.
- The third 'voice' in the viola part enters on G in bar 19<sup>1</sup>.
- The fourth 'voice' enters on bassoon and continuo on C in bar 20<sup>3</sup>

The decoration at the cadence varies with subsequent statements of the subject and answer. The rhythmic patterns and shapes can be seen later in the music, e.g., b.48.

The semiquaver music in the exposition is thought of as **free-flowing counterpoint**.

It is described as **countersubject** material if the identity of this music becomes recognisable and 'thematic' in its own right. A sense of unity is achieved by using repeating motifs. (Can learners identify these patterns in the music?)

Bars 22–25<sup>1</sup> is an **episode** where the subject is not heard in its entirety but is dominated by **sequential treatment** of some of the semi-quaver patterns or motifs. A partial return to the subject in the treble voices at bar 25 leads this section to a close.

### Bar 27<sup>1</sup>–32<sup>3</sup>

The independent trio of double reed instruments starts this section, with a move away from the tonic-dominant statements of the exposition. There are no strings.

Now in the relative minor – A minor, the shortened subject material is presented in tonic and dominant versions the new key.

Important new **countersubject** material with sustained notes and off-beat syncopations add to the complexity of the texture from bar 27<sup>4</sup>.



This material is heard frequently from this point onwards.

In the previous section, the answer response to the subject was consistently maintained, but here the entries sometimes occur more rapidly. When the answer enters before the subject is completed this is referred to as **stretto**. (See bar 32, for example). This creates an increasing intensity as the music works its way through closely related keys.

Can learners identify cadences and scale patterns to establish the keys at, for example, b.36; b.44<sup>4</sup>–45<sup>1</sup>; b.54?

### Bar 32<sup>1</sup>–54<sup>3</sup>

The strings return with the subject in A minor, overlapping with the end of the independent woodwind music. Throughout this section, the subject entries can be traced and noticeably, the oboes do not always double the string parts. Their independence can be seen at b.41<sup>3</sup> taking the music to E minor from bar 42. Sequential treatment of a pattern in imitation between the bass and oboe parts creates a more open texture.

Sometime just the opening 3 quavers of the subject are sufficient to remind us of it, e.g., b. 43, violin I.

An **episode** of sequentially-treated material precedes the perfect cadence in G in b.54.

Learners should listen to and analyse how the subject material (including modulations) and use of the independent 'trio' feature in the music up to bar 99<sup>1</sup>.

An important moment is the cadence in bars 87<sup>4</sup>–88 signalling a clear arrival at the tonic key of C. The subject is played in each of the trio voices, doubled at bar 91 in the continuo part. A further passage of sequential treatment and re-stated subject themes comes to rest on a bass pedal as the final section begins.

### Third section (A<sup>2</sup>) (bars 99–114)

The long-held tonic **pedal** note of C in the bass part at bar 99 is transformed in its function into a dominant pedal in F, by the introduction of a B-flat in the upper voices.

The return to a stately common time restores the ceremonial mood of the opening of the overture. The rhythmic features, scalic patterns, dissonant and resolving harmonies are all present – but this is not a simple repeat. How does the music differ?

## The Dances

### Movement 2 Courante

The Courante became established as a standard movement of the suite from the mid-17th century. The Italian version was in a quick triple time with a light, running texture.

The Courante here is of the 'refined' French type. The tempo is a moderate one in 3/2 time with music that has shifts in emphasis between 3/2 and 6/4. This is a good opportunity for learners to refresh their understanding of simple and compound metres.

In 3/2 the stresses are heard as 1 2 3 4 5 6

In 6/4 the stresses are heard as 1 2 3 4 5 6

Bach variously

- changes the metrical emphasis from bar to bar
- changes the metrical emphasis between parts, within a single bar
- uses syncopation to add further rhythmic interest

The texture is in four-parts throughout, with the principal melodic material contained in the outer parts. Whilst the inner voices fill in the harmonies, they also have a melodic character in places where quaver movement ensures smooth 'voice-leading', much in the same way the inner parts function in a Bach chorale harmonisation.

The upper voice is a unison played by oboes I and 2 plus violin I.

The 'inner parts' are played by violin II and viola, with bassoon and continuo instruments taking the bass part.

The overall structure is an 'asymmetrical' binary form – the first section has 8 bars and a second section, 20 bars. When performed, 'A' is usually repeated but 'B' is frequently not.

Learners will find it useful to identify changes in metrical emphasis within a section of this dance. In analysing the use of harmony, it is again an opportunity to observe the way Bach uses a mixture of root and first position chords together with quaver 'passing notes' to create the 'melodic' or mobile bass line so characteristic of baroque writing.

Momentary modulations to closely related keys might also be identified.

Both the gavotte and minuet movements are designated 'alternativement', indicating that the first dance is returned to, forming a 'da capo' structure A B A. By listening to a range of recorded performances, learners will notice that some performing decisions may differ in terms of ornamentation, repeats within each section, and also instrumentation.

### Movement 3 Gavotte I and II

Continuing in the key of C major, contrast is achieved through a change of metre, instrumentation and structure.

The main characteristic of this dance is heard in phrase lengths which start and end halfway through the bar of four crotchets (quarter notes) with an overall sense of a duple metre. Each Gavotte is presented in a binary structure with the second part longer than the first.

#### Gavotte I *alternativement*

##### Bars 0<sup>3</sup>–8<sup>2</sup>

Instruments are grouped as the Courante but the melodic interest is carried by the oboes and first violin part with mainly crotchet/quarter-note movement accompanying.

Some performances reduce the instrumentation to strings only for the repeat, to add interest.

This section concludes with a perfect cadence in the dominant key of G.

##### Bars 8<sup>3</sup>–24<sup>2</sup>

From G, the music passes through D minor, A minor and F major; the use of suspension and increasing quaver movement drive the music on its way back to the tonic key of C. The repeat may be reduced to strings alone.

#### Gavotte II

With a change of instrumentation and texture, this second gavotte provides a clear contrast to Gavotte I. A trio of double-reed players (two oboes and bassoon) function together whilst upper strings (violins and viola) take an 'accompanying' role in the manner of a 'horn call' with its emphasis on tonic-dominant pitches and fanfare-like melodies outlining the harmonies.

The oboe music is characterised by movement in 3rds and 6ths, some syncopation, and articulation emphasising the slurring of notes in pairs.

Whilst the repeats of each section are executed in this section, the return to Gavotte I often entails a performance for this final time without repeats.

### Movement 5 Menuet I and II.

The English word **minuet** is derived from the Italian and French forms of the word. The Urtext score of the Set Work uses the word **menuet** but the meaning of both words is interchangeable. The minuet has its origins in a stately dance of the French royal court from the mid 17th-century. In triple metre, most minuets are in binary form but in Bach's suite, the menuet is presented in a 'da capo' form with the second menuet being more lightly scored. In this larger 'da capo' form, the structure becomes ternary.

Learners should be able to describe the texture and observe how repeats, instrumentation and ornamentation, for example, differ across alternative interpretations. With the example of the structuring of the Gavotte movement in mind, they will be able to recognise a similar 'asymmetric' binary structure. They will be able to compare the way instruments are grouped and the way passing notes are used to generate flowing lines in each of the four parts.

## Antonio Vivaldi

Concerto in G minor Opus 3 No 2 (RV 578)

- 1 Adagio e spiccato – Allegro
- 2 Larghetto
- 3 Allegro

### IMPORTANT

#### Number of movements and labelling of bar numbers in these notes.

Some scores and recordings reference the concerto as having four movements / tracks. In these notes, we follow the consensus that the first 13 bars of the music form an introductory section to the first movement rather than an independent movement. Most of the *L'Estro Armonico* concertos are structured in three movements, reflecting the independent developing of the concerto from the four-movement structure of the trio-sonata. This concerto can be seen as in the typical fast-slow-fast structure favoured by Vivaldi but preceded by an opening slow section.

Bar numbers are given for the Adagio e spiccato – Allegro as a single movement in the first instance but a bar number is also given in brackets for Learners using scores that notate them as separate movements.

Whilst *ürtext* scores are always recommended, there are differences between *ürtext* scores available.

### General

This Opus 3 set of concertos by Vivaldi is full of confidence and invention. Performers enthusiastically talk of the energy required to play these concertos and also the joy derived from engaging with such delightful and powerful works.

The end of the 17th-century and the early 18th-century were dominated by musical creativity coming mainly from Italy. Anton Corelli had established the Concerto Grosso in Rome, developed from the trio-sonata model with its (usual) structure of four contrasting movements.

Vivaldi was a performer, teacher and director at *Ospedale della Pietá*, a Venetian institution that provided care and music education for orphaned girls. It produced singers and instrumentalists of the highest quality ensuring that Vivaldi had a set of impressive musicians at his disposal to perform his compositions.

Vivaldi was becoming more widely known in Europe more widely from around 1700 but it was the publication of twelve concertos as *L'Estro Armonico* in Amsterdam in 1711 that demonstrated the composer's craftmanship and originality to a wider world. A precise translation of *L'Estro Armonico* is difficult; various suggestions include 'inspired harmony' and 'musical delight'.

The reception of this collection and its influence was highly significant. J.S Bach was sufficiently impressed to make arrangement of six of the concertos for organ or keyboard-instruments and strings.

The collection of concertos includes various structural models and Learners may wish to explore the music of other concertos in this set.

The concertos were published by Estienne Roger in a set of 8 part-books: 4 violin, 2 viola, one cello and one 'continuo e basso'. Concertos focus variously on

- a solo violin as used by Torelli, or
- 2 solo violin parts, as in the model of Corelli, or
- the colourful and exotic deployment of four independent violin parts in concertos 1, 4, 7 and 10.

These various forms of the concerto provided all the signposting needed for Vivaldi to make a definitive contribution to the classical concerto to come. (See below for the move from a four to three-movement structure.)

RV 578 is the second concerto of the set and features two solo violins and violoncello obbligato. The inclusion of the solo cello line makes the concerto feel closer to a 'concerto grosso' model where a group of 'concertino' instruments are placed in contrast to the tutti or ripieno ensemble.

As a result of this ambiguity, when scores were published based on the original part books, differences of opinion resulted. Centres may find a score layout presented as a concerto grosso with concertino instruments grouped and marked accordingly. Alternatively, the ensemble might be presented as eight equal staves including continuo. In this presentation, solo lines are indicated in the score at the appropriate moments.

### Listening to performances

This is a relatively short work and Learners can be encouraged to listen to a range of recordings / performances before they even look at a score. Can they hear the difference between modern and historically informed performances? Is it possible to identify the basso continuo instruments used in any particular recording? What difference does a venue (recording studio, church, concert hall) make to the overall sound?

Comparing performances of an unfamiliar work is a significant part of the exam questioning and Learners can 'practise' on carefully selected extracts from this work. This provides a good opportunity for teachers to help Learners to navigate the many recordings that they might consider.

What do reputable writers and music critics have to say about recordings or performers?

**prestomusic.com** collates information about recordings that have won praise and awards, for example, in Gramophone, BBC sources, Grammy Awards, Penguin Rosettes. International Classical Music Awards, etc.

### Concerto in G minor Opus 3 No 2 (RV 578)

Most scores give the key signature of a single flat, as in the original. The flat for the sixth degree of the scale was commonly omitted in minor flat keys. You will notice more frequent use of accidentals in the music when different forms of melodic and harmonic scales are used.

#### I Adagio e spiccato – Allegro

The detached quaver movement of the opening bars gives a bright, brittle sound. There is more than a passing resemblance to the opening movement of Vivaldi's Concerto No.4, Op.8, RV 297. 'Winter' (*L'Inverno*) – from *The Four Seasons*, written some years later.

From the start, Learners will hear a series of suspensions (including preparation and resolution) as the quaver movement chords move purposefully to a perfect cadence in the dominant minor in bars 5<sup>4</sup>–6<sup>1</sup>. The dissonance created by these suspensions adds significantly to the harmonic richness of the opening of this movement. After a brief moment where violins 1 and 3 take the music to a higher register, the quaver movement continues to use suspensions across all instruments, concluding with a perfect cadence in the tonic key of G minor in bar 10.

For the first time, violins 1 and 2 play as soloists with a significant contrast in the lighter sound and texture. Only the violas continue with quaver movement as an accompaniment to the quiet, melodic, decorative figuration characterised by a dotted rhythmic pattern and parallel motion in thirds. It is followed by the return of all parts, including the continuo in a strong perfect cadence, concluding this opening section.

## Allegro

After a pause on the final note in bar 13, the Allegro sections begins at bar 14 [bar 1].

