Lou Harrison and the Aesthetics of Revision, Alteration, and Self-Borrowing

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Abstract

Lou Harrison seems always to have been re-examining his older works, revising or updating them, reworking them into movements of longer compositions, or creating alternative versions. This article examines Harrison's revisions, alterations, and self-borrowings in terms of both technique and aesthetic objectives. Harrison's first reworking of a set of short pieces into an extended composition, the *Suite for Symphonic Strings* of 1960, resulted in a poly-stylistic work he found so attractive that he not only used the self-borrowing technique in later works (such as the *Third Symphony*) but also incorporated similar contrasts in most of his long works, whether or not they were based on recycled materials. Thus the process of revision and self-borrowing in itself helped Harrison develop a distinctive personal style – one marked by its own eclecticism.

In developing the works-catalogue for my 1998 biography of Lou Harrison (1917–2003),[1] I faced a particularly thorny problem: Harrison's propensity to revise, alter, reappraise, rescore or borrow earlier works had resulted in such an intricate network of interrelated compositions that its scope was difficult, if not impossible, to convey to the reader. Harrison abandoned numerous pieces after their inception, revisiting and completing them years later; other pieces were substantially revised – sometimes repeatedly – after performance, publication or recording. In still other cases, Harrison incorporated altered (or simply re-orchestrated) versions of earlier compositions in newer works; and many pieces survived in several alternative versions, all musically viable and authorized by the composer. Harrison, it seemed, was constantly looking backwards, reworking short pieces into movements of longer ones, altering old works for new performances, or simply completing business he had left unfinished years earlier.

As a case in point, consider the percussion trio *Tributes to Charon*, whose second movement ('Counterdance in the Spring') was completed as an independent work in 1939 (performed repeatedly and recorded), but whose first movement ('Passage thru Darkness') was not written until 1982.[2] Harrison had envisioned 'Passage thru Darkness' from the outset

1 Miller and Lieberman, *Lou Harrison: Composing a World*, now reissued in paperback as *Composing a World: Lou Harrison, Musical Wayfarer*. The author, a musicologist and flautist, met Harrison in 1982 and performed and recorded much of his chamber music prior to writing this book.

2 For a history of this composition and a critical edition, see Miller, ed., *Lou Harrison: Selected Keyboard and Chamber Music, 1937–1994*.

– including one of its most distinctive features, the use of alarm clocks – but having failed to meet the deadline for the first performance, he put the project on the back shelf. When percussionist William Winant asked him for a new work for a sixty-fifth birthday concert, Harrison realized his old vision. He had no sketches or verbal notes for the movement – only its title and a detailed concept in his memory.

But the Harrison of 1982 is not the Harrison of 1939, and the first movement of *Tributes to Charon* is not the one he would have composed in the first place – despite its incorporation of ideas he had developed at that time. The movement's form, language and textures were influenced by forty-three years of compositional experience, evolving aesthetic viewpoints and international cross-fertilization in the musical world, interactions with performers, and numerous other factors. In 1939, after all, Harrison was still at the beginning of his career, exploring percussion ensemble music, but also trying his hand at twelve-tone serialism, Ruggles-inspired dissonant counterpoint, and neo-baroque forms. By 1982 he was a seasoned composer who had rejected many of his earlier compositions and found a distinctive voice by exploring cross-cultural syntheses between Asian and Western musics. The watershed in Harrison's career – which prompted him to define a personal stylistic path – was a nervous breakdown in 1947. During his slow recovery, he re-evaluated his compositional language and quite deliberately turned away from dense contrapuntal writing to more transparent textures, diatonic and pentatonic modes, just intonation and melodicism.

At the same time, however, Harrison's compulsive retrospection provided a connective tissue to earlier works. Up to the year of his death, he took pleasure in re-examining old pieces, some of them complete, others only a few measures in length. Harrison had no hesitation about pulling unfinished works out of his drawer after they had lain dormant for years. Listed in Figure 1, for instance, are seventeen compositions based on sketch material dating anywhere from five to more than sixty years earlier. These works, along with completed compositions that Harrison rescored, revised or altered, help us chronicle the turns and twists in his productive career.

To unravel the complex web resulting from this continual self-reappraisal, we must distinguish between several related, but non-identical concepts. The term revision, for instance, implies preference. For the composer, the revised version of a work generally represents improvement – a version intended to replace the original. Whether performers, conductors, editors or analysts would agree with the composer's assessment is quite beside the point: given the choice, Harrison and other composers would most often characterize the revised version of a work as 'better' in some way than the original. Alteration, on the other hand, is more neutral, suggesting the possible creation of alternatives as well as replacements. Considerations other than improvement may come into play: adapting the composition for a different ensemble, for example, or developing a version suitable for insertion in a longer multi-movement composition. Both revision and alteration imply changes to the actual notes of the composition, as opposed to rescoring without fundamentally disturbing pitches, rhythms or form. As we will see below, any one of these processes – revision, alteration or rescoring – might lead to self-borrowing, a compositional procedure Harrison used frequently after 1960.

Com-pletion date	Title	Sketch date	No. of inter-vening years
1942	Canticle 2	1937	5
1943	Six Cembalo Sonatas	1934	9
1952	Fugue for Tudor	1947	5
1952	Mass St Anthony, 3-5	1939	13
1959	Concerto for Vn and Perc Orch	1940	19
1962	Holly and Ivy	1951	11
1966	Easter Cantata	1943	23
1970	Air in G minor	1947	23
1975	Elegiac Symphony, 1	1958	17
1977	Binary Variations	1934	43
1978	String Quartet Set, 1	1940s	> 35
1982	Third Symphony, 1	1958	24
1992	Songs in Forest	1951	41
1993	Old Times Tune for Merce Cunningham	1952	41
1994	Vestiunt Silve	1951	43
1995	New First Suite, 3	1930s	> 60
1995	Suite for Cello and Piano	1948-49	46

Figure 1 Seventeen works by Harrison based on earlier sketches.

These various categories might at times overlap. Rescoring a composition for a new performance medium often suggested to Harrison substantive compositional revisions. On the other hand, revising a work to meet the composer's satisfaction might make it so attractive that he would provide alternative scoring options to stimulate more performances.

Two characteristic examples illustrate the interaction of motivations that could result in multiple versions of a particular work. Harrison's second opera *Young Caesar* originated in 1971 in a version for puppets, requiring five singers and five instrumentalists who played a host of Western and Asian instruments.[3] In 1988, as an outgrowth of a productive relationship with the Portland Gay Men's Chorus, Harrison created an alternative version of the opera for human singer-actors and standard orchestra. His objective was not to replace or improve the puppet opera, but rather to create an equally acceptable alternative, performable by opera companies. In the process, however, he made substantial changes to the score and added many numbers for male choir. But the 1988 production received a devastating review

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3 Commissioned by Encounters, a concert-presenting organization in Pasadena, the premiere of *Young Caesar* took place on 5 November 1971 at the California Institute of Technology.

in the local press,[4] and to a large extent, its problems stemmed directly from the process of alteration: scenes that worked with puppets proved ineffective – sometimes even tedious – with human beings. Characteristically, Harrison took the criticisms to heart and continued to rethink the work, vowing to 'get it right before I die'.[5] In 2000 he revised the 1988 score by writing seven new arias and restoring some of the unusual tunings present in the 1971 original. He then entered into negotiations for a Lincoln Center production of the opera's third version. However, the director and conductor proposed additional changes, some of which Harrison accepted, others of which were anathema to him. Regrettably, Harrison died before these issues could be resolved. We are left, then, with four choices, none of which is satisfactory: (1) an eclectic puppet opera that is difficult to perform (the five instrumentalists in 1971 played violin, viola, p'iri, psaltery, harp, koto, ocarina, various side-blown and end-blown flutes, sheng, a portable organ tuned in Pythagorean intonation, numerous percussion instruments and a set of metallophones tuned in just intonation that Harrison had built with his partner William Colvig); (2) an alternative version for standard orchestra, soloists and large male chorus that proved less than successful; (3) a group of arias Harrison wrote to repair the problems of the second version; and (4) a set of modifications to the third version proposed by a conductor and a director. In short, despite Harrison's attention to this work over a period of thirty years, we have no satisfactory version of the opera.

The *Mass to St Anthony* had a similarly convoluted history. It began its life in 1939 in a version for voices and percussion.[6] After Harrison completed the vocal parts for the five movements of the Ordinary and the percussion parts for the Kyrie and Gloria, he abandoned the project for thirteen years. When he returned to the Mass in 1952, he changed its scoring to trumpet, harp and strings. His motivation was entirely pragmatic: he feared that percussion would not be permitted in the church. Whereas Harrison never disallowed the 1952 alternative, which has been performed often and recorded three times,[7] he would often talk nostalgically about his original concept for the piece. In 2001 (at my urging) he restored the original percussion parts of the Kyrie and Gloria – the former entirely from his memory – but also added a piccolo to the Kyrie. In this case, then, we have two equally successful, but strikingly different versions, both sanctioned by the composer: a five-movement setting from 1952 for chorus, strings, harp, and trumpet; and a 1939 version of the first two movements – revised in 2001 – for chorus, percussion and piccolo.

Figure 2 lists twenty-four works that Harrison subjected to substantial revision after their premieres. (Compositions altered in minor ways are not given. If they were, the list would more than double in length.)

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4 David Stabler's article, ' "Young Caesar" Fails Despite Noble Narrator, Dancers" ' (*Portland Oregonian*, 10 April 1988), followed a sold-out première performance. More sympathetic reviews appeared in *Just Out* ('Bithynia or Bust', May 1988) and *The Advocate* ('Lou Harrison's Gay Opera, *Young Caesar*, is a Sensuous Masterwork about Love and Loss', 13 September 1988).

5 Personal communication with the author, 1994.

6 Harrison began the Mass on 1 September 1939, in response to Hitler's invasion of Poland.

7 Two LP recordings include Vox SVBX-5354 (Gregg Smith Singers and the Orpheus Ensemble) and Epic LC-3307 (N.Y. Concert Choir and Orchestra, M. Hillis, conductor). The Oregon Repertory Singers recorded the piece on compact disc (Koch 3-7177-2H1) with Gilbert Seeley conducting.

| Original date	Title	Revision date	Comments
1936	Ground in e minor (pf)	1970 1988	1970: ground bass varied 1988: doubled in length by the addition of a middle section & coda; used as 2nd mvt of A Summerfield Set
1937	Largo ostinato (pf)	1970 1982	1970: major alterations to the melodic line. 1982: further revision and orchestration as the 3rd mvt of the Third Symphony
1937	France 1917—Spain 1937	1968	B section and abbreviated D.C. added
1937	Passacaglia (pf)	1942 1946 1948	1942: orchestrated for Canticle #2 1946: scored for 2 pianos 1948: revised as mvt. 3 of First Suite for Strings 1995: abandoned
1939	Mass to St Anthony, mvts 1,2	1952 2001	1952: changed from percussion to trumpet, harp, strings 2001: percussion scoring restored with piccolo added
1941	Jephtha's Daughter (chamber ensemble)	1963	Expanded
1942	Canticle #3 (perc ens)	1989	Ocarina part heavily ornamented (occasioned by recording)
1948	First Suite for Strings	1995	1 mvt revised, 2 mvts new but based on earlier works unassociated with the original composition
1948	Suite #2 for Strings	1950s 1985	Ending of first movement altered twice.
1949	Marriage at the Eiffel Tower (septet)	1961	Revised and orchestrated
1949	Suite for Cello and Harp	1994	Mvt 2 revised
1951	Io and Prometheus (pf)	1985	Scoring changed to chamber ensemble; voices added
1952	Rapunzel (opera)	1996	Many small changes (occasioned by recording)
1959	Concerto for violin and percussion	1974	Last mvt cadenza altered (occasioned by recording)
1964	Symphony on G	1966	New finale
1971	Young Caesar (opera)	1988 2000	1988: puppet opera rescored for humans; chorus added; 2000: seven new arias and duets
1975	Elegiac Symphony	1988	Third mvt revised; fourth mvt extended
1976	Gending Samuel (gamelan)	1986 1989	Opening section used in A Cornish Lancaran (saxophone and gamelan); 1989: sax part revised.
1976	Bubaran Robert (gamelan)	1981	Trumpet part added to the gamelan work
1982	Third Symphony	1985, 2002	Numerous changes, especially to the finale
1986	Gending Aphrodite (gamelan)	2002	Changes in scoring and text
1986	Cornish Lancaran (gamelan, sax)	1989	Second section added to the saxophone part
1986	New Moon (septet)	1989	New fourth movement
1990	Fourth Symphony	1991, 93, 95	Mvt order changed; numerous small changes

Figure 2   Harrison's revisions of individual works more than ten years after their composition or involving substantial alterations after the premier.

These repeated revisions pose serious conundrums for performers (to say nothing of the headaches they create for publishers), who are faced with multiple versions of a particular work. During the composer's lifetime, his publishers would often scramble to provide performers with the latest changes. And recordings of many of Harrison's works disagree with scores.

Even if we *can* determine Harrison's preference, it is not clear that we are always obliged to privilege his latest version. In a typical example, there are three different endings for the first

movement of his *Suite No. 2 for Strings*. The original 1948 version, for string orchestra (Example 1a) was published by Merrymount Music Press. But on one copy of the print Harrison changed the penultimate bar to the version shown in Example 1b. Though undated, this handwritten change was apparently prompted by a recording of the piece by the New Music String Quartet – an alternative *scoring* authorized by the composer; their 1952 recording contains this revised ending.[8] But Harrison was apparently still dissatisfied, for more than thirty years later he amended still another copy of the print as shown in Example 1c, and wrote beneath the score, 'rev., Nov. 12, '85.' In an orchestral recording prepared seven months after Harrison's death, the conductor laid down endings 1 and 3, but ultimately chose Harrison's *original*, which she found more successful than his later versions.[9]
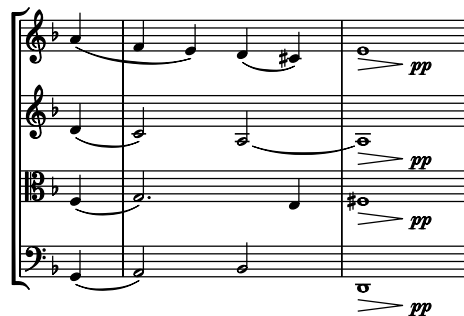
a. Original version (last six measures): 1948
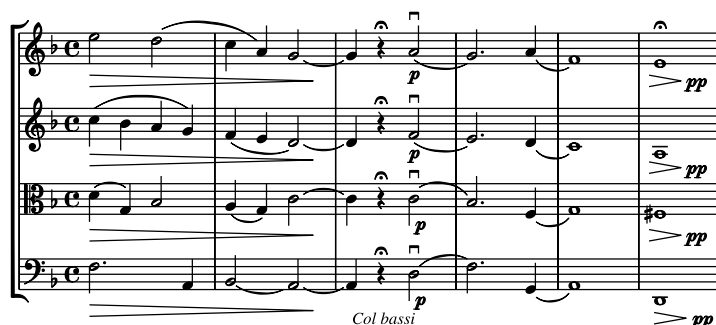
b. First revision (last two measures): 1952
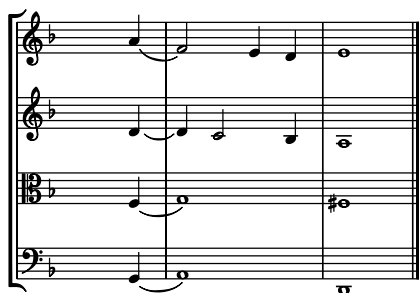
c. Second revision (last two measures): 1985

Example 1 *Suite #2 for Strings*, movement 1: Three alternative endings.