Following the rich harmonies of the Adagio, the fast-paced downward scalic movement in a four-violin unison provides a dramatic contrast.

Vivaldi is a master of invention, including quirky twists and turns when it comes to handling his ideas. The scores are full of material that can be used to illustrate melodic and harmonic devices.

There are two important ideas in the opening unison violin statement:



- a descending and ascending melodic minor scale
- a rhythmically interesting response starting with a semiquaver rest and angular leaps in quaver movement at the end before a similar phrase a major third lower is stated in bar 16 [3]

A syncopated idea begins at bar 17 [4] which also incorporates an ascending sequence of a 3-note pattern:



The Allegro is in a ritornello structure: sections of repeated material for the full ensemble (ritornellos) alternate with sections focused on the soloists (known as episodes).

The following table outlines the use of the principal musical ideas.

Bar	Tutti / Solo	Description	Keys, etc.
14–22 [1–9]	T	The opening ritornello is characterised by scalic movement followed by a syncopated pattern in the unison violins. Other strings accompany with harmonies moving chromatically through a series of secondary dominant chords.  At bar 20 [7] roles between upper and lower strings are reversed (violins and violas have repeated semiquavers while the cellos and basses have the syncopated pattern.)	G minor then modulating through various keys back to G minor.
23–27 <sup>2</sup> [10–14 <sup>2</sup> ]	S	The two soloists (Violins I and 2) play entirely alone, in thirds. The melodic movement makes use of repetition and sequence leading to...	



Bar	Tutti / Solo	Description	Keys, etc.
27 <sup>3</sup> –33 <sup>2</sup> [14 <sup>3</sup> –20 <sup>2</sup> ]	T	... a re-statement of the ritornello material. How does Vivaldi vary the music this time? (texture, roles, dynamic, placement of the pattern within the bar?)	
33 <sup>3</sup> –45 <sup>3</sup> [20 <sup>3</sup> –32 <sup>3</sup> ]	S	The two soloists play the same music as in Episode 1 but displaced by a half-bar. This is now extended by introducing the solo cello part in imitation a (compound) fifth lower than Violin I, over a bass line outlining a circle of fifths. (See notation below*)	Modulation to D minor
45 <sup>3</sup> –54 <sup>3</sup> [32 <sup>3</sup> –41 <sup>3</sup> ]	T	The material from the start of the Allegro is repeated in the dominant minor key, although displaced to start halfway through the bar.	D minor
54 <sup>3</sup> –70 <sup>3</sup> [41 <sup>3</sup> –57 <sup>3</sup> ]	S	Although Violin I starts alone, Violin 2 follows, the soloists alternating their quaver / semiquaver patterns antiphonally. The texture is derived from the inner string parts heard earlier in the movement. The ensemble accompanies with punctuating chords that allows modulation.	
70 <sup>3</sup> –74 <sup>1</sup> [57 <sup>3</sup> –61 <sup>1</sup> ]	T	The syncopated material and driving semiquaver accompaniment in lower strings returns, propelling the music to a return of ...	
74–83 [61–70]	S + T	... the opening descending scale idea (now in Violin 1 only), marking a final section of varied and decorated solo lines with developed accompanimental material in the tutti parts. The use of sudden contrasts of dynamic (often referred to as 'terraced dynamics') adds to the drama of the final forte statement with unison violins returning.	G minor

\*From bar 37<sup>3</sup> [24<sup>3</sup>] Vivaldi ingeniously creates a three-part texture which combines

- the rhythmic idea, now in a solo cello part, imitating
- the solo Violin I part started two beats earlier
- over a circle of fifths outlined in the continuo part, shown here:

The image shows three staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled 'Violin I' and contains a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It features a series of eighth-note patterns. The middle staff is labeled 'Solo cello' and contains a bass clef with a key signature of one flat. It features a similar eighth-note pattern, starting two beats later than the Violin I part. The bottom staff is labeled 'Continuo' and contains a bass clef with a key signature of one flat. It features a series of quarter notes and eighth notes, outlining a circle of fifths progression.

## II Larghetto

This slow central movement contrasts in both tempo and in time signature – now a lilting, triple metre.

The opening is suggestive of the opening of movement I in its block chord textures followed by melodic lines with dotted rhythms in the solo violins.

The movement is structured in two parts:

Bars 1–13      The music begins in G minor, modulating to B $\flat$  major (relative major).  
This section is repeated.

Bars 13<sup>4</sup>–47      In this section, the materials already presented are explored and expanded in terms of keys and textures.

In the **first section** Learners will notice

- a tendency to 'double-dot' rhythms in performances – a distinctive baroque performance practice
- the use of terraced dynamics in the opening sets of cadences
- an appoggiatura effect, using second inversion chords (e.g. bar 2).

The first five bars consists of tutti playing of perfect and imperfect cadences. The spacing and distribution of notes bears closer examination in terms of voice-leading and orchestration. The tutti melodic response in bars 6–9 moves to the relative major key and is followed by four bars of solo voicing of the same material (violins 1, 2 and cello), gracefully concluding the section.

The repeat of this section is a good opportunity for Learners to discuss and describe the way performers sometimes ornament the music on the repeat. Historically informed performances may use a bass lute (theorbo) or archlute (baroque guitar) in the continuo part. The moments of lighter texture of this movement will enable elaborations to be heard clearly and for instruments to be identified.

In the **second section** the music commences with a dramatic move to a G major chord that becomes the dominant chord in a perfect cadence in C minor. There is plenty of opportunity in this section for Learners to identify a range of passing modulations.

Features to notice include:

- the change of texture as Violin I enters with a legato descending scale at bar 18, imitated by Violin 2 a bar later generating a texture in thirds over a tonic (G) pedal in the solo cello
- a further series of rhythmic tutti cadences from bar 21<sup>4</sup>, moving towards a legato imperfect cadence at bars 28–29
- a tutti version of the descending, dotted melodic line in upper strings, (from bar 30), now accompanied by bass line outlining a circle of fifths with a rhythmic shape that emphasises the second beat of the bar
- an echo of this 8-bar section in the solo parts from bar 38 leading to a strong perfect cadence conclusion from the ensemble, in G minor.

### III Allegro

The general arrangement of typical concerto movements, fast – slow – fast, sees a return to Allegro for this final movement. In a compound, quadruple time-signature, Vivaldi generates lively materials of dance-like quality. In a ritornello structure that contrasts tutti and solo sections, coupled with Vivaldi's skills of generating endless variety in repeating materials, the composer demonstrates his proficiency in using the minor key in a playful manner.

Learners may now feel confident to map out the structure of this movement using the model provided in these notes, for movement I.

The movement begins with an opening, scalar melody in unison violins, with a pronounced descending contour, yet striving upwards with each new phrase.



The angular shaping of b.3 and b.4<sup>2-3</sup> is similar to the angular shaping of the cadence following the scalar opening theme of the Allegro in Movement I.

A second, closely related idea is a 'fragment' of a phrase that is characterised by an initial rest, also reminding us of the second Allegro idea from Movement I.

This fragment is shaped with an upward chromatic feature within a more restricted pitch-range.



The brackets around the four-note and three-note motifs indicate the ideas Vivaldi uses as further fragments to play with using repetition and sequence in the music from bar 9<sup>4</sup>.

#### Features of the solo lines

Once again Vivaldi varies the presentation of the solo material. Some examples include:

- from b.13<sup>3</sup>, solo violins 1 and 2 play in parallel thirds with bass accompaniment
- from b.23<sup>4</sup>, Violin I is paired with solo cello, now in (compound) sixths but continues alone from b.28
- from 44<sup>3</sup> the solo violin parts are contrapuntal, including imitation

#### Textures

Some sections have a clear melody and accompaniment texture but Vivaldi enables both upper and lower strings to interact more polyphonically with the 'fragment' theme.

Shorter, strongly shaped bass line phrases provide an important harmonic foundation for the solo violin playing from b.28. The distribution of parts in the final tutti section (from bar 64<sup>2</sup> creates an essentially a three-part texture.

#### Keys

Vivaldi continues to present his main material in G minor and contrasts this with passages of harmonic exploration including to the subdominant and dominant minor keys. The return of the opening scalar material of bar 1 is heard in D minor at bar 38.

### Harmonic and melodic devices

The music of this movement provides many further examples of devices that candidates might be required to identify in the unprepared music of Section A of the listening exam.

Can Learners locate (using precise bar and beat numbers) devices such as pedals, circle of fifths, ascending and descending sequences, repetition, fragmentation and extension of materials? Can they identify scale shapes / types, cadences and key changes? Can they convincingly describe and compare ornamentation or articulation (use of legato / staccato, etc.) in different performances/ recordings?

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## Section B: Understanding Music

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### Journeys

Antonín Dvořák	Symphony no. 9 in E minor op. 95 ' <i>New World</i> '
Two songs:	
Florence Price	<i>Travel's End</i>
Margaret Bonds	<i>Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening</i>
Michael Nyman	<i>MGV (Musique à Grande Vitesse)</i>

Learners will approach the set works for this section with a different emphasis. Compositional techniques remain important but it is an understanding of the effects created in the music that need to be explained in response to examination questions.

How do composers produce the intended effects? Candidates will need to consider the evidence and make reasoned judgements about the ways in which features such as instrumentation, tonality, texture, tempo, rhythm, harmony and dynamics are used.

This not an exclusive list; the use of **melody** in Dvorak's symphony is a major compositional feature across all four movements of the 'New World', for example.

Teachers should prepare candidates to answer questions that ask for commentary on compositional techniques and their effects across the set works.

Learners will use scores as they learn about the music of each of the set works, but aural perception is important too. They may ask themselves, 'What is happening here? What is the significance of this?'

### Journeys

A common thread running through each of the pieces in this section is the idea of 'Journeys'. Sometimes the sense of 'journey' in the music is literal, as in Nyman's music for a 'high-speed' train journey or the consequences of Dvorak's journey to take up his new post in North America. The influence of African American melody on Dvorak is well documented but the origins of these songs have a darker story in the forced journeys of Africans brought to America as slaves. The symbolism of the music 'journey' for two pioneering Black woman composers of the early twentieth century is also important. There is a strong sense of 'journey' as metaphor in both song settings.

## Antonín Dvořák: Symphony no. 9 in E minor op. 95 'New World'

Score: Bar numbers and rehearsal markings referenced in these notes are taken from the 2022 Bärenreiter Urtext edition.

This four-movement symphony is a substantial piece of music. Learners do not need to know every movement in close detail but should be able to write about significant topics, for example, the role of melody in relation to the theme of 'Journeys'. They should learn about contrasting examples from at least two movements. They should also be able to describe in some detail the compositional features of selected extended passages.

### General Context

When philanthropist Jeanette M Thurber invited Dvorak to New York to take up the post of Musical Director of the National Conservatory of Music in 1892 she understood the firm national foundation upon which the composer's *Slavonic Dances* (1878) had been composed. Thurber wanted to promote the musical education of Americans in America but the musical establishment was almost entirely dominated by a European view. Her invitation to Dvorak has been seen by some as a further endorsement of the European model. Dvorak's valued the native music of any land and this was to play an important role in the search to start to think about what genuinely 'American music' might look like. A 'school of American composers' was certainly what Thurber wanted for her country.

It is impossible to understand the development of musical life in American without some sense of the turbulent history of the country. From the arrival of the Italian explorer Christopher Columbus in 1492, there followed centuries of journeys made by immigrants and settlers, producing a uniquely complex culture in America. Many scholars believe it was only in the 20th-century that American music began to establish for itself a more completely independent art-form.

From early colonial settlement (1600s–1763) and the American revolution (1763–1783) establishing independence from British rule, some attention was paid to the rights of the indigenous population in the establishing of the American constitution ('regulating Indian affairs'). Much of the indigenous population, however, had been decimated by disease brought from Europe, displaced or killed in wars over ancestral lands.

African Americans had been enslaved in America since early in the 17th-century. Slaves were used in the cotton and other labour-intensive industries up to the early 19th century. Many slaves saved to buy their freedom and increasingly many cities in the north and south had large, free black populations. The Civil War and Reconstruction (1861–1877) was largely focused on the issue of slavery.

It was just 15 years later that Dvorak arrived in 1892. The difficulties of establishing a fruitful multi-racial society in America were to continue well into the 20th-century and beyond.

### Musical Context – Dvorak's music journey from Europe to America

A pupil of Brahms, Dvorak had already composed eight symphonies and a substantial body of chamber music. He was influenced by Wagner in operatic composition and was acknowledged as a popular and accomplished composer in Europe. Schooled in, and loyal to the Germanic tradition, Dvorak's music was also characterised by musical traits of his native Bohemia.