Although we may question the conductor's right to reject Harrison's revisions, we must also remember that he placed great trust in performers and conductors, whose comments often led to major changes in his scores. For instance, after the initial rehearsal of *A Parade for*

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8 Columbia issued the recording (ML-4491) in 1952 and deleted it from the catalogue six years later. See Carol Oja, *American Music Recordings: A Discography of 20th Century U.S. Composers*, 153.

9 *Lou Harrison: For Strings*, The New Professionals Orchestra, London; Rebecca Miller, conductor; Mode Records 140 (2004).

M.T.T. (commissioned by the San Francisco Symphony in 1995), Michael Tilson Thomas suggested substantial alterations, including the addition of an organ to the orchestra. By the second rehearsal, Harrison had not only added the organ, but had also changed numerous details in response to Thomas's suggestions.[10] Furthermore, Harrison typically left many interpretative matters to the discretion of performers. Once, during a recording session, I offered him two viable renditions of a particular passage. He refused to choose: 'Whichever way you want it, my dear,' was all he would say.[11]

Although Harrison may have been more compulsive than most composers about reworking his pieces, the types of revisions and alterations we have seen thus far are not particularly unusual. A number of composers in distant and recent history have looked back on their earlier works with a view towards creating improvements or alternatives. Stravinsky comes to mind immediately. So does Ives. Harrison, who edited several of Ives's pieces under the composer's guidance, remarked that 'as soon as a new work was printed, Ives would go to the store and buy a copy and start revising'[12] – an anecdotal account tinged with a measure of hyperbole, to be sure, but not entirely fabricated, as the spate of writings about Ives's many revisions aptly demonstrates. Although the motivation for these revisions has been hotly debated in recent years,[13] there is little doubt that Ives's aim in most cases was to 'improve' his works. C. P. E. Bach provides a historical model of a composer who seemingly could not leave his earlier compositions alone, whether they had been published or not. A huge number of his instrumental pieces survive in multiple versions, some of which were designed as replacements, others of which provide alternatives bearing the composer's imprimatur. In fact, the latest version of many of Bach's pieces is simply that: the final iteration in a cycle of changes that would likely have continued had he lived longer.[14]

More unusual than revision for the sake of improvement, or alteration designed to create alternatives, is the process of self-borrowing. Harrison's use of this compositional strategy resulted in one of the most notable and often cited characteristics of his large works: they

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10 The author was present at the rehearsal and performance and drove the composer home from San Francisco, during which time he discussed the proposed changes.

11 The work in question is the *First Concerto for Flute and Percussion* (1939)**,** recorded in 1994 for the compact disc *Lou Harrison: Birthday Celebration* (Musical Heritage Society 513616L). The recording is scheduled to be re-released on a CD to be published by Mode Records in Fall 2005. The passage in question was from the central slow movement; I inquired whether Harrison preferred the crotchet at the end of one measure to be played as a release from the previous minim or as a pick-up to the following measure. The effect was quite different, one interpretation providing a sense of conclusion, the other of forward momentum.

12 Lou Harrison, interview with the author, 31 March 1994.

13 In an article in 1987, Maynard Solomon suggested that Ives back-dated some of his compositions to make them appear more ground-breaking (Solomon, 'Charles Ives: Some Questions of Veracity', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 40 [1987], 443–70). The article prompted numerous responses, among them: J. Philip Lambert, a communication in *JAMS* 42/1, 204–09; Solomon's response to Lambert in the same issue, 209–18; J. Peter Burkholder, 'Charles Ives and his Fathers: A Response to Maynard Solomon', *Institute for Studies in American Music Newsletter* 18/1 (1988), 8–11; Carol Baron, 'Dating Charles Ives's Music: Facts and Fictions', *Perspectives of New Music* 28/1 (1990), 20–56; and Gayle Sherwood, 'Questions and Veracities: Reassessing the Chronology of Ives's Choral Works', *Musical Quarterly* 78 (1994): 429–47. Burkholder summarizes the arguments in his article on Ives in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* second edition, vol. 12, 686.

14 For a discussion of C. P. E. Bach's revision process, see my article 'C. P. E. Bach's Instrumental "Recompositions": Revisions or Alternatives?'; for Bach's reworkings of his keyboard sonatas, see Darrell Berg, 'C. P. E. Bach's "Variations" and "Embellishments" for his Keyboard Sonatas'.

feature striking – sometimes startling – internal contrasts in compositional style. Self-borrowing resulted directly from Harrison's habit of re-examining his earlier pieces: enamoured with the potential for excellence in some of his rarely performed compositions, he breathed new life into them by inserting them (usually in revised form) into longer works. In this regard Harrison may be compared more readily to Handel (one of his icons) or to J. S. Bach, whose self-borrowing in works such as the *Mass in B Minor* and the *Magnificat* has been explored at length elsewhere. Various hypotheses about why Bach might have resorted so frequently to this so-called 'parody' technique in his later years have been proposed: a desire to elevate a secular work to a more serious – sacred setting; an expedient solution to the exigencies of a highly demanding job; or a *horror vacui* that came with age.[15] But George Stauffer recently suggested a motivation more in line with Harrison's:

> Bach's strong desire for perfection, witnessed in the ongoing refinement of details in the Well-Tempered Clavier or the Great Eighteen Chorales, may have led naturally to parody technique, which offered extensive opportunity for reworking earlier scores. . . . For the aging Bach, parody became a central part of the creative process, enabling him to be increasingly self critical. The supreme refinement of the B-Minor Mass is due in large part to the parody process.[16]

Harrison's self-borrowing, as we shall see, was rarely occasioned by expediency and was certainly not due to a lack of musical ideas. Instead, he discovered that his early works provided the stimulus for new, and sometimes quite different compositions. For Harrison (as for Bach) self-borrowing 'became a central part of the creative process', but in his case the procedure helped mould the composer's fundamental aesthetic preferences quite early in his career. Harrison's first use of self-borrowing in 1960 resulted in a dramatically eclectic symphonic work he found so appealing that he began to incorporate similar contrasts in most of his long works – whether or not they were based on recycled materials.

The *Suite for Symphonic Strings*, 1960

In 1960 Harrison for the first time created an extended multi-movement work from a series of older short pieces. The *Suite for Symphonic Strings*, written to fulfil a commission from Broadcast Music, Incorporated (BMI), draws upon six completed compositions dating from 1936 to 1952. As Figure 3 shows, these six works were combined with three new movements to create an eclectic nine-movement *Suite* featuring dramatic contrasts.

Why Harrison resorted to self-borrowing to develop this *Suite* is not entirely clear, but we might point to several factors operative at the time. One was his inexperience in writing independent large-scale orchestral works. Before receiving the BMI commission in 1960, Harrison had nearly always relied on a text or dance plot to organize long

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15 For a review of the literature on Bach's parody process and discussion of the reasons it might have proven attractive, see Hans-Joachim Schulze, 'The Parody Process in Bach's Music: An Old Problem Reconsidered' (especially 18–20).