A great deal of controversy has been expressed about the triumphant reception of Symphony No. 9 in America and in Europe upon its first performance in Carnegie Hall on 16th December 1893.

The popularity of this work rather overshadowed the considerable achievement of Dvorak's other works with critics hinting at 'superficial' content in this ninth symphony. Subsequent analysis of the musical content of the work also led to speculation, questioning the extent to which 'American-ness' can be directly attributed to specific elements of the composition.

Dvorak, writing in a *New York Herald* article published the day before the first performance, stated clearly, 'I have not used any of the [native] melodies' whilst acknowledging that the use of pentatonic and modal elements might have been derived from 'creative rearrangements of fragments of existing melodies'. It is clear from Dvorak's writing, that at the very least, the composer attempted to recreate musically, the essence and wonderment of his American experience in the 'New World'.

In his diary entry, we read that Brahms agreed with others who saw shortcomings in the symphony but nevertheless praised in highest terms its overall musical talent and the joy the listener may find in it.

Dvorak's Symphony, Op.95, the '*American Quartet*', Op.96 and String Quintet, Op.97 were written around the same time as the '*New World*' symphony. All three containing similar features: modal / pentatonic melodies, the use flattened sevenths, syncopation, unison passages, etc.

## The music

Dvorak's symphony has a traditional four-movement structure but the influence of 'cyclic' form should be understood. Larger single movement orchestral structures such as the symphonic poem and the concert overture developed during the late 19th-century in Europe and these 'recycled' themes and ideas across the whole work. The natural inclination to narrative interpretation in such works can be seen in the titles of some of Dvorak's own concert overtures, *Carnival* (1891) and *Othello* (1893).

Dvorak's arrival in New York coincided with celebrations marking the four hundredth anniversary of Columbus's landing in the New World. The three days and nights of continuous festivity, including contributions from many nations, made a strong impression on the Bohemian who declared he did not have enough words to describe it all.

Dvorak certainly had the resources to make an appropriately varied and powerful response in writing his 9th Symphony. He makes full use of an enlarged symphony orchestra with its full complement of brass instruments, here with additional timbres such as piccolo, English horn and tuba.

The composer's own writings reveal his interest in getting to know about non-European music in America. On engaging Dvorak, Thurber had proposed that opera might be a route to provide a role-model for American born composers to consider. She specified Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha* as the basis for a libretto. The opera was never written but Dvorak used materials from his 'sketches' which are particularly evident in movements 2 and 3 of this symphony. Some commentators see the use of relatively simple musical ideas such as pedal / open 5ths as characteristic of 'folk' materials.

[As a point of context, it was Coleridge Taylor who in 1898 set Longfellow's poem as a cantata.]

The working friendship at the conservatory between Dvorak and the African American baritone, Harry T. Burleigh was especially fruitful. Burleigh had learned many of the old plantation songs from his grandfather Hamilton Walters who had bought his freedom from slavery in 1832. In his writings, Burleigh states that he used to sing these songs to Dvorak in the evenings after supper. Whilst pointing to the use of a spiritual melody in the third theme of the first movement Burleigh, nevertheless, says that Dvorak saturated himself with the spirit of the old tunes and then invented his own themes. This apparent contradiction – is it an intentional quotation or not? – remains unanswered.

Swing low, sweet cha - ri - ot co - min' for to car - ry me home.

The appeal of this symphony owes much to its rich Romantic harmonies and colourful orchestration but many of the melodic themes are pentatonic in nature, a characteristic of 'folk-music' across time and nations of all continents. The unsophisticated, almost child-like phrasing of Dvorak's melodies were a characteristic of his music before he set out for America. The use of the flattened seventh (d-natural in E minor) is a marked feature in themes across all movements of Dvorak's 9th symphony. Whilst conventional tonic-dominant cadences are used to confirm key changes, the modal scale form without the raised seventh dominates the final fifty bars of the work, as if to confirm the journey away from traditional, European harmonic thinking.

A sense of Bohemian energy can clearly be heard in the scherzo, driven by a typically Slavonic rhythm that states and reverses the 'long-short' pattern. (see movement 1, cello b.16; movement 3, cello b.154, for example).

Learners will primarily gain familiarity with this music movement by movement. They should also consider musical elements across movements as they hint at a range of peoples contributing to this American portrayal whether indigenous, African American or those of European heritage.

## Movement 1 Adagio – Allegro molto

Important structural 'signposts' to listen out for include extensive use of melody, motifs, keys and the use of Slavonic rhythm as mentioned above.

Structural overview: The three main sections of the movement correspond loosely to Sonata Form structure, but with structural flexibility in the emphasis placed on developing ideas. The exposition is a relatively substantial section, the development is shorter and the recapitulation of theme 1 and final statements in the movement form the longest section.

Bar	Section	Brief description
1–23	Introduction	Germs and seeds of ideas to come; structural / expressive contrast
24–177 (plus 1st and 2nd time bars)	Exposition	3 melodic themes presented with some extension and elaboration of ideas
177 <b>[6]</b> –272 <b>[9]</b>	Development	A section where themes, rhythms, textures, orchestration, keys and expressive possibilities are explored more fully
273–395	Recapitulation	Theme 1 returns in the tonic key with an extended section focused on Theme 2.
396 [13]–448	Coda	

### Introduction

Soft lower strings open the work with hints of ideas, syncopated rhythms and motifs that are to play an important part in the music to follow. The cello melody in the very first bar contains the flattened seventh. The sudden horn interjection at bar 4 fades as the upper woodwind take the rhythmic shape and mournful descending lines. The drama of the fortissimo, accented syncopations and block chords (9–12) are exaggerated by timpani interruptions hinting at the dramatic passages that will unfold in this symphony.

From b.16 the horns and lower strings hint at theme 1 as they alternate with woodwind textures. The musical texture of this introduction builds from the quietest starting point in the strings, now adding tremolo bowing as the music moves upwards in pitch and growing intensity. The fortissimo timpani is heard in the rest between the chords of an imperfect cadence pre-empting the Allegro molto.



There are unusual features in this E minor opening – the pentatonic flavour from the outset and the flattened seventh of D natural rather than D sharp. The tentative opening, with its dramatic contrasts is followed by a confident fanfare-like figure in the horns (b.24) that sets the scene for the entire work.

## Exposition

The array of articulations, accents, dynamics swells and sforzando outbursts subside and make for a clear entry of theme 1 in horns over an E minor chord in the strings:

**Allegro molto** ♩ = 136

Clarinet (and bassoons)

Horns 3 & 4

Main theme 1

Theme 1 extension

The dynamic main theme consists of a rising and falling arpeggio figure with a distinctive iambic rhythm (short-long) in the second and fourth bar. Sometimes referred to as ‘inverted dotting’, (a reversal of the long, short pattern), or ‘Lombardic rhythm’, the use of this rhythm is widespread in a range of non-European cultures including Scottish folk melody, African American music and later, jazz.

The four-bar theme has an extension – a response of accented, dotted material in thirds in clarinets and bassoons. The eight bars of music are repeated in woodwinds followed by a **ff** statement of the main theme now on the dominant chord (ascending) and chord ii<sup>7</sup> (descending). Dvorak gives the theme in octaves to strings; sustained, heavy brass and wind chords accompany. Small details – bassoons in thirds b.47, the semi-quaver pattern in thirds, violas, b.51 followed by the iambic motif in lower strings lead back to a tonic statement of the main theme at b.59 **[1]**, played by the full orchestra. A smooth descending line in clarinet thirds is treated sequentially with a brief passage using a harmonic circle of fifths. The opening bar of the second theme is anticipated in violas and cellos in b.74. Learners can listen and note the return of these details in the score as the movement unfolds.

A gentler **second theme** (sometimes described as a transition theme) is heard in bar 91:

Fl. 1, Ob. 1

91

*p* *fz* *fz*

Commentators suggest several features here that imply a ‘folk song’ feel to the theme and its setting.

- short two-bar phrases in flute and oboe, transferring to other instruments
- G minor with a flattened seventh, f natural
- restricted pitch range
- pedal in horn with high sustained harmonic in violin 1 (b. 91)
- pizzicato drone in cello (b.99) with alternating octave pedal higher in violin 1
- the semiquaver detail of b.92 becomes an important accompaniment figure and its ‘pastorale’ uses of thirds from b.115
- a nimble, playful texture, orchestrated with a light touch

These features acknowledge something of a universal reference to folk traditions.

Unlike a conventional exposition, Dvorak begins to explore this second theme straight away rather than simply state it, in a passage extending for over fifty bars.

In bar 149 [5], the **third theme** in G major is presented in solo flute, unusually low in its register:



Dvorak's orchestration of the accompanying held chords in strings is appropriately marked **ppp** to allow this rarely used timbre to be heard in an orchestral context.

Its melodic contour uses arpeggio shaping and iambic rhythm as in the main theme 1 – the rhythm of the first two bars of themes 1 and 3 are identical. Learners may by now start to identify familiar features: the pentatonic melody, the short-long rhythmic motif and the off-beat accompaniment. This 8-bar melody, however, extends and unfolds in a way that can be fragmented and used in later development of the material. From its initial tender presentation, the theme transfers to violins with offbeat accompaniment, quickly building to a third, strong statement of this G-major theme, now in **ff** lower strings. Trombones support with timpani, moving either to return to E minor with the repeat or onwards to confirm a change of harmonic direction.

### Development [6]

Following the three G-major statements of Theme 3 just heard, Dvorak now leads us to a further exploration of this thematic material. The composer presents a diverse landscape. This section of development is introduced by a fragment of the melody - a harmonically augmented version of bars 3 and 4, giving a sense of uncertainty in the music to follow:



The harmonic texture is interspersed with trumpet and clarinet triplet figures as this texture expands and then calms. Bars 196 and 197 show us the link between the fragment of theme 3 in the trumpet followed by the figure in oboes – reminding us of the extension material of theme 1. The use of pedal and string textures are related to the accompaniment of theme 2 although the actual melody is not used.

Some details to notice about the way Dvorak weaves his materials together, include:

- solo voices present the opening section of theme 3 in E major b.189–196
- a shortened version of theme 3 in trumpet, b.209 [7] is accompanied with a fragment in diminution in violin 1
- a **ff** statement of theme 1 in the bass instruments of each orchestral family rises upward on a diminished chord, b.213
- an F-sharp minor version of theme 3 in the oboes and horns, b.217 is answered with theme 1 on diminished-seventh chord harmonies in the bass instruments from b.221
- a statement of theme 1 in Eb minor (b.231), leads on to the bass instruments re-stating theme 1 in E minor at b.241 [8]. The consistency of approach to orchestration, focus on textural variation and exploration of themes continues, suggesting this is not yet the 'recapitulation'
- from b.245 the fragment from b.209 [7], violin 1, assumes a prominent role in the texture.

## Recapitulation

A full statement of the principal theme in the horns with response, now in the lower woodwinds, signals a sense of 'return' at b.273 **[9]**. Learners will now be able to track the return of materials, noting the changes in orchestration. The reappearance of Theme 2, now in G-sharp minor can be observed as well as the references to 'pastoral' harmonies in thirds in the accompaniment. Theme 3, now in Ab at b.370 **[12]** references off-beat accompaniments and motifs used previously to now build to a modulation with a tutti ff, b.396 **[13]**.

## Coda

The pedal note E underpins the overlapping statements of Theme 3 in A major with rising Theme 1 in trombones, rapidly transitioning through multiple key centres. Only at b.436 do the trombones and lower strings loudly proclaim the main theme with fully orchestrated tonic chord dramatically bringing the movement to a close.

## Movement 2 Largo

Commentators agree that the narrative of *Hiawatha* is significant in the composition of this famous slow movement. Dvorak cited the chapter entitled 'Hiawatha's wooing' as influential. It has been suggested that the pastoral tone of the English horn melody represents the journey of Hiawatha to his home with his bride Minnehaha.

'Pleasant was the journey homeward, Through interminable forests, Over meadow, over mountain, Over river, hill and hollow. Short it seemed to Hiawatha, Though they journeyed very slowly, Though his pace he checked and slackened To the steps of Laughing Water.'

A ternary form is used for both the large-scale structure of the movement and the small-scale shaping of the main melody.

Bar	Section
1–45	A D-flat major
<b>[2]</b> 46–100	B C-sharp minor
101 <b>[5]</b> –127	A [modified] D-flat major Including Coda b. 120–127

Features of the musical content of the movement can be summarised as follows:

### Section A

This second movement presents a complete contrast of tempo and mood. A soft brass and lower woodwind chorale serves as a calm yet strong introduction, followed by an even quieter string passage taking over the harmony of D flat – the tonic key of the movement. Upper strings are muted.

The rich, warm sound of the English horn (Italian: corno inglese) takes the now famous melody:

Solo Corno inglese

The melody is made up of three, regular 4-bar phrases in a ternary structure a – b – a2.

A clarinet echoes the music of the last bar precisely and then in rhythmic augmentation (b. 19,20). At b.21 **[1]** the introductory chords are now heard in the woodwinds and French horn, concluded by brass instruments and timpani. The **ff** dynamic of b.25 is a dramatic contrast to the hushed **ppp** dynamic, before and afterwards.

### A note about the melody

Whilst acknowledging the influence of the *Hiawatha* text, the wistful, longing sound of this melody also has the style of a 'spiritual' in its own right. This melody was Dvorak's own invention but he clearly brought to it his understanding of the spirituals or 'plantation songs' of African Americans.

If the 'home' of 'Swing Low Sweet Chariot' was a reference to heaven – the only hope of an end to a life of slavery – Dvorak, through his exploration of African American and American indigenous music perhaps sought to infuse these sentiments of 'homeland' in his music here, whilst also far from his own home.

The English horn, a member of the oboe family, had been a frequent member of the orchestra since the middle of the nineteenth century. It was usually played by the second oboe player and gave an extended lower range that could be played softly and with ease compared to the oboe. Its distinctive timbre was often used for solo melodies. As a transposing instrument, the melody will sound a fifth lower than that written in the score above.

In bar 26, an altered version of the melody is played on strings alone before being joined by the English horn in b.36. The fading fragmentation and echoes of the theme lead to a muted horn delivery of the melody's first four bars, poignantly giving emphasis to the sense of a homeward journey.

### Section B

Dvorak moves to a slightly faster tempo. This and the shorter triplet quavers give a sense of urgency. The music is lighter yet tinged with sadness and it has been suggested that the passage may be descriptive of the death and burial of Minnehaha. The feeling of sadness is achieved through the change of key to the tonic minor. (C-sharp minor is the enharmonic tonic minor.)

Some Important details:

- a range of score directions indicating a more flexible approach to tempo
- a sorrowful melodic theme from b.46 **[2]** characterised by flute and oboe triplets with swelling dynamics over hushed tremolo strings in C-sharp minor; note also the use of the flattened seventh
- a poignant clarinet duo from b.54 accompanied by pizzicato double bass and a rapid, unpredictable figuration in Violin 1
- the melody of b.46 **[2]** is repeated at b.64 **[3]**, now in the strings; the flute and oboe take a triplet countermelody in contrary motion a beat later
- yet another idea at b.90 **[4]** is presented in solo oboe – a lightly articulated pattern in much shorter notes values over a simple drone seems to describe the character of Minnehaha – 'Laughing Water'. This is now

in C-sharp major, so has in fact returned (enharmonically) to the movement's tonic major. Dvorak does not reinstate the D-flat major key signature until the return of the opening theme at b.101 **[5]**

- a sudden dramatic build up in the texture with its insistent fragments of previous ideas, reintroduces theme 1 from movement 1 (b.96) in trombones; bright trumpets reference the English horn theme and high strings playing a portion of Theme 3 from movement 1.

### Return of Section A material

Following this brief but powerful reminder of previous themes, the return of the main melody (b.101, **[5]**) is shared between English horn and strings with a reduction in orchestral numbers contributing to this wistful, reflective ending.

The orchestration contributes significantly to underpin the narrative of this journey's end. The string section is reduced to just ten soloists in their response with the 'b' section of the melody. Paused rests and echoing fragments break up the melody giving a further sense of fading and withdrawal. Just three string soloists play from b.110, joined by tutti, with muted upper strings, two bars later. Echo fragments, solo lines, slight adjustment to melody and harmony take us to a coda. The opening brass chorale is solemnly referenced, darker now for the loss of bright trumpets. A gently rising D-flat arpeggio leads to an extraordinary final bar: a divisi three-part tonic chord in the double basses.

### Movement 3 Scherzo

The scherzo had replaced the minuet for the third movement in most symphonies at this time and is used here. Its character includes a lively, rapid triple-metre tempo with humour or darker passages of often surprising and abrupt twists and turns. As in the minuet and trio form, the third movement here is in a 'da capo' structure with contrasting ideas leading back to the opening section before then jumping ahead to the coda at b. 141.

Dvorak uses a Slavonic style in dance-like themes in short sections that are repeated. His use of pedal, drone-like textures and ostinato patterns are once again suggestive of typical accompaniments for 'folk' materials. The 3:2 cross-rhythms of this exciting movement are characteristic of Dvorak's native folk music. His use of cross-rhythm can clearly be heard in the opening materials of his Slavonic dances, Op.46, no.1 in C major and no.8 in G minor.

Re-use of previous material is also heard in this movement. Having analysed the first and second movements in some depth, Learners should now be able to recognise familiar material and identify new ideas as they appear. They will also be able to identify for themselves, different key areas of shorter passages that contribute to the episodic feel of this movement. Learners should take note of and be able to describe the ways in which the composer uses different textures as a means of contrast and structuring. Dvorak also uses orchestration as a primary tool to support a change of mood and direction. The brightness and penetrating quality of the trumpets with horns is used in this movement whilst resting the trombones. The light-hearted addition of triangle underlines the playfulness of this scherzo movement.

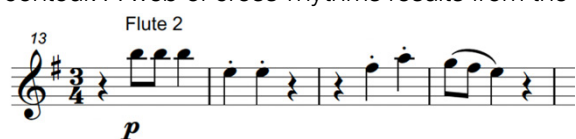
An overview of the structure can be summarised as follows:

Bar	Section	Brief description
1–141	<b>A</b> E minor – E major – E minor	A statement of themes and ideas with some exploration and development, presented as a mini-Scherzo and Trio first section within the much longer overall ABA + coda movement.
142–247	<b>B</b> transition to C major	Generally reduced orchestration with a folk-like melody at b.176 b.239 <b>[6]</b> Menacing key changes transition back to ...
1–141	<b>A</b> E minor	A return to the beginning of the movement
248–299	<b>Coda</b>	Prominent use of themes from movement 1.

Some features to note:

### Section A

- A bold opening states the short rhythmic ideas that will dominate this section
- After a piling up of quartal harmonies (bars 5–9) which then persist as sustained and repeating harmonic pedal movement, the short first theme, is introduced. Its rhythmic invention is as important as the melodic contour. A web of cross-rhythms results from the overlapping statements in different instruments.



- A powerful descending theme contrasts in two ways: it is a continuous sustained theme in horns; its duple rhythmic structure cuts across the triple metre texture



- A new homorhythmic accompaniment pattern is established (b.64) for a second theme, now in E major in upper woodwinds:



After the excitement and irregular rhythms of the opening, this pentatonic melody is now structured in more predictable 8 bar phrases, (a,a,b,a<sup>2</sup>)

- The soft return to the faster pace at b.99 **[2]** also sees a return to the material of the opening theme building steadily (via a hint of Movement 1, theme 1 in the horns at b. 119) to a powerful climax at b.123 **[3]**, dominated by the descending duple melody.

## Section B

- Note the reduced orchestration of this trio-equivalent section
- A 34-bar 'introduction' (bars 142–175) of delicate references to the opening rhythms and sustained pedals is interwoven with further low string reminders of movement 1, theme 1.
- A new folk-like melody **in C major** is introduced and repeated:

Flute and Oboe

175  
*p* etc.

Note the colourful addition of the triangle in accompaniment here.

- A playful fragmentation of the descending duple melody, (b.41) now in the major key, is explored and developed across a further repeated section:

Violin 1

192  
*mf* *p* *pp*

- In a series of menacing chromatic key shifts upwards, the music returns to the strong E minor opening of the movement at the 'da capo' instruction, b.247.

## Coda

Candidates should be able now to identify the multiple ideas woven together in this final section of the movement. There are four statements referencing the first theme of movement 1, rhythmic motivic references unique to this movement and finally an unexpected **fff** statement of the third theme, movement 1, now in a modified 3-time but unmistakable in its shape. Learners should be able to describe the presentation of these themes (referencing instruments, keys and textures) in such a way as to demonstrate convincing close familiarity with the music.

## Movement 4 Allegro con fuoco

There is a striking opening theme – this is a forceful 8-bar melody with rhythmic emphasis in both melody and accompaniment to reinforce the strongest beats of the bar. The chorale-like string response presents a strongly contrapuntal shaping in bass and treble parts before a 'tutti' restatement of the first part of the theme with punctuating brass chords and rapidly bowed arpeggio figuration in middle strings.

10 Horns 3,4

*ff*

As in previous movements, Dvorak introduces us to further new melodic materials but as the movement progresses, textures built on motivic ideas, fragmentation and figurations from previous movements, are increasingly heard. Reference to the English Horn theme combine melodically with this movement's main theme in woodwinds from b.156. The increasingly contrapuntal texture is masterfully developed with offbeat patterns (e.g. b.208) becoming more prevalent, adding to the excitement.

A particular significant section for study is the Coda of the movement, which also serves as the Coda of the entire symphony. With its organic inclusion of so many references to earlier passages, this is a fitting summary, not only of the entire symphony, but of Dvorak's American experience. A musical exploration of disparate influences, themes, fragments and statements bring this 'journey' to an unquestionably confident conclusion.

### Coda b.313

- The tempo in this last section becomes much more flexible with some sudden changes and is a crucial factor in portraying the mood and intention in the music
- Woodwind and brass chords act as an alternative 'chorale' pre-figuring the return of the first two bars of the English horn melody in clarinets, b.313
- The short triplet / quaver motif derived from the scherzo rhythms, passes down through the instruments from flute to cello over long held tonic pedal in double bass, bars 313–321
- The timpani alone (b.320) accompany the softy horn recall of the fourth movement's main theme, as it then builds to a tutti statement of the theme in octaves, b.327
- Over insistent tonic drum rolls and double bass tremolos, trumpets and trombones dissonantly combine the two most prominent themes of the entire work, b.333.

Given the background of American history, the dominance of the German-European classical music mindset together with what we know of Dvorak's interest in the Hiawatha story and his love of African American melody, it is unsurprising that commentators have imputed a range of 'meaning' into this 'New World' project. The term 'New World' was used for the Americas in the late 15th- early 16th-century by European explorers who had journeyed there with an intention to colonise the land. It was 'new' to them – but not to the indigenous populations.

What is not in doubt is that Dvorak achieved a hugely successful musical synthesis of disparate cultural references. The essence of features of Native American music and African American melody are combined with European [Germanic] compositional practices, infused with Bohemian energy and enthusiasm together with universal features of folk traditions.

The music is literally and metaphorically representative of varied 'journeys' taken to begin the task of establishing a genuinely independent American music.



## Two songs:

Florence Price *Travel's End*

Margaret Bonds *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*

The young, accomplished black British conductor/composer, Samuel Coleridge Taylor made three visits to America from 1904–10. His cantata 'Hiawatha's Wedding Feast' (1898) was performed in the US as early as 1900 and featured in the repertoire of most black church and concert choirs. The Coleridge-Taylor Music School was established in 1913 and had some of the most prestigious black African American teachers on the faculty including the pianist Estelle Bonds. Her daughter Margaret received piano and composing lessons there.

## Florence Price (1887–1953) and Margaret Bonds (1913–1972)

### Context

Price is known as the first African American woman composer to have gained national recognition. Her first Symphony in E minor was premiered by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 1933, having won first prize in the Wanamaker Contest. This contest, like several others was established primarily to offer prizes to African American composers.

It was especially difficult for African-American women to make progress towards acceptance and recognition within the classical music establishment.

Prizes brought both Price and Bonds to national attention. Price's *Piano Concerto in One Movement* was performed in 1934 by the Women's Symphony Orchestra of Chicago, with the talented black pianist Margaret Bonds as soloist.

Both composers came from professional backgrounds. Price received a solid music education in composing and performance (piano, organ) having enrolled at the New England Conservatory of Music at the age of 15 and worked as a teacher for many years. Life was to become difficult for her when she left an abusive husband and brought her children up as a single parent. It was Margaret Bonds' mother who opened her home to the financially desperate Price. Mrs Bonds was a generous woman who provided hospitality in a middle-class mixed neighbourhood to anyone who had fallen on hard times. This in turn provided a wonderful opportunity for Price to meet distinguished black artists: musicians, poets, writers, artists and dancers all supporting each other in their meetings at Estelle Bonds' home.

Price became close to Bonds during this time and was keen to encourage the composing abilities in Margaret; the two became good friends as teacher and pupil.