16 George B. Stauffer, *Bach: The Mass in B Minor*, 29.

Mvt	Title	Earlier work (scoring)	Date	Treatment of source
1	Estampie	none		
2	Chorale	Chorale for Spring (piano)	1951	New middle section added
3	Double Fugue	Double Fugue (unspecified)	1936	Slightly revised
4	Ductia	none		
5	Lament	Triphony (piano) Trio (strings)	1945 1946	Heavily revised
6	Canonic Variations	none		
7	Little Fugue	Fugue for David Tudor (piano)	1952	Slightly revised (material reordered in one section)
8	Round	Almanac of the Seasons (pf or chamber ensemble)	1950	(Original lost)
9	Nocturne	Nocturne, mvt. 1 (2 violins; tack-piano)	1951	Minor alteration (6 mm. omitted on repeat)

Figure 3 *Suite for Symphonic Strings*, 1960: Relationship to earlier works.

compositions.[17] When he had attempted, in 1948, to write an *independent* string orchestra suite, he found the resulting work so problematic that he did not allow it to be performed or published, and finally, in 1995, he tossed out or revised much of it.[18] In response to a Louisville Orchestra commission in 1955, Harrison chose to write for eight baritones as well as the orchestra so that he could structure the work's form on his own Navaho-inspired poetry.[19]

Furthermore, the BMI commission came during a dry spell in Harrison's career. While resident at Black Mountain College in 1951–53, he had not only completed the *Mass to St Anthony*, but had also written his first opera (*Rapunzel*), *Seven Pastorales* for orchestra, the *Suite for Violin, Piano, and Small Orchestra*, and a host of small pieces for keyboard, guitar, or chamber ensembles.[20] But from the time he returned to California in late 1953 to the end of the decade, his creative output slowed dramatically. Part of the reason was the simple need to earn a living: Harrison worked long hours as a forest fire fighter and an animal hospital nurse – and then kept himself awake at night with drugs in order to compose. Despite these Herculean efforts, the only substantial works he completed during the years 1953–59 were *Strict Songs* (for the Louisville Orchestra), the *Concerto for Violin with Percussion Orchestra*, and *Cinna*, a twelve-minute solo for tack-piano (a piano with thumb tacks [i.e. drawing pins]

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17 A good example is the octet *Solstice* (1950), written to accompany a dance by Jean Erdman, but subsequently performed often as an independent thirty-minute instrumental suite. One notable exception, however, is the *Suite for Violin, Piano, and Small Orchestra* (1951).

18 Harrison completed the first version of the five-movement *First Suite for Strings* in 1948. The Suite's third movement had already developed from a series of revisions, beginning its life as a *Passacaglia* in 1937 and then becoming a movement of the orchestral *Canticle #2* (1942), and then a two-piano *Ground* (1946). In 1995, Harrison threw out this movement entirely and replaced it with a new one. In addition, he expanded the fourth movement from twelve to forty-seven bars and replaced the fifth movement with a new 'Chaconne'.

19 The resulting work, *Strict Songs*, has been recorded in its original version for eight baritones and in a revised version for SATB chorus and baritone solo (Louisville Orchestra recordings 58–2, R Whitney, conductor; Musical Heritage 513616L, Nicole Paiement, conductor). The SATB version is scheduled to be re-released by Mode Records in Fall 2005.

20 For a list of Harrison's works up to 1997, see Miller and Lieberman, *Lou Harrison: Composing a World*. The works-list has been updated and extended to the year of Harrison's death in the paperback edition, *Composing a World: Lou Harrison, Musical Wayfarer*.

inserted in the hammer felts). In fact, he wrote no works at all in 1956, and an extended cantata begun in 1958 remains incomplete. Furthermore, in his new residence in rural Aptos, California, Harrison found himself cut off from the hotbeds of activity – and inspiration – in the new music world.

So one can imagine that the BMI commission, though welcome, may have caused Harrison some anxiety, or at least bewilderment. During a time of low output he was faced with creating an extended orchestral suite for a high-profile national organization without the guidance of an external organizing mechanism. Harrison found inspiration for the *Suite* by revisiting a series of older works, each of which had potential for success in orchestrated versions. The combination of these works provided a framework for the new piece.

Harrison subjected most of his borrowed materials to substantial revision. For the second movement, 'Chorale', for instance, he orchestrated a piano piece (*Chorale for Spring*) written for dancer Katherine Litz at Black Mountain College, but doubled the work's length by inserting a new middle section. The original composition consisted of a single page with five systems of slow, rich chords notated in exact rhythm but *senza misura.* (Example 2a shows the first system.)[21] The orchestrated version creates an organ-like effect, the string ensemble functioning as a single cohesive unit (Example 2b). For the new middle section, however, Harrison introduced contrast: a thinner texture and a dialogue between the basses/second violins (who play an eerie flautando, non-vibrato melody spanning four octaves) and the rest of the strings (who answer with a subdued response in their lower registers; Example 2c).

For the *Suite*'s third movement, Harrison dusted off a lengthy *Double Fugue* for unspecified instrumentation from 1936. He expanded two of its sections slightly and condensed another, but otherwise adopted this twenty-four-year-old dissonant contrapuntal work with minimal change except for orchestration. Example 3 shows a developmental episode near the opening of the movement that Harrison doubled in length to create greater dramatic momentum.[22]

The fifth movement ('Lament') stems from a 1945 piano piece *Triphony*, which Harrison had already transformed, without revision, into a *Trio* for strings. The four-and-a-half-minute *Trio* had garnered exceptional praise from critics. After its premiere at the New School in January 1947, Virgil Thomson wrote:

> Lou Harrison's Trio is composed in a syntax that would be exactly described, I think, as non-differentiated chromatic secundal counterpoint. It is both consistently dissonant and deeply felt. It has clear phraseology, spontaneity of gesture, a humane discourse. Except for the Webern pieces of 1909, it is the real news of the weekend. Few composers anywhere in the world are writing integral counterpoint – today's language of the young – with either Mr. Harrison's skill or his intense and straightforward expressivity. He is a composer to watch. And to listen to.[23]

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21 The original manuscript is in the Katherine Litz collection at the New York Public Library.
22 The manuscript of the *Double Fugue* is in Special Collections at the University of California, Santa Cruz.
23 Virgil Thomson, 'Music', *New York Herald Tribune*, 27 and 28 January 1947.

a. *Chorale for Spring* (piano, 1951): opening
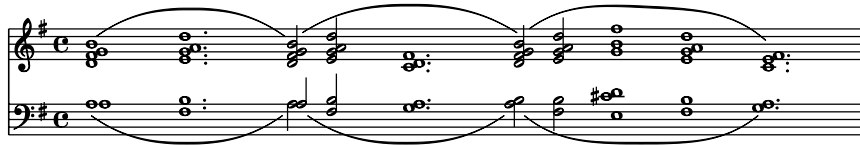
b. *Suite for Symphonic Strings* (1960), second movement: opening

c. *Suite for Symphonic Strings*, second movement: beginning of the new middle section (m. 27–39)

Example 2 *Suite for Symphonic Strings*, second movement ('Chorale') and its model.

a. Measures 35–53. The section between the brackets is expanded in the revision

b. Original version, from the 1936 *Double Fugue*, of the bracketed passage in example 3a

Example 3 *Suite for Symphonic Strings*, third movement ('Double Fugue').

Despite such critical acclaim, Harrison altered the *Trio* extensively when he revisited it for use in the *Suite for Symphonic Strings*. The beginning and end of the two works are closely related, though not identical. Harrison also pulled measures 47–65, 84–94, and 95–105 of the 'Lament' quite literally from his earlier work, but then recomposed the rest of the movement. Perhaps he hesitated to reuse a composition that had not only been performed but also reviewed. More likely, however, Harrison's aim was to improve *Triphony/Trio*, a piece that dated from the years just before his breakdown. His compositions from this troubled period are intensely dissonant and dark, and by the time he composed the *Suite for Symphonic Strings* in 1960 he had rejected the majority of them. But the *Trio* attracted him sufficiently that he undertook the task of reworking it. Although he overhauled much of the earlier composition, he retained the *Trio*'s harmonic language, despite the fact that he no longer composed in this idiom.

The resulting 'Lament' emerged as a sophisticated recollection of Harrison's pre-breakdown musical persona. One of the most dramatic and moving parts of the 1960 *Suite*, it is tinged with desolation and loneliness, and its dark foreboding mood is pierced by cries of anguish (see Example 4).

The 'Lament' contrasts sharply with the surrounding 'Ductia' and 'Canonic Variations' (both composed in 1960), and with other post-1950 movements, such as the 'Chorale' and gentle 'Nocturne' dating from Harrison's Black Mountain College years. The 'Nocturne', which functions as a coda to the thirty-seven-minute *Suite*, is virtually unchanged from its original version for two violins and tack-piano. Example 5 shows the opening melody in the violins, played over a dissonant drone in the violas.

In summary, then, the *Suite for Symphonic Strings* acquired a particularly eclectic character because Harrison combined pieces written both before and after the most important stylistic divide in his creative life. Its nine movements trace his compositional path from his flirtation with 'ultra-modern' techniques of the 1930s and 40s to the melodicism and textural transparency characteristic of his post-1950 style. But Harrison was not troubled by these internal contrasts; in fact, he found the juxtapositions alluring. And he assured that his next orchestral work – completed only four years later – would feature similar contrasts.

Later symphonic works: The *Symphony on G* and *Third Symphony*

Figure 4 summarizes the development of Harrison's first symphony, the *Symphony on G*, as it took shape over a period of nineteen years.

In 1947, during his hospital stay, he completed a short score for the first movement, wrote parts of the 'Largo' and 'Waltz', and composed the 'Song', which he dedicated to John Cage in gratitude for Cage's help during Harrison's illness. Two years later Harrison revised the 'Song' as one movement of a *Suite for Cello and Harp* and later orchestrated the revised version for use in the symphony. In 1953 at Black Mountain College he wrote the 'Polka'. Even after finishing the symphony in 1964, Harrison continued to revise it, replacing the finale with a new one in 1966.

Example 4 *Suite for Symphonic Strings*, fifth movement ('Lament'), beginning.

Example 5 *Suite for Symphonic Strings*, ninth movement ('Nocturne'), beginning.

Mvt	Title	Compositional history	Related works
1	Allegro	1947, Dec 26: Short score completed	
2	Largo	1947, summer-fall: Partially written	
3a	Waltz	1947, summer-fall: Partially written	
3b	Polka	1953, Oct. 9: Short score completed	
3c	Song	1947: Short score completed; rev. 1949	Used in Suite for Cello and Harp, mvt 4, 1949
3d	Rondeau	(unclear)	
4	Largo—Molto Allegro	1964; replaced with new mvt, 1966	

Figure 4 *Symphony on G*, completed 1964, revised 1966.

The evolution of the *Symphony on G* offered the opportunity for stylistic consistency, particularly since all of its movements are twelve-tone and based on the same row. But Harrison managed to introduce contrasts into this work that are similar to, though not as extreme as, those in the *Suite for Symphonic Strings*. Example 6 shows excerpts from the rugged, modernistic opening movement and the Stravinsky-esque, neoclassical 'Polka'. Harrison's personal modifications to the Schoenbergian twelve-tone technique provided the flexibility he needed to create such contrasts. He not only permitted repetition of subsets of the row but also devised a rotational principle by which he could start on any note of any row-form as long as he circled back to the beginning to include all twelve notes.[24] Both techniques are in evidence in Example 6. After two statements of the row at the beginning of the symphony, Harrison used P3 beginning on note 10, and then cycled back to the beginning to pick up notes 1–9 (measures 5–7). The 'Polka' begins with I1 starting on note 7 and repeats subgroups of the row internally to create the infectious opening theme. Some might argue that Harrison tweaked the twelve-tone process so drastically that movements like the 'Polka' counter its aesthetic aims. But to Harrison, such criticism is pointless. 'Any

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24 Harrison also used these principles in his first opera, *Rapunzel*, discussed in Miller, 'Method and Madness in Lou Harrison's *Rapunzel*', especially 97–101.

compositional process can be used for any effect,' he said. 'It's like painting with red one day and blue the next.'[25]

The *Symphony on G*, then, builds on the polystylistic aesthetic of the *Suite for Symphonic Strings* but without depending on earlier works to create such contrasts. Nevertheless, in later works Harrison continued to employ the self-borrowing method he had used in the *Suite*: he found that it stimulated his creative energies and harnessed his fertile imagination. For other large-scale works, such self-borrowing became his standard procedure. Figure 5 lists ten extended compositions that incorporate revised or altered versions of earlier works. In this table, 'minor changes' include orchestration or non-structural modifications such as ornamentation of the melodic line. In other cases, revisions involved the expansion, abridgement or recomposition of sections of the piece, sometimes with changes to the work's harmonic or melodic language as well. Note that all of Harrison's symphonies are included in this list: three movements of the *Elegiac*, five movements of the *Third*, and two movements of the *Fourth Symphony* are based on previous compositions.

By the time Harrison composed his *Third Symphony* in 1982, he had refined considerably the art of recycling old works into new ones. As Figure 5 shows, the symphony is nearly as eclectic as the *Suite for Symphonic Strings*: the models for its five recycled movements span the years 1937 to 1981. The evolution of the symphony's slow third movement elucidates Harrison's approach to revision and self-borrowing, and demonstrates the process of transforming an early piano piece into a mature symphonic movement reflecting the composer's development over a period of more than forty years. The original work, *Largo Ostinato* (1937), was composed in the highly chromatic language characteristic of Harrison's prebreakdown years. Even after his movement away from this expressive language in the early 1950s, however, the *Largo* retained enough of an allure that Harrison was reluctant simply to abandon it. So in 1970 he reworked it, creating a new piano version more in line with his current aesthetic. Twelve years later this revised version formed the basis for the symphony movement – after being subjected to further revision.

Figure 6 shows a schematic diagram of the symphony movement with comparison to the two earlier piano versions. The sections in bold – the introduction, bridge, interludes and coda – remained virtually unchanged from the 1937 original. But Harrison substantially altered the melodic material of the A and B sections, while retaining unchanged the underlying ostinato. Example 7 presents the three versions of the A section.