Price's output includes other extended orchestral pieces, pieces for piano/organ; chamber works and a substantial number of art songs. Bonds' primary means of compositional expression lay in songs for solo voice but she also wrote symphonic, choral and solo piano works.

### Florence Price: general stylistic characteristics of her music

The influence of Price's Southern roots, particularly the cultural, social and politically sophisticated middle class Black community in which she grew up, shaped the composer she was to become. Price was among the many black families who moved away from their southern roots to escape the harsh racial segregation laws enforced there.

Across the range of her output, a number of characteristics and influences contribute to the composer's style. Her music makes use of pentatonic melody and there are references to African American music such as

spirituals and dance forms associated with slave ancestries. Her harmonic language is frequently conservative / late Romantic but blues references and chromaticism can also be heard. She has an ear for the sonorities of contrasting families of the orchestra: strings, woodwind, brass, often sharing material between them. Price delights in using percussive colour and effects (e.g. Symphony no 3).

## Florence Price *Travel's End*

### The score, poem and recordings

A recording of the music can be found at

<https://theartsongproject.com/florence-b-price-travels-end/#comments>

A faithfully reproduced score of this song is available as no 2 of 'Five Art Songs', edited by Rae Linda Brown, published for medium-high voice and piano, and in B major, by Classical Vocal Reprints. Online, imslp have a facsimile of the composer's original copy. There is also an edited, typeset version of this which, whilst easier to read, does not replicate the voicings of the chords accurately and the distribution of notes between the right and left hand piano parts has been altered.

The poet of the song setting is Mary Folwell Hoisington (1894–1955). Learners can write out the poem and seek to understand images that may be unfamiliar such as 'carded wool' or 'the poke of the feathered down' (perhaps the sharpness of the feather quill as it pokes through the quilt cover?).

### The Song - overview

#### What is Art Song?

Described as No.2 of Five Art Song, this setting has much in common with a specific type of vocal setting that became important in the Romantic period – Lied. A characteristic of this period was a desire to make connections between the arts – in this case poetry and music. Schubert, for example used texts of famous German poets including Heine, Müller and Goethe. Lieder were written for voice and piano with a sensitivity for harmonic colour, word-painting and melodic shaping. Through such songs a full range of poetic and philosophical thought can be expressed with often dramatic depiction of psychological states and varying emotions. Piano accompaniments were often independent and highly creative, reflecting the elevated status of the instrument at this time.

An art song is sometimes described as a song of serious purpose in the 'classical art tradition' in contrast to the folksong or popular song traditions. The incorporation of African American melodies in their work saw Price and Bonds blur these boundaries of song writing.

#### Interpretation and structure of poem

The poem does not have a specific focus on general hardships or trials as might be found in many spirituals but is rather a wise, generic comment on the inevitable circularity of life and how the imagery of a life's beginning might be replicated in life's ending. In this sense the poem references travel as a metaphor for the journey of life.

The poem consists of three verses (stanzas) of four lines. It's narrative structure rhymes on lines two and four; this simple, short structure, connects mother, child and adult. The image of 'my mother's house' and the bed infuses the first two verses. The bed of verse one might be a reference to the bed of the poet's birth.

If verse one is nostalgic in its references to the sights, colours, texture and smell of a childhood home, verse two becomes more diversified as it focusses intensely on the colour white, the personalisation of the bed and remembering a time of the safety and peace of dreaming sleep. The third verse contains the only mention of literal journeying in the poem: 'walking far forlorn' before returning to the mother's bed and thoughts of death.

### The song – detail

Whilst not a spiritual as such, the song with its lilting 9–8 time signature has the sense of a rocking lullaby such as a mother would sing to a child. There is a nostalgic remembering as the adult child sings: their mother's sheet and associations of the peace of home is to be desired after life's 'walk', now for life's end – to become their shroud in the grave when life's journey is complete. Not a 'borrowed' spiritual, but certainly this is a song infused with the consciousness of a spiritual in Price's hands.

The song has a modest tempo of 'allegretto' but with plenty of score indications from the composer to sensitively shape the music, often at the ends of phrases, with slowing down followed by 'a tempo' markings. The accompaniment is almost entirely independent of the vocal line.

#### b. 1–2<sup>2</sup> Introduction

The start of this song's 'journey' towards travel's end, is harmonically rather contemplative. With a set of descending, second inversion chords – I, vi and V<sup>7</sup>, the left-hand piano part high in the treble clef and the simple melody above it has a quality of reflective innocence.

The stepwise quaver figure with accompanying chords on the main beats of the triple metre is a consistent feature throughout the word setting.

#### Verse 1 b.2<sup>3</sup>–14<sup>2</sup>

Each of the four vocal phrases are consistently structured and balanced in their shaping, starting and ending on a held note with a variety of movement in between. The semiquaver triplet played by the agile left hand moving up from a much lower starting place, is a characteristic part of the figuration of the piano accompaniment in this first verse setting. It returns in verse three.

The melody line and accompaniment are inter-dependent in this first verse. Here, as in every phrase of the song, the vocal part starts with an anacrusis, launching the emphasis towards the important words on the strong, first beat of the following bar: 'bed', 'sheets', 'poke', 'I'. The first phrase is pentatonic in character. The anacrusis is not traditionally harmonised with V-I but with a weaker imperfect cadence: chord I (with added 6th) to V<sup>7</sup>d (the weakest inversion) on these first two words.

A clear tonic is avoided; the open fifth in the accompaniment on B is on the weak beat of the bar (2<sup>3</sup>) and is tempered by the simultaneous sounding of G# minor in the low right hand as it alternates with chord V<sup>7</sup>.

In bar 5, Price takes us to the remote chord of Gm+6 (using an enharmonic pivot of A-sharp, B-flat) giving the music a sense of 'stepping away' from reality. The voice ascends chromatically to F#, an important note framing the phrases, and a piano chord of D/A. If the harmonic departure of the second phrase gives a reason not to be lulled into a false sense of security, the third vocal phrase with its clear B major outline provides a more predictable harmonic accompaniment in bar 7. The combination of rising melodic phrases, triplet figuration and brightening harmony give a sense of innocent joy at the remembrance of a family home. The flattened notes of chord ii (bar 7<sup>3</sup>) and chromatic falling in inner part is one example of a tinge of 'blue' harmony. Word-painting the richness of the word 'wool' is achieved with a spread chord that builds from a root of C-sharp, adding fifth, raised third, seventh and thirteenth. It resolves, not onto the dominant (F-sharp) but pivots over an F-sharp back to B in bar 10.

The lyrical use of the quaver figure generates rhythmical momentum, expanding to form an accompanimental interlude between verses. Here the sense of movement underlines the poetry, having moved from the comfort of the house to a remembrance of the smell of hay outdoors. The gentle dissonances against held pedal points and 'pastoral' sound of descending parallel thirds take us to rest momentarily on a C# minor chord (ii).

**Verse 2 b.14<sup>3</sup>–22<sup>3</sup>**

A conventional perfect cadence at bar 14<sup>3</sup>–15<sup>1</sup> moves us into the second verse.

The repeated F# in the melody aptly mirrors the poking of the sharp goose feather quill in bar 15, whilst the descending, inverted piano chords remind us of the introduction. There is a continuous melody for the first two phrases and a greater vocal range is explored and the quaver figure is used more freely in this central verse.

The semiquaver figure in the piano has dropped out of use. An abrupt harmonic change is now heard with the third vocal phrase and its accompaniment outlined in D major with an angular vocal line echoing the octave drop of the previous line. In the last phrase we notice the use of melisma for the first time in this otherwise syllabic setting. This special treatment for the word 'sleep' is perhaps a foreshadowing of the 'sleep' implied in the last verse. Word painting floats the notes effectively and the musical setting of the words 'dreamy' and 'peace' are facilitated by an extended metre and flowing descending groups of quavers.

Verse two and three are now continuous, with the end of phrase four accompanied by the flowing piano quavers, hastening the pace of the poem's journey directly to the last verse. Note the sequential treatment of the piano treble motif at b.21, the seventh harmonies and parallel falling chromatic movement of the harmonies here, evoking the language of Price's southern origins.

**Verse 3 and postlude b.22<sup>4</sup>–36**

If the poem references the 'forlorn' walking of a life-journey away from home in the setting of verse 3, the music does not dwell on this but underpins the sense of 'return' – the circular theme at the heart of the text. Learners will hear that the melody setting and harmonic accompaniment are *almost* identical to verse 1, and can discover for themselves what these differences are, in affirming the poet's message.

In bar 27<sup>2</sup>, a full, forte, minor seventh chord at the top of the arpeggio is heard. This adds a poignancy to the word 'would' to underline, arguably, the most significant line of the poem. In general, dynamics are used structurally as well as expressively throughout this song in that each verse has an extended crescendo in the middle.

The chord in verse 1 on the word 'wool' has the smallest of alterations now on the word 'shroud', changing from C#<sup>13</sup> to C#<sup>11</sup>. The brightness of the harmony is reduced slightly.

The voice part ends on an extended F# – the central note of the song's melody – and being the dominant rather than the tonic, this gives a sense of wistful drifting.

It is left to the piano postlude (as so often in Schumann's lieder) to complete the musical expression of the poem's meaning. The music repeats exactly the opening introductory material with a plain but final conclusive perfect cadence in B.

**Concluding remarks**

Travel's End has an accompaniment written by a pianist; its intricacies and agility is what gives the work its Art Song quality. At little over two minutes, this is a small taste of the music of this composer whose output is weighted toward larger-scale instrumental music.

Professor Doug Shadle says: 'Of course we should never get away from her race and gender identities, but we need to talk about just how *good* her music is, too ... Everything I know by Price I find fascinating, beautiful and absolutely worth all the attention her music is finally starting to have.'

## Margaret Bonds *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*

Settings of text have enabled Bonds to have a means to express the oppression experienced by African Americans. Her friendship with the Harlem renaissance poet Langston Hughes was to last until his death in 1967. The themes of his poetry gave Bonds the motivation and determination she needed to succeed in a world of extreme racism and she set several of his poems.

Bonds acknowledges the music of her forebears in her arrangements of spirituals. *He's Got the Whole World in His Hand* was arranged and orchestrated for the soprano Leontyne Price and became popularised by performances by vocal 'giants' such as Jessye Norman and Barbara Hendricks.

Known for her captivating Art Songs and arrangements of spirituals, Bonds also made a significant contribution to the music theatre and popular song repertoire.

### The score, poem and recordings

A score can be found in the volume, 'Rediscovering Margaret Bonds' edited by Louise Toppin / Videmus African American Art Song Series.

Note: there is a misprint in this score at bar 51: the word on beat 1 is 'sweep'.

This score is without expression markings which may indicate that the composer's intention was to allow the poem to generate the musical interpretation required.

Dr Toppin's own performance of the song can be found at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=GuJrBtyo3-g&list=RDGuJrBtyo3-g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GuJrBtyo3-g&list=RDGuJrBtyo3-g)

Bonds' text is by the American poet, Robert Frost. The poem was published in 1923, the song of the same title being composed in 1960.

### Interpretation and structure of poem

Learners will discover many sources interpreting the possibilities of meaning within Frost's words which have had several musical settings. In brief, the narrator is a traveller on a journey who pauses to reflect on the beauty and attraction of the natural world on a snowy winter's night. His clear desire to stay in the woods seems to be a metaphor to avoid re-engagement with life. In verses 2 and 3 the poet voices the traveller's thoughts projected through his horse. In verse 4 the narrator is pulled away from the peacefulness of the surroundings and reminded of the responsibility to keep 'promises' and that there are 'miles to go before I sleep'. Final rest, at the end of the day or at the end of life is not yet achievable.

The structure of the poem is fascinating: four verses of four lines with a distinctive rhyming pattern for the first three stanzas. Lines 1,3 and 4 rhyme; the final word of line 3 becomes the rhyming word to commence the following verse: 'Here' of verse 1 line 3, rhymes with 'queer', 'near' and 'year' of verse 2 and so on. The final verse does not follow the pattern – the poem comes to an end with a repetition of the profound conclusion.

### The song – detail

Learners should enjoy several repeated listenings before digging deeper into the score. They can get an overview of the pianistic qualities of this art song setting, experience the vocal setting as an interpretation of the poem and acquire a sense of the harmonic language Bonds uses. They will hear elements of African American traditions, chromaticism and the use of chords with added notes. Each verse is 16 bars in length with a 2-bar extension for finality at the end of verse 4. The vocal line faithfully adheres to the structure of the poem in its

three verses but repeating material is primarily rhythmical. Each phrase begins after a quaver rest and each verse starts with a similar melodic shape even though the pitches may be different.