Not only did Harrison ornament, lengthen, and expand the range of the melodic line, but he also modified its language, reducing the amount of chromaticism, avoiding leading tones, and adding ornamental double grace notes that may have been suggested to him by his study of Chinese cheng in the early 1960s. On the cheng, an ancient Chinese instrument of the zither family, the strings are stretched over a common fixed bridge and then over individual movable bridges on the soundboard. With the right hand, the player plucks the strings between the movable and fixed bridges; with the left, s/he presses and then releases the portion of the string on the opposite side of the movable bridge, thus raising the pitch before

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25   Lou Harrison, personal communication, Fall 2001.

a. Tone row, original form and versions used in this example

b. First movement, beginning

c. Third movement, 'Polka', main theme

Example 6 *Symphony on G.*

Rev. date	Title	Orig. date	Earlier work	Degree of revision
1964	Symphony on G, mvt. 3c	1949	Suite for Cello and Harp, mvt 4	minor changes
1969	Orpheus (ten, ch, 15 perc)	1941	Labyrinth 3 (11 perc)	expanded; new mvts added
1973	Concerto for organ/perc, mvt 2 (organ solo)	1951	Double Canon for Ruggles (pf)	varied repeat; new ending
1975	Elegiac Symphony mvt 2	1942	Canticle 6 (orch), mvt 1	minor changes
	mvt 4	1947	Praises for Michael the Archangel (organ)	orchestrated; new 10-m. ending
	mvt 5	1942	Canticle 6 (orch), mvt 2	central section rewritten
1982	Third Symphony mvt 2a	1939	Reel to Henry Cowell (pf)	orchestrated; minor changes
	mvt 2b	1977	Waltz for Hinrichsen (pf)	orchestrated; minor changes
	mvt 2c	1981	Estampie for Summerfield (org)	orchestrated; minor changes
	mvt 3	1937	Largo ostinato (pf)	expanded, major sections rewritten
	mvt 4	1958	Political Primer, overture 1 (orch)	heavily revised: sections rewritten
1985	Three songs mvt 1	1941	King David's Lament (ten, pf)	minor alterations: ornamental figures
	mvt 2	1946	Fragment Calamus (bar, pf)	harmonies altered, texture thinned
1987	Clay's Quintet, mvt 3	1985	Faust, Gretchen's Spinning Song (sop, ch orch)	some revisions
1988	Summerfield Set (pf) mvt 2	1936	Ground e minor (pf)	doubled in length
1990	Fourth Symphony mvt 1	1983	New Moon, rejected 4th mvt. (cham. ens.)	some revisions: new figuration & counterpoint, repeated section
	mvt 4	1986	Foreman's Song Tune (gam)	orchestration of gamelan composition
1996	Rhymes w Silver (quintet), mvt 5	1943	Gigue, Musette (pf)	minor changes

Figure 5 Examples of Harrison's use of completed pieces in later multi-movement works. (The *Suite for Symphonic Strings*, 1960, is not included here. For the use of self-borrowing work, see Figure 2 above).

returning to the original note – in essence, creating a sliding double grace note. (A cheng built by Harrison is shown in Figure 7.) After Harrison studied the cheng in Taiwan in 1962, he not only composed for the instrument and built replicas, but he also evoked this characteristic effect on Western instruments by writing double grace-note figures (and inviting string players to slide between them).

The B section of the 'Largo Ostinato' underwent dramatic changes between 1937 and 1970, but then remained virtually unaltered in the symphony. However, one of Harrison's last projects was the revision of this section, in anticipation of a performance by the Columbus Symphony at a festival of his music at the Ohio State University. The proposed changes – including expansion by a measure and alterations in the melodic shape, creating a more gradual ascent to the climactic E flat – are shown in Example 8. Harrison was on his way to the performance when he died on 2 February 2003.

Although the revised version of the 'Largo Ostinato' is compatible with Harrison's 1982 aesthetic, it is not at all clear that his objective in modifying his old piano piece was to create stylistic consistency within the symphony. In fact, there are strong indications to the contrary, for the *Third Symphony* features as eclectic a range of expression as that in

Introduction
All versions basically identical
(chordal background added in fl, 1982)

12 — **A section**
1937: nearly half the length of symphony mvt; highly chromatic
1970: same length as '37; ornamented, less chromatic, rhythmically more flexible
1982: nearly doubled in length; even less chromatic

26 — **Bridge**
All versions basically identical;
sm. changes, '82

29 — Rpt end of A
1937: 4 meas.
1970: 2.5 meas.
1982: 4.5 meas.
large variation among versions

65

33 — Interlude
All versions basically identical

40 — B section
1937: chromatic, makes reference to m. 30-32
1970: less chromatic, melodic shape drastically altered; no reference to m. 30-32
1982: identical to 1970 for m. 41-46, 48-51
2002: m. 47 changed; new m. inserted before 48

51 — **Interlude**
m. 53-58 = m. 33-38
w minor changes in orchestration

59 — **Coda** (recalls introduction)
All versions basically identical

Figure 6 Harrison, *Third Symphony* (1982), structure of third movement ('Largo Ostinato') and comparison with earlier versions.

Example 7 *Third Symphony*, third movement ('Largo Ostinato'): Melody of the A section as compared to the 1937 and 1970 versions.

Harrison's other compositions. Compare the 'Largo', for example, to the 'Reel', for which Harrison orchestrated – with barely a change – a 1939 piano piece, and to the finale, which he adapted from an overture to an unfinished cantata begun in 1958 (Example 9). Rather, his motivation for repeatedly revising the 'Largo' appears to have been the preservation and enhancement of a piece he felt had strong potential. His goal in creating the 1970 piano
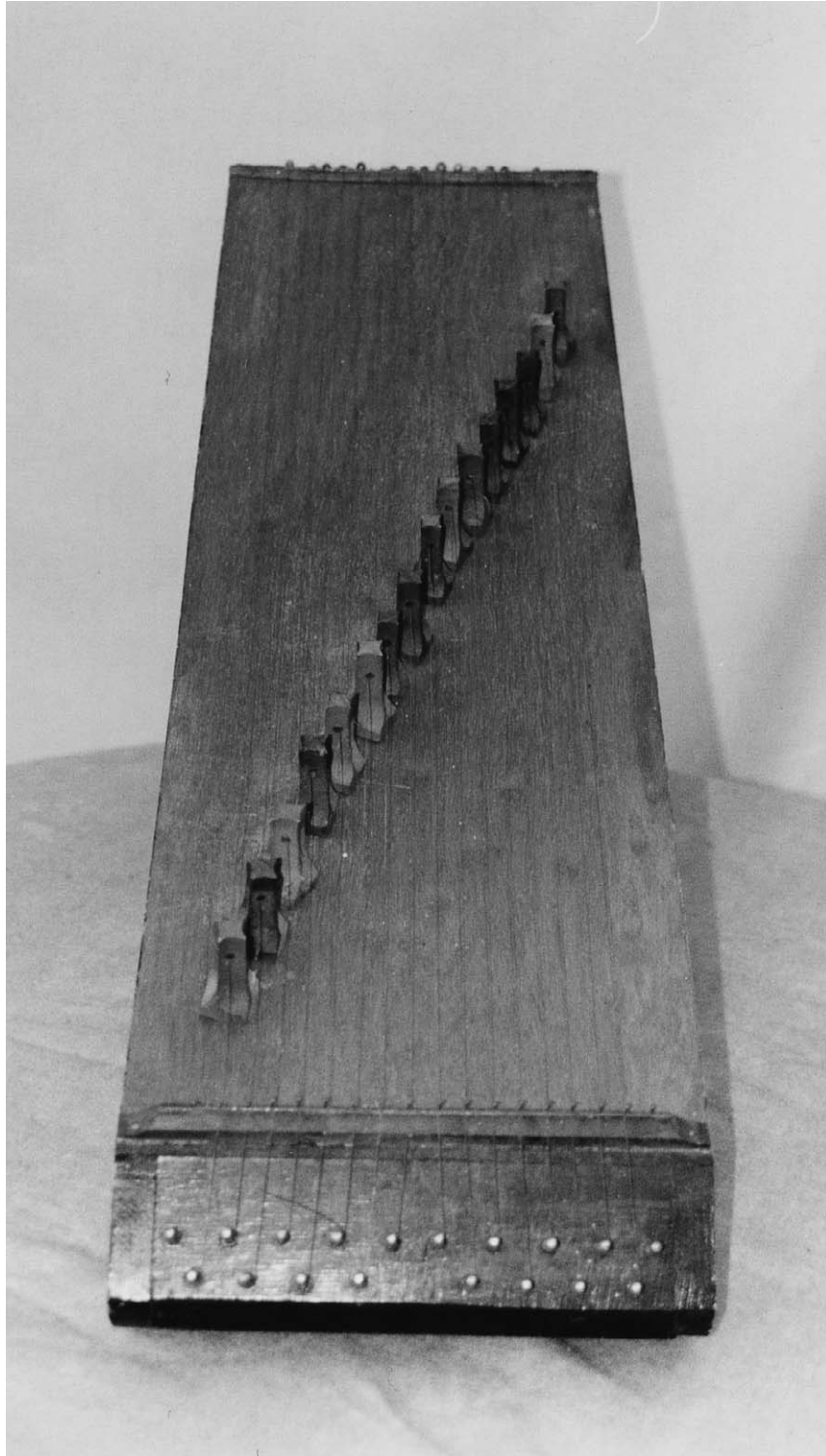
Figure 7   A home-made cheng built by Harrison and his partner, William Colvig. (Photo by Fredric Lieberman; used by permission.)