### Bars 1–8, introduction

The song is introduced by 8 bars of solo piano, in duple metre, a key signature of Eb and in a moderate tempo. Several features of the accompaniment of the verses are foreshadowed here:

- harmonic uncertainty and an immediate playful avoidance of the home key provide an air of mystery on this snowy evening
- the slow rhythmic 2-bar pattern in the piano left hand references the plodding / trotting of the horse for four bars
- a decorative flowing upper piano part with a prevalence of semiquaver figuration

The longer note values of bars 7 and 8 together with the semitone and major 7th intervals suggest a slowing of the 'journey', to pause and contemplate difficult things amid a beautiful natural setting.

The harmony of the left-hand accompaniment is straightforward, using only tonic and dominant chords added-note chords. It is the right-hand piano part playing modal harmonies that give a sparkling depiction of the snowy night with both hands in the treble register.

### Bars 9–24, Verse 1

Frost's poem, on the surface, is a simple narrative. Bonds responds accordingly with a mainly syllabic setting in four phrases of 4 bars, each one ending on a longer note to reflect the traveller's 'stopping' to ponder.

The use of steady quaver chords in the piano left hand continue, now in a lower register and thickened to accompany the mainly single note melody of the right hand.

The harmonies of the left hand continue to replicate those in the introduction.

Rhythmic features that continue into the verse include the repetition of the second and third quaver harmonies / notes. Repetition of pitches is also a feature of the right hand piano melody and the vocal line. This repetition in the vocal line allows the words to be heard and their meaning understood. Rhythms and semiquaver note groupings in the verse accompaniment are often the same as those in the introduction.

The accompaniment in its harmonic ambiguity is more able to convey the depth of meaning and feeling within the subtext of the poem. The pitches of the vocal part are often in conflict with the accompaniment, e.g. the first vocal notes of bars 10, 11, 14, etc. Bonds uses the whole tone scale in bars 17–18 and harmonies become more chromatic as the right-hand piano part flows once more, high above the vocal part.

A sense of continuity and flow is achieved. There is continuity in the journey and an evocation of the traveller's thoughts and feelings.

### Bars 25–40, Verse 2

The mysteriousness of the accompaniment continues as the text describes the anxiety of the moment through the imagined thoughts of the horse. Left hand harmonies from bar 25 reference those heard at bars 1 and 4. There is no direct word-painting although Learners might want to consider how the music supports the meaning of the 'frozen lake', for example, or the 'darkest evening'. Much of the right-hand accompaniment is played in a higher octave than notated, emphasising the voice in the middle of the texture.

**Bars 41–56, Verse 3**

Here, the word painting is more explicit with rapid grace notes in the high piano register replicating the harness bells and the 'sweep of easy wind' revealed in shorter 'gusts' of right-hand figurations, bars 52–53.

**Bars 57–74, Verse 4**

After a link under the held final note of verse 3 that is reminiscent of bars 7 and 8, the harmonies of verse 4 are less chromatic and once again gentle and alluring. The wide-ranging piano left hand from bar 57 illustrates the 'dark and deep' of the woods.

The piano right hand no longer plays the single-line melody with chromaticism or other non-diatonic colouring. Apart from the downward pentatonic sweep to reflect the word 'deep', it is playing mostly diatonic added-note chords, frequently over a dominant pedal. The right-hand function has taken over that of the left, albeit in semiquavers now.

The pentatonic accompaniment of bar 60 (no Ab or D) is a moment for reflection of the potentially simpler choice to stay within the 'lovely' wood.

Harmonic ambiguity has been replaced by rich, warm chords suggesting the attraction of the security of the woods and relief from more travelling yet to be done.

On the word 'promises,' the diminished seventh over a B flat pedal is a point of harmonic tension from which the music subsequently relaxes towards its conclusion as the final line of text is repeated.

Whilst the voice remains on a long-held Bb on the final word 'sleep' the accompaniment continues to perform a conflicting role with its reiteration of B-natural. The inner parts of the final bar of accompaniment remind us of the introduction (b.7-8) before settling to rest on a clear Eb chord.

**Concluding remarks**

To take such a rich and yet simple poem and set it to music that compliments, supports and enhances the layers of meaning is a difficult task. As Professor J M Cooper asserts, 'The insight and musical genius required by that task were the stock in trade of Margaret Bonds.'

## Michael Nyman *MGV (Musique à Grande Vitesse)*

If there are aspects of 'metaphor' in the 'journeys' represented in the songs of Price and Bonds, Nyman's *MGV* may seem rather more literal. This is high speed music commissioned to mark the inauguration of the French high-speed TGV North European rail line in 1993.

The line would eventually service journeys from Paris to various French regions as well as connecting to London, Belgium and Amsterdam.

In Nyman's own account of the music, however, the composer explains that the piece was conceived of as 'an abstract, imaginary journey; or rather five interconnected journeys'. The music consists of five regions. A dictionary definition of 'region' suggests a geographical area without fixed boundaries, and this understanding is mirrored by music that generates both change and continuity of ideas from one region to the next.

The composer, with some humour, cautions against too literal an interpretation: 'the topography of *MGV* should be experienced without reference to planning, description or timetables. Tempo changes, unpredictable slowings down, bear no logical relation to the high speed of the Paris-Lille journey ...'

Studying this music will allow the Listener to uncover the objective *musical* means by which the composer generates a sense of landscape and changing moods – anticipation, reflection, excitement, joy or the sensation of relative movement and energy throughout the journey. Hearing this music for the first time listeners should, above all, experience the music as a *pure sound event* (Glass), without necessarily attaching complexities of interpretation and meaning.

### Score and overview

Learners will gain familiarity with the music by repeated listening both with and without the score. These notes will refer to rehearsal marks, **A**, **B**, etc., bar numbers and descriptions, enabling the listener to locate various 'events' in the music.

Where precise locations in the music are given, the superscript marking will refer to the crotchet beats in the bar.

Learners **must not** refer to timings on their recordings when answering questions on the examination paper. These will vary according to the individual recording and playback equipment used. They should aim to describe events, musical ideas, compositional techniques and the use of instruments clearly, referencing the structure of the music by region and rehearsal markings.

### I The Composer

Michael Nyman (b.1944) is a British composer who completed a Ph.D in English Baroque Music and scholarly editing in the 1960s. He worked as a music critic from 1968 and as a researcher and writer of his groundbreaking work, 'Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond'. (Published, 1974). The experimental music explored in his book included the compositions of Cage, Reich, Boulez, Stockhausen, Feldman, Glass and Cornelius Cardew, amongst others, and it was this work that led Nyman to compose.

### The Michael Nyman Band

In 1977 Nyman had gathered a loud 'street band' of musicians together, to perform arrangements of 18th-century Venetian popular music for a production at London's *National Theatre*. Its distinctive raw sound of medieval instruments together with bass drum, 'thumping' piano and soprano saxophone, performed with enthusiastic playfulness and energy, made for a distinctive sound. Some members of the Band wanted to stay together and others subsequently joined, e.g. John Harle (soprano saxophone) and Martin Elliott (bass guitar).



From the early 1980s the use of amplification became an important sonic trademark of Nyman's composing sound.

Performer participation has become an increasingly essential component of the creative process for Nyman.

## Output

Nyman is perhaps best known for his film scores (e.g. *The Draughtsman's Contract*, 1982; *The Piano*, 1993, *War Work: 8 Songs with Film* 2015) and music written more recently for 1920s silent films. His knowledge of Baroque practice was influential in the composition of many of his early film scores.

He has written several operas, song cycles and a piano concerto as well as music for dance. Travelling extensively, Nyman has composed and produced music working alongside a diverse range of collaborators from outside the western classical / experimental tradition.

## II Minimalism

Nyman is credited with being the first to use the term 'minimalism' in 1968 although the music critic Tom Johnston also claimed ownership of this descriptor. *MGV* uses large instrumental forces across a sizeable structure. How can the large sound force and immense structure of *MGV* be described as 'minimalist'? Which minimalist concepts are evidenced in *MGV*?

Compositions by the **New York** minimalists, (La Monte Young, Riley, Reich and Glass) share some common composing characteristics, including:

- the use of a small range of pitches, often shaped into cells or motifs
- repeating rhythmic ideas, e.g. pulsing quavers within relatively static harmony.
- cross rhythms generated by overlapping rhythmic cells
- additive systems: gradually extending a rhythm or a pitch idea as a linear transformation; rhythmic augmentation and diminution
- phase-shifting: over-layering a single idea at different starting places or being played at slightly different speeds, thereby going 'out of phase'
- non-western influences, e.g. Reich: Ghanaian drumming, Balinese Gamelan; Young, Riley, Glass, Indian classical music use of modes
- transparent presentation of structure and process that can often be *heard* by the listener moment by moment.

*MGV* certainly seems to fulfil the promise of an 'audible structure' – the listener is able to grasp a sense of the repeating and evolving fragments and patterns, progressing through an exciting sonic landscape.

## III *MGV* the music

Although in early minimalism there was a move away from programmatic depiction or the expression of a romantic expression of feeling, Nyman is working here in a slightly different realm: he gives us a narrative context and clues in the title of this set work, whilst cautioning us that this is an *imaginary* journey or journeys.

*MGV* was first performed by the Michael Nyman Band and the Orchestre national de Lille under Jean-Claude Casadesus on 26th September 1993.

It is scored for an orchestra with full, extended wind sections including piccolo, bass clarinet and bass trombone. Whilst the 'Band' is titled 'Concertante Group (Amplified)' using the Italian concerto grosso descriptor, the group is not used in the traditional baroque way. Their distinctive sound operates primarily as a block. Nyman tells us 'the Band ... lays down the tracks on which *MGV* runs'.<sup>1</sup>

## Mapping the five 'journeys' – an overview

The recording with its 5 tracks, marks the regions but these are not shown on the score.

1st Region	2nd Region	3rd Region	4th Region	5th Region
b.1–152	b. 153–302	b. 303–646	b. 647–801/2	b. 801/2–944
Introduction, A, B, C, D	E, F, G, H, I	J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S	T, U, V, W,	X, Y, Z, A1

The music runs continuously for approximately 26 minutes, the central region making up the longest section.

Nyman tells us that each section ends with a slow moving, mainly stepwise melody which is only heard in its 'genuine' form when the music reaches its destination. This gives weight to the concept of the journey as an evolving, organic 'whole'.

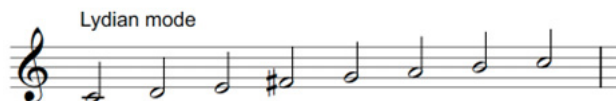
Nyman explains how the idea of 'transformation' is crucial to the changing identities of ideas whether rhythmic, melodic or textural, for example, as they pass through different musical 'environments'.

## Harmonic overview

The score is 'in C', helpfully enabling Learners to more easily identify scales, chords and keys without the complexities of transposing.

It is helpful to be aware of important features of the harmonic relationships and language that can be heard in the work from the outset.

- There are two important pitch centres: C and E
- The interval of a third is important throughout with many vertical harmonies being made up of triads with added seventh and ninths
- Whilst C and E majors are heard in substantial sections of the music other closely related scale patterns are also heard:



The Lydian mode is sometimes thought of as an even brighter scale than major version alone can convey. This is used particularly in J–K.

- E major, E natural minor are used freely and the Phrygian scale is heard in **V–W**, for example



## IV Detailed description and suggestions for study of the music

Learners can be encouraged to write out motifs and rhythms on manuscript paper to help them become familiar with the principal ideas. Marking the main ideas on the score in pencil will also help navigation of the music. Focus points are given for each section of the music but learners should be encouraged to make their own discoveries of compositional method in the music. It is important to take time to get to know the music of Region 1 thoroughly, noticing the subtle alterations to motifs / rhythms on subsequent repetitions.

The musical forces divide into a full orchestral grouping and the amplified Band instruments. The percussion instruments listed on the first page of the score are not heard at all until Region 5. Nyman's music is nevertheless extremely percussive, and Learners will notice how the use of accents and detailed articulation markings, together with the cross-rhythms generated by overlapping patterns in changing metres, generate a percussive quality from the various solo and ensemble instrumental combinations.

The Band functions very much as a 'rhythm section' within the music overall.

### 1st Region (bars 1–152, Introduction, A, B, C, D)

#### Bars 1–48 A (Introduction)

The Band alone start off the music, providing the 'chugging', steady motion that gives a sense of the enormous weight of the train and its journey from the outset. The 'edgy' sound of amplified saxophones, bass trombone, two violins, cello, bass guitar and piano fulfil both a percussive, accented role within the steady 4/2 time signature as well as outlining the important pitch-centres of C and E.

#### Bars 1–18

This section is played entirely by The Band with the texture dominated by a low pitch range. Nyman talks of 'rhythmic cycles' of different lengths played against the bass line pulse.

**Bar 1:** The first of these is a 9-beat cycle heard from bar 1 in the alto and baritone saxophones and upper piano part. The cycle consists of seven crotchets, two quavers accented on the second of the pair and a crotchet rest. It is heard over the 4/2 bass line so the displacement moves steadily forward by one beat, pumping out steady pitches and generating exciting cross-rhythms as the journey begins.

**Bar 8:** The 9-beat cycle, previously heard on a single pitch is now transformed in a second layer heard in the soprano saxophone from 9<sup>5</sup>. This motif is derived from the first one, now an 11-bar cycle; the two quavers are tied to a crotchet and have an added pitch outlining a minor third. The solo cello part beginning at b.9 also has a displaced 11-beat cycle but now in quavers with rhythmic syncopation as notes of the harmony are outlined at the end of each cycle. These rhythmic devices provide an increasing sense of momentum. The important relationship of a third now moves between A and C in the bass from bar 9 and this will happen again later.

Note how the use of subtle dynamic markings for every new entry, e.g. the pulsing quaver, violin octaves in bar 14, ensure a smooth transition in building up the ever more complex texture.

**Bar 19:** Low orchestral sounds creep in to join the Band for the first time. The bass guitar (sounding an octave lower than written) provides the root of the C major chord and horns and bassoons frame the sound of a sustained open fifth. The music creates a sense of the journey opening out into a changing landscape whilst the inner cycling pulsing of cross rhythms continue. Variations on this textural idea are developed by Nyman throughout the work in different ways.

**Bar 35:** As more orchestral instruments join the sustained slow moving harmonic outline, an important melodic motif played by the alto saxophone, doubled by Vln. 2, cuts through the texture at this point. The 6-beat shape

followed by 3-beats of rests ensure it is clearly heard here and again when the bass moves down a minor third in b. 41. This energy filled motif contrasts the longer sweep of 'melody' in the sustained parts.

Learners will be able to hear and see the triadic nature of the harmonies both vertically and laterally in the music but there is also dissonance generated by the stepwise melody moving against held pedal tones.

#### A–B (b.49–99)

Following a crescendo, the distinctive 'blast' of a high note cluster at **A** above the continuing C harmony / pedal might almost be the sound of the train horn. The TGV horn is an essential safety feature of high-speed trains on the TGV rail network, warning people to stay clear of the tracks and platforms when a train is arriving or departing. Not only practical, the TGV horn symbolises the power, speed and importance of the train.

This section alternates 4 and 3 time-signatures; the 2-bar note-clusters alternate over C and E pedals. The saxophone motif has dropped out, allowing a focus on the sustained clusters.

**Bar 61:** The horns' motif, a rhythmically augmented version of that heard in oboe and solo saxophone, outlines the all-important interval of a third, creating gentle dissonances against pedal parts in the texture. In the bar, Learners will notice how overlapping thirds contribute to the harmonic sound world of the music: A, C, E, (piano, flute, clarinet) G, (melodically in the soprano sax before and after this point) B, D, (oboes, horns, trumpets etc.) F (alto sax).

**B bar 75:** Amplified upper strings drop out for the first time but the pulsing quavers remain in the Band-cello and start in divisi sixths in the orchestral violas.

The listener hears an important melodic shape at this point emerging from the accented violin part with its dropping octaves, coloured by sustained voices in clarinets and horns. A sense of a sustained 'landscape' emerges from the composite mix of energy-filled accents and long sustained materials.

#### C–E (b.100–152)

Following the use of a limited number of pitches in motivic materials so far, the introduction of a rising scalic pattern in oboes, violin I and violas offers a significant contrast. In this first statement the figure turns back on itself before continuing up the stepwise pattern; the off-beat accent of the quavers remains a prominent feature.

The Band violins begin and continue a figure with a similarity to the rhythms of the saxophone motif of bar 35.

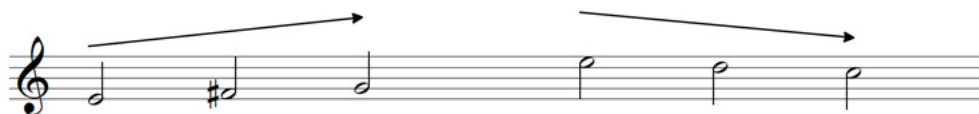
The scalic pattern outlines the natural minor scale but with a raised sixth (Dorian mode) with piano and bass notes confirming a tonal centre of E. Many of the subsequent entries of this scalic figure have subtle alterations that learners can track through this section to bar 115. For example, there may be a use of the same form of the scale but starting on a different note, such as the oboe and string entries, b.104 with its B minor harmonic foundation or altered forms of the scale such as those heard at in bassoons, b.105<sup>3</sup> or clarinets at b.111<sup>2</sup>. When a solo trumpet takes over at b.114<sup>3</sup> a return to the E tonal centre is confirmed.

Bar 116 (**D**) introduces a slow-moving melodic pattern in minims heard in violins with flutes an octave higher and trombone and cellos an octave lower. It is the mainly stepwise conclusion that Nyman has told us signals the conclusion of each Region.

This is a rhythmically augmented version of the ascending scalic pattern focussing mainly on the first three notes, whilst the busy underpinning of patterns in the Band continue in their clear harmonic outline. There is a heightened sense of grand, 'larger-than-life' quality with the addition of the sustained lines.

The scale pattern starts on E (b.116<sup>3</sup>), moving to the scale pattern starting on C (b.122).

Sifting through the detail of the rising and falling scalic patterns and their chord outlines, there is, however, no escaping the 'pull' of pitch centres C and E and of the 3-note rising and 3-note falling pitches:



The music is expansive even though the range of pitches is small. The composer seems to 'stretch time' within this 'first' journey using augmentation of patterns initially presented in notes of shorter duration. He creates a sense of an open landscape, together with a simultaneous sounding of busy patterns and long sustained sounds, carefully orchestrated.

## 2nd Region (bars 153–302, E, F, G, H, I)

The music continues without pause but the 2nd Region is marked by changes in metre, key and instrumentation. After the constant crotchet movement of The Band, these amplified sounds drop out for the first time leaving a purely orchestral sound. The expansion of materials suggest the journey moves on from an initial urban setting.

The music has now changed to a triple metre after a long 4-2 section. The prominent C# of bars leading up to **E** signal a key signature change to (enharmonic) D-flat.

The rising scalic figure with its syncopated, steady crotchets and off-beat accented quavers provide continuity. Long held pedal notes in lower strings and bass trombone continue to add cohesion.

Perhaps the most startling change is the complete cessation of The Band after its constant steady presence in the music of Region I. The music is now carried by the orchestral horns, lower brass and strings.

A sense of propulsion in the music is conveyed in numerous ways; compositional features which learners will notice include:

### E (b.153)

- a 12-beat scalic pattern now made up of whole tone intervals to start with; semitones end the upward rising motif in horns and trombones
- a D-flat pedal in lower strings and bass trombone; varied accents and bar lengths disguise the starting point of each loop of the scalic pattern
- a 9-bar repeating pattern in orchestral violins similar to the opening bars of The Band's music now emphasising the interval of a major second. The Band strings enter in b.158 with a continuous pattern of Eb, Db (*non divisi*), accented every 2 crotchet beats, confirming the movement of the train, the major second interval (played on adjacent strings) here adding a percussive quality
- repeating patterns and ascending melodies have increasing quaver movement, for example, the extension of the scale pattern in horns from b.164.

### F (b.171)

- this heavily articulated melody now transfers to the rich lower timbres of bassoon, tuba, and electric bass soloists, pumping out the theme in a lower octave
- adding to the texture at b.187, quaver, chromatic extensions of the theme are developed providing movement above the continuing stasis of the D-flat pedal; quaver movement is also noticed at the start of scalic phrase

- the brightness of trumpets supplement the upper woodwind sustained chords as they alternate between major and minor intervals to reach a glorious D-flat chord in b.192
- b.192 the baritone sax cuts through with its distinctive colour as major seconds (thumbs) and are pulsed out in the piano part
- b.204 – a firm return in brass, bass trombone and electric bass of the crotchet-led theme with a sense of the vast openness between the land and sky depicted by the interval of the lowest to highest note in the bar before G; there are many details of instrumentation to observe here.

The brightness of the upper sustained chords seem as if they could be portraying, not the warning of the TGV horn but an expression of the joy of the journey.

### G (b.217)

- the orchestral brass drop out whilst electric bass, bass trombone and baritone sax start with a further modification of the rising scale
- other parts include a rapid semi-quaver inverse pedal feature in orchestral violins adding to the sense of 'high-speed'
- vln.1 and upper saxophones in the Band play a short figure first heard in bar 35
- the playfulness of this section dominated by strings gives way to a steady augmentation of the quaver figure, now in crotchets in upper voices at b.225;
- at the same time, the horns, bassoon and lower strings begin a climb up the whole tone scale motif, now further augmented in minim values
- parallel fifths and fourths dominate the texture here over a pulsing quaver figure in the electric bass supporting the mesh of motifs as they interlock
- the combination of both Vln.1 and piccolo **ff** (con forza) with steady, upward moving bass parts is powerful and impressive at this point
- b.235: the prominent D-flat of the previous section becomes a C-sharp enharmonically and there is a key change to the momentary brightness of A major
- candidates will be able to hear the overlapping of each of the motifs in various rhythmic forms and the rising parallel chords, particularly in the piano and woodwind parts

### H–I (b.241–302)

This section provides further scope for candidates to observe textural and rhythmic combinations as various instrumental groups first exchange and alternate short phrases and then longer phrases with longer note values (from b.249). Alternating between D-flat and A (and so maintaining the aural major third relationship) key signatures continues. The slow-moving minim theme in lower wind instruments begins at b.257 and reminds us of the theme represented in Region 1 b.116 **D** (here in E minor).

There are several interesting features from I that lead us out this 2nd Region of Nyman's music:

- A key change to E major with the minim theme now including a G-sharp
- The use of a punctuating pair of accented woodwind quavers starting each bar from b.263, extended to a set of four quavers a b.275, hinted at by the horns in the six bars leading up to this section, thus ensuring overlap and continuity
- b.275: two themes are heard clearly together – the rising scalic figure in horns 2&4 and trumpets 1&2 (dominated by crotchet and quaver movement) **and** horns 1&3, middle-strings and trumpet 3 play an augmented minim version heard previously in flutes and strings from the start of **I**.
- full chord repeated quavers continue to provide clear harmonic support (particularly heard in the piano part)

- b.281 – here the ‘raw’ sound of amplified saxophone voices in the Band with orchestral clarinet parts, cut through the busy texture with increasing quaver interjections in upper woodwind and bass trombone. They continue to frame the upper and lower registers on the journey.
- The static harmonies and sustained pedal parts are clear and revolve around a relatively small number of notes, but it is the overlapping of parts moving in different note values, together with the stepwise movement of the ascending figure that generate some dissonance and interesting rhythmic accentuations against the pulsing quaver values

### 3rd Region (bars 303–646: J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S)

This is the longest ‘journey’ forming the central portion of the piece overall. There are four subdivisions within this region.

In J and K there are musical ideas we recognise, providing continuity. For the first time we have metronomic changes to the basic minim pulse as well as more clearly defined changes of tonal centre, harmonic pace and mood from L–N. The relationship between the Band and the orchestral group changes focus as the music unfolds in this region. It is important to remember that the amplification of the Band instruments gives them a special capacity to cut through the orchestral texture and affect the balance of sound perceived by the listener.

#### J–K (b.303–380)

Learners will notice the following main features:

- a change of key signature with harmonies in C indicating a strong sense of the Lydian mode
- the ‘chugging’ texture in the Band with its off-beat accents provides a familiar solid foundation for
- the return of the string melodic shape heard previously at B with off-beat accents and dropping octave pattern giving a continuing sense of energy and propulsion but now over a G pedal rather than C
- at the same time a short, 9-crotchet quaver figure in clarinets and band alto sax cycles across the 4/2 metre; the restricted range of notes outline a minor third pitch range
- the orchestral timbres are gradually incorporated as the music journeys skyward (b.316) and the two groups share motifs and materials
- many instances of patterns using just 2 tones, 3 descending pitches and small expansions of the quaver pattern can be found as the section climbs to clear shift in gear at **K**
- with a change of key signature and tonal centre now in E major, the Band dominates with the expanded quaver texture now across a range of a perfect fifth
- the sustained wind and accented string parts create a sense that the journey has reached a place of ‘freewheeling’ stasis, at least for now
- the major second clusters in muted trumpets heard at b.343 remind us of the opening of Region 2 but now with a change of timbre; this small motif becomes part of the textural fabric
- the new faster pace of harmonic change at b.361 adds a richness to the journey at this point with clear shifts between C-sharp minor / E major, A and B major harmonies with soft dissonances generated by added thirds in the motivic patterns
- many of the established patterns are now heard across both instrumental groups, (apart from the lower brass) in the expansive approach to **L**. The music has been at a loud volume since b.350 but notice how richness and intensity are increased by the use of instrumentation and pitch range.