Example 8 *Third Symphony*, third movement ('Largo Ostinato'): Harrison's 2002 changes to the B section.

version was improvement – and his efforts were successful, for this version is decidedly more convincing than the original. When he began to compose the symphony in 1982, Harrison could envision this refined Largo in a more colourful guise, clothed in a rich array of instrumental timbres. But he needed to expand the composition's length to accommodate the requirements of a large-scale orchestral work. And the process of orchestration suggested additional changes.

a. Movement 2a ('Reel'), beginning

b. Finale, beginning
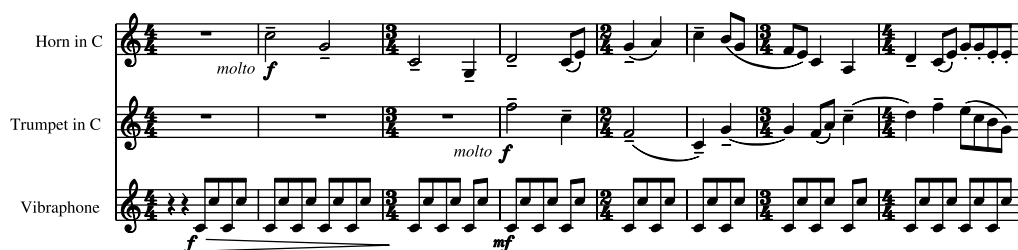
Example 9 *Third Symphony*, excerpts.

The advantages and problems of self-borrowing

Despite the ultimate success of Harrison's 'Largo Ostinato', the process by which the third movement of his symphony evolved raises questions about the efficiency of using old pieces as the basis for new ones – a procedure that could become as time-consuming as simply starting from scratch. And, despite his repeated attention to this piece, he seems never to have been entirely satisfied with the result, since he continued to revise it up to the year of his death. Why, then, did he make such extensive use of self-borrowing?

Harrison noted that revisiting old compositions placed boundaries on the wealth of stimulants that flooded his imagination when he began to compose a new work.[26] Historically, many of the Bach scholars treated self-borrowing as a problem: might Bach's use of this procedure imply that he was bereft of new ideas?[27] Harrison's experience suggests quite the opposite: for each new composition he found himself flooded with too *many* ideas. His first task was to limit his options by devising rigorous compositional restrictions,[28] focusing his technique through the inspiration of extra-musical factors, or reworking old pieces for which essential compositional strategies had been addressed previously.

Furthermore, the self-borrowing process allowed Harrison to concentrate on matters other than defining the work's structural and expressive premises. When Seattle composer Janice Giteck asked for Harrison's advice in fulfilling a high-profile commission from the San Francisco Symphony, he urged her to borrow from an earlier work. As Giteck explained:

> I had never written for full orchestra except in orchestration classes. So I was shaking in my boots. I asked Lou, 'Do you have any suggestions on how I can handle this situation?' He said, 'Give yourself the opportunity to think about the orchestra. Don't start with brand new material. Start with a piece you already feel good with and orchestrate it, so that you can spend all your time making the orchestra sound just wonderful.' I did exactly that. I expanded some chamber pieces both vertically and in terms of duration, and it worked really well.[29]

Harrison's transformation of the 'Largo Ostinato' into the slow movement of his *Third Symphony* illustrates his own advice. He had shown imaginative skills in orchestration as early as the 1940s, when he completed several projects for Ives: Harrison orchestrated Ives's World War I song 'He Is There!' on a commission from the League of Composers,[30] for example, and reconstructed parts of the *Robert Browning Overture* from sketches (the original was later discovered).[31] By 1982 he had honed these orchestration skills by

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26 Harrison, interview with the author, 26 May 1994.

27 See the discussion in Schulze, 'The Parody Process'.

28 It is instructive to recall the 'terror' Stravinsky felt in the face of 'the infinitude of possibilities' as he began each new work, and the palliative effect of severe compositional restrictions (see Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons*, 62–65).
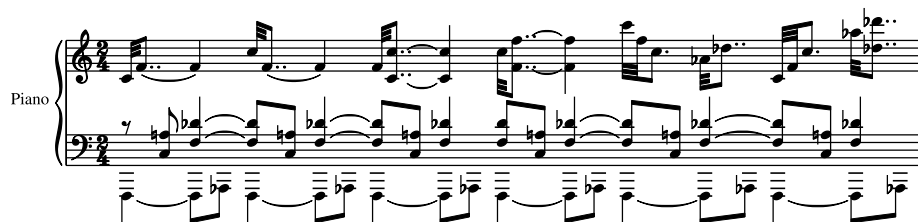
29 Janice Giteck, interview with the author, 30 August 1995 (quoted by permission).

30 The orchestrated version (entitled 'They are There!') is published in the widely-used *Norton Anthology of Western Music*, ed. Claude Palisca, 3rd edition, vol. II, no. 143. Harrison is nowhere cited as orchestrator. There is an error in the piano part of the score, bb. 26–27, where the wide leaps (unplayable by normal-sized hands) are intended to be forearm clusters (Lou Harrison, personal communication, 2001).

31 Lou Harrison, interview with the author, 31 March 1994.

a. Original piano version

b. Orchestrated version in the *Third Symphony*

Example 10　'Largo Ostinato', opening.

completing two symphonies, an extended suite for strings, and orchestral works with voices. For the *Third Symphony*, then, he was able to visualize the instrumental potential of his unpublished piano Largo. So instead of devoting time and effort to devising new material, he concentrated on 'making the orchestra sound wonderful'. The coloration he introduced into his old piano piece is shown by the movement's opening measures (Example 10): a stately, repetitive introductory fanfare on the piano is transformed into a call-and-response dialogue among the woodwinds and brass, while the harp etches the rhythm of the string ostinato and the flutes provide a subtle background wash of sound.

Yet many composers find it difficult to identify with, much less be inspired by, early works whose style they have eschewed – or at least outgrown. Roger Reynolds, for example, recalls

an occasion when flautist Robert Aitken asked to perform *Acquaintances*, one of Reynolds's early chamber works.