#### L–N (b. 381–446)

On this part of the journey, the change in the music is a persuasive reason to imagine a change of landscape, perhaps from urban to open country, from bustling to calm and occasions for a more relaxed frame of mind for the traveller. Learners should identify the ways in which the composer uses his ideas to generate these changes of perception, even within an imperative of an ‘imaginary’ journey.

The sense of a slower speed at **L** is not entirely due to the change of metronome marking but also due to the cessation of the accented rhythmic energy portrayed in the previous bars by the Band. Legato playing is indicated for the quaver movement continuing in orchestral upper strings and baritone sax and there is a sudden fading of dynamic in many of the sustained notes at **L**. The rich cello melody, interwoven with the trombone movement from b.381 relies once more on the three ascending notes of E major.

The sustained tonic and dominant combined pedals throughout **L** (an idea heard in Region 1) frame a gradual increase in both dynamic and pitch range as flutes join the legato trombone crotchet figure.

The return of the Band at **M** comes with a return to the original faster tempo and a reoccurrence of an almost full texture of competing accents and cross-rhythms. The rich cello melody now in unison with high double bass in treble clef continues; the alto sax melody from b.36 returns, now in E and doubled in octaves by the soprano sax. A sense of busier environment is evoked in the more rapidly changing harmonic basis of this section as electric bass pumps out the bass notes of triads changing every one or two bars.

As the cello melody gradually expands its pitch range through **M**, (now given strength by clarinet and horn reinforcements) so there is a new addition of a minim triplet figure (b.427) against the underlying 4/4 – a further rhythmic augmentation of the simpler five pitches of the E scale. The note range expands as the music climbs to a sonorous climax at b.445 where the distinct layering of ideas in specific pitch ranges and grouping of timbres that has dominated this section achieve crystal clarity.

All the pace is taken off the music when it slows at **N**, including a momentary break at the end of b.445. The number of instruments playing is substantially reduced as we enter a different sound world on the journey.

The 'dropping-octave' figuration first heard at **B** is barely recognisable in this version with sustained pedal notes on D-sharp and later, E in support of the minor chord sonorities focussed on G-sharp. Score instructions specifically direct that this figure comes from the outside desks of the string players. A very different sound world is generated here with low pizzicato strings adding weight without volume in their open divisi chord shapes emphasising fifths and octaves.

The Band blends with the orchestral group in continuing the augmented triplet pattern in strings, bowing lightly over the finger board (*sul tasto*). Saxophones sustain the high B pedal note and rock between F-sharp and G-sharp. Harmonically the mood of the music has fallen to the minor side of the key signature, generating an altogether more reflective mood.

The Band has lost its role as driver of the music until rapidly repeating semi-quavers at b.482 propel the music forward to a fuller texture of familiar rhythms.

#### O–R (b.494–622)

Previously heard ideas are now presented in a faster tempo with the two instrumental groups sharing the energetic motifs, now in the key of D. This section, the fastest so far, is threaded through with statements, often in the brass instruments and learners will be able to suggest links to other materials. They should track the key changes and their effects as well as changes in motivic length, texture, instrumentation and continuity. Aural features include:

- cross rhythms generated between upper strings with lower brass fragments against the solid metrical pulse of the Band
- a descending, expansive wind melody, dominated by horns from b.530
- **P** – a legato rising string melody with a short, bright trumpet motif in thirds with offbeat, accented quavers as the key now moves upwards from D to E
- an expanding trumpet melody from b.573



- **R** – a passage of rich harmonic complexities, with smooth voice leading and use of suspensions contrasting with the more abrupt juxtaposition of chords heard in the music so far
- after a passage alternating D and G major chords leading up b.584, the harmonic shift to a chord Ebm<sup>7</sup> (enharmonic), Ab etc. at **R** is startling and these rich harmonic shifts are particularly pronounced in this passage
- an elongated yet meandering melody line (orchestral violins) in which the shaping is uncharacteristically interspersed with leaps as well as step wise movement (see below)
- at b.604 the saxophone rhythmic figure (b.35) joins the texture.

### S (b.623)

In contrast to the cross-rhythms and off beat accents of the previous section, this return to the region's opening tempo presents us with ideas that focus on the main beats of the bar with solid 2 and 4-bar phrasing heard in low flutes minims, 3rd horn and low trumpets, and trombones. A comparison with the violin melody just heard in **R** is particularly worthwhile. Learners might

- compare the registers covered and instruments used for the melody from **R** with those heard from **S**
- compare the note lengths used for the melody from **R** with those used from **S**
- compare the shaping of the melodies noting that from **S** the melody focuses on the 3 whole tone pitches of b.585–6, F#, G#, A# (see below)
- compare the continuous, angular melody at **R** with the 7-note mainly stepwise

groupings at **S** (just note heads are tracked for ease of showing the overall *shape*)

#### Shaping the melody at **R**



#### Shaping the melody at **S**



Parallel harmonies throughout **S** shadow the movement of the melody:

F# (b.623), Ab (b.627), B flat minor (after b.627) with added notes from various motifs and figurations generate dissonance against the pedal notes as previously. The tempo change at **S** marks the start of a slower, more relaxed conclusion to this region. Bright major thirds on E and A alternate in a sense of harmonic peak at **T**.

The rarified atmosphere of **R** gives way to an immediately solid sense of direction as soon as Region 4 begins.

### 4th Region (bars 647–801: T, U, V, W)

#### T–U (b.647–717)

The loss of the playful cross-rhythms which dominated Region 3, has been prepared for through **S** enabling the journey now to take on a different feel.

There is a common, shared purpose as various instrumental groups combine to play the ascending scales. The tempo increase a little, and all the main ideas the composer uses in this section of the region are laid out in the first two bars of **T**.

These are:

- the return of the rising scale figure from Regions 1 and 2
- a short pulsing oboe figure, expanding in pitch and using the accented quaver motif, out of phase with the underlying 3/2
- high open inverted pedal intervals in strings
- regularly accented quaver pattern in electric bass, supporting harmonies
- a 4-quaver figure in muted trumpets and horn producing a sound almost like a mechanical 'sound-effect'
- alto then soprano sax alternate sustained 'calls' using the important major second interval

If the use of the Lydian mode here is expansive with a characteristic sense of innocent wonder it is darkened by the dissonance heard at the top of each ascent when the F# sounds against the E in woodwind and electric bass and the underlying harmonies turn to the minor mode as the melody starts its ascent on E at b.653.

The Band gradually comes back to share an expanding texture with some subtle developments in the textural figuration at b.672. Learners should track the way the composer uses instrumentation and minimalist composing techniques to work with these materials through this section.

#### V–W (b.718–801)

The Band drops out of the journey at this point apart from the edgy, off beat resonance of the baritone sax / orchestral bass clarinet figure. The pulsing of a G major chord inside the C pedal parts generates a harmony dominated by thirds.

After the dominance of the falling F# motif, the (*molto*) expressive 7-note melody, led by horns from **V**, contains an F-natural, with pedals and sustained notes outlining the importance of a pitch centre of E with its open fifth and minor third. This move to a predominantly modal harmonic world gives an impression of a stranger, more remote territory. The Phrygian mode, with its flattened 2nd interval emphasises a more desolate, darker landscape.

Long sustained 7-note melodies expand into ever more angular shapings; they overlap and compete with the baritone sax figure as it becomes more insistent from within lower woodwind and amplified cello sonorities. Alternating accompaniment chords of Em<sup>7</sup> and C reinforce the major third relationship that has so dominated the music of MG V.

At **W** the Band once more energise the music and the 7-note angular melody transforms into its stepwise pattern, sounding predominantly in the Band saxophone voices, marked *pesante* (*molto espress.*) The texture is enlarged and expanded with a return of the long triplet figure in flutes and violins with a sense of stasis in the harmony as the electric bass outlines the notes A, C and E.

At b.787 the journey direction is powerfully propelled forwards by the four-note rising bass and its harmonies starting on the 5th note of the Phrygian scale.

The brass parts cut through the sound increasing as the music drives towards the end of this region. In b.800 the bass line with its insistent accents, gets 'stuck' on the leading note of the scale, unable to quite reach its destination.

Throughout **W** there has been something particularly buoyant and jubilant about this music but Nyman has reserved a startling interjection (b.802) in announcing that there is even more to come in the final segment of the overall journey.

### 5th Region (bars 802–944: X, Y, Z, A1)

After the minor modality of Region 4, the music for this final region is bridged by the pounding of crotchet triplets (three players on high pitched drums of different pitches), that continue right to the end of the music. This is the first time that drums are heard and provides a startling interruption. The feeling of the previous minim pulse is lost for these eight bars of drumming which themselves bear no easy relation to the (faster) return of 4/2, against which they will establish a cross-rhythm that will persist for the whole of this region.

At **X** (b.803) we hear a **ff** fully expressed statement in E major of the buoyant, rhythmically characterful motif first hinted at in saxophones, Region 1, b. 35 and memorably at **M**. The new drum timbre cuts rhythmically across the clear 2 beats per bar in the instrumental parts.

Learners should be alert to the important presence of the three rising and falling tones predominantly in E as the music concludes but present throughout this region in different keys:



The following important moments of this region should be noted:

- b.822: trumpet and trombone motif derived from quavers 6-8, (b.819)
- b.823: the motif is extended to hold a long G# in trumpets and trombone, sounding against an F# pedal in oboe 3,
- b.826 the motif in horns joins the oboe on a long F# in horns in b.827, still sounding against a G# in trumpet and trombone
- b.831–4: brass timbres cut through to frame the motif now in A but with many accented strong-beats on G#, proving gritty colouring
- **Y**: the three rising and falling tones are now heard in G in saxophones and orchestral strings. Notice the shimmering effect of Vln.II in the use of performance techniques here as the music rises to its culmination
- **Z**: major thirds are prominent in the textures here with a return to E major and a repeating harmonic use of chords I, V, I, vi, IV, vi etc. with punctuation from regular lower repeated woodwind chords
- b.889: the main minim melody built on the notes outlined above, begins in orchestral strings, joined by trombones and lower woodwind from b.899, expanding ever upwards with piccolo reinforcement
- b.908: a broad crotchet melody, falling version of the theme is heard momentarily in strings before its majestic return in minim values at **A1**

In section **A1** the superimposition of the quaver melody of **X** is heard to cut through in piccolo and Band-strings. From a **ff** starting point, players are directed to crescendo to the end of the piece. The rising and falling versions of the themes in their various metrical presentations (quavers, crotchets, minims) are enhanced by the brightness of the orchestration in the highest registers of woodwind and strings. The music is left inconclusive on a final **fff** dominant chord.

## IV Some summary comments

Familiarity with the music will enable Learners to understand this music, not as complex in terms of *ideas* but as inventive and detailed in the manipulation and instrumentation of a small number of minimal materials.

There is variety and repetition in the motion of the music 'along the journey'. Instrumental colour, skilful combinations and playfulness with fragments and repetitions of ideas are consistent themes through every region.

Nyman says that each interconnected journey 'ends with a slow mainly stepwise melody which is only heard in its 'genuine' form when the piece reaches its destination'. In what sense 'genuine'? Region 5 is certainly the moment when all the motivic, rhythmic and textural ideas come together in multiple expressions in an organic 'whole'.

The piece reaches its destination on a huge tutti chord of B major which is not the 'ending' in E that might be expected at the conclusion of this colossal work. The tight relationship between the keys of C and E that dominate the travel of the music comes to a musical 'non-conclusion' on the dominant chord of E-major. A lack of finality / arrival is perfectly in keeping with the minimalistic principle of generating an infinite continuum.

Although this imaginary journey has reached its destination, perhaps there will be other journeys.

**School feedback:** ‘While studying Cambridge IGCSE and Cambridge International A Levels, students broaden their horizons through a global perspective and develop a lasting passion for learning.’

**Feedback from:** Zhai Xiaoning, Deputy Principal, The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China

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