> I said, 'Well, if you're going to do it, why don't I revise it? Why don't I make it into what I think it ought to be?' I tried very hard, but I found it impossible to change anything. And I realized at that point that whatever you are, you are. To be an artist, I think, is to exercise your aesthetic sensibility, and this sensibility changes almost not at all over time. The decisions you make are a part of the way you hear the world, but what you can (what you must!) do at each stage of your life is different because of your accumulating technical expertise and your experience and the evolution of your taste. Basically, the things I wrote then were what I was then. And I cannot be that ever again. It's that simple.[32]

Harrison would agree that a composer's sensibility can evolve without changing in a fundamental way. But while this realization prevented Reynolds from altering his early work from the distance of many years, it freed Harrison to react in quite the opposite way: the affinity he felt for his early compositions gave him licence to revise, adapt and rework them – allowing the old pieces to be transformed in response to his increasing skill and new interests. At the same time, Reynolds's observations might explain why Harrison was never completely satisfied with many of his revisions.

Reynolds's experience aside, we must acknowledge that Harrison is far from unique in recycling old pieces (or sketches) into new works – but he might have been more honest than others in admitting to the fact. It is not difficult to identify other instances of self-borrowing, although often the procedure would more accurately be described as self-*quotation* (for instance, Copland's use of the *Fanfare for the Common Man* in the finale of his *Third Symphony*).[33] At the same time, recycling completed short pieces into longer works is certainly not unprecedented (the complex interrelationships of Mahler's songs and his symphonic movements come to mind as one example). What may be unusual with Harrison, however, is the distance – both temporal and stylistic – between many of his early works and the contexts of their subsequent reappearance.

Interestingly, temporal distance had little effect on the *degree* of revision to which Harrison subjected older works (see Figures 3 and 5 above). In *Rhymes with Silver* (1996), for instance, he adopted a fifty-three-year-old *Gigue and Musette* with no change except instrumentation; but for the central movement of *Three Songs* (1985), he altered his thirty-nine-year-old model extensively. Like the 'Lament' from the *Suite for Symphonic Strings*, this movement of *Three Songs* dated from the difficult period preceding Harrison's breakdown. (The original was a setting of Walt Whitman's 'Oh you, whom I often and silently come where you are' for baritone and piano.) The original song's harmonic language, like that of the 'Lament', is a good example of what Virgil Thomson called 'secundal counterpoint' – a texture of interlocking melodic lines that emphasize chromatic motion

32   Roger Reynolds, interview with the author, 11 December 2001 (quoted by permission).
33   For an interesting discussion of this instance of self-quotation, see Elizabeth B. Crist, 'Aaron Copland and the Popular Front', especially 448–56.

both melodically and harmonically (see Example 11a). Though Harrison was no longer exploring this type of dense dissonant counterpoint when he composed *Three Songs* for the Portland Gay Men's Chorus in 1985,[34] he chose to adapt this piece rather than starting anew. He retained the voice part but thinned the accompanimental texture, thus creating increased transparency while maintaining the song's expressive language (Example 11b). This middle movement of *Three Songs* contrasts sharply with its neighbours. The opening movement, adapted from a song for tenor and piano from 1941, features an expansive melody over an ostinato bass; the last movement, composed in 1985, makes reference to Chinese opera. As with Harrison's other works, the contrasting harmonic and melodic language in the three movements was not an issue; he relished such diversity.

Thus the degree of alteration to which Harrison subjected his models depended less on their conformity with his current aesthetic than on their inherent artistic quality. He judged this quality not by the work's harmonic, melodic or rhythmic language, but by its 'carrying power', which he equated with 'that mysterious quality known as style'.[35] Providing a work had such power – or the potential to achieve it through revision – Harrison had no qualms about reusing it, even if it dated from a half-century earlier.

At the same time, his identification with works from his distant past suggests a fundamentally linear progression in Harrison's stylistic development: as he absorbed new influences in the 1950s-70s – Chinese music, Korean music, the inner workings of gamelan, or the intricacies of just intonation tunings – these new tools did not so much *replace* the old ones as *coexist* with them as viable alternatives. As Harrison often repeated: 'When I was very young I laid out my toys on a large acreage, and I simply went around playing with them.'[36]

The success of the *Suite for Symphonic Strings* suggested to Harrison that he could combine these toys, juxtaposing diverse manifestations of his 'aesthetic sensibility'. Although his original motivation may have been to structure a lengthy symphonic work for which he had no compositional model, he was attracted by the resulting richness and began to cultivate stylistic diversity for its own sake. In addition to the *Symphony on G* discussed above, many other newly composed works feature similar contrasts.[37] The *Varied Trio* from 1987 is a typical and sophisticated example: among its five movements are a Javanese-inspired 'Gendhing', an evocation of the Indian jalataranga,[38] and a neo-baroque French rondeau.

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34 After Harrison visited Portland in December 1984 and attended the Christmas concert of the Portland Gay Men's Chorus, the group commissioned *Three Songs* from him. The premiere of this piece, on 28 September 1985, led to the remake of Harrison's second opera *Young Caesar* cited at the beginning of the present article.

35 Lou Harrison, 'The Philosophy of Style', unpublished lecture, *ca*. 1992. Although the document is undated, internal references place it after 1987. The lecture is directed to Japanese composers and therefore most likely dates from Harrison's trip to Japan in 1992. The original manuscript is in Special Collections at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

36 Lou Harrison, interview with the author, 29 December 1993 (one of many times Harrison made this analogy).

37 One is reminded of Ferruccio Busoni's observation about works that sound like arrangements even though they are not: 'Most of Beethoven's piano compositions sound like transcriptions of orchestral works; most of Schumann's orchestral compositions, like arrangements from pieces for the piano' (Busoni, 'Sketch of a New Esthetic of Music', 86).

38 An Indian instrument formerly used in China, the jalataranga consists of a set of tuned porcelain bowls struck with thin bamboo sticks.

a. Original version for voice and piano (*Fragment from Calamus*, 1946), m. 1–8.

b. Revised version in *Three Songs* (1985), bars 1–11

Example 11   *Three Songs*, second movement, beginning.

Such works exhibit traits often associated with the postmodernist aesthetic of the late twentieth century: in particular, the combining of disparate geographical and/or temporal influences within a single composition. In Harrison's compositions, a medieval-inspired estampie may rub shoulders with a movement in dissonant counterpoint or with an evocation of the sliding tones of China or Korea. During his long career Harrison was at times criticized on precisely these grounds: reviewers would fault him for a lack of stylistic unity. But in fact his quilt-like approach to large-scale composition anticipated many of the ideas that were to follow on the heels of his multi-cultural explorations. The goal of unity – so central to nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Western music – has in recent times often been supplanted by an aesthetic of inclusiveness: a philosophy Harrison appropriately labelled 'transethnicism', and one that kept him constantly stimulated by new ideas without entailing a rejection of older inspirations. 'This whole round living world of music – the Human Music – rouses and delights me,' he wrote in 1971; 'it stirs me to a ''transethnic'', a planetary music'.[39]

Though the evolution of American (and particularly Californian) culture thus followed a path similar to Harrison's own development, he never aspired to be a trend-setter. Asked about an overarching compositional philosophy or a personal system or goal, Harrison would typically demur, baldly admitting the impossibility of true originality and openly crediting his models. Like his mentor Henry Cowell, Harrison praised and admired hybrids. His originality lay not in newly invented modes of composition or expression but rather in the discovery of untried *combinations* of ideas, some relatively recent, others quite ancient. The juxtaposition of these ideas in itself created a recognizable personal style – one marked by its own diversity.

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39 Lou Harrison, *Music Primer*, 45. See also David Nicholls, 'Transethnicism and the American Experimental Tradition'.

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