

THESIS

A CONDUCTORS GUIDE TO VINCENT
PERSICHETTI'S *KING LEAR*

Submitted by

Andrew Robbins Gillespie

School of Music, Theatre, and Dance

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Master of Music

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Spring 2018

Master's Committee

Advisor: Rebecca L. Phillips

K. Dawn Grapes
Wesley Kenney
Dawn Mallette

Copyright by Andrew Robbins Gillespie 2018

All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

A CONDUCTORS GUIDE TO VINCENT

PERSICHETTI'S *KING LEAR*

Vincent Persichetti's septet *King Lear* was originally composed for the choreographer Martha Graham and her 1949 production, *Eye of Anguish*. While the production was considered a failure and has not been performed since its European tour in 1950, Persichetti admired his own portion of the collaboration and argued it would stand on its own merit as a chamber work. This thesis represents the first significant study of Persichetti's *King Lear*. It is a guide for conductors and chamber ensembles preparing an informed performance, with historical information, theoretical analysis, and rehearsal analysis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the National Band Association and Colorado State University School of Music, Theatre, and Dance for financially contributing to my project through research grants. I would also like to thank the staff at the Library of Congress Performing Arts Reading Room, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, and Martha Graham Dance Company for their help and service throughout my research. In addition, I would like to thank Dr. Dawn Grapes, Professor Wes Kenney, and Dr. Dawn Mallette for serving on my committee.

I owe a great deal of gratitude to my parents Tara and Dave, who have supported and encouraged my pursuit of higher education in music; my friends Chris Nadeau, Nicholas Gledhill, Kevin Poelking, William Gamache, Heather Ewer, Sabastian Adams, and my best friend Rebecca Stapfer, who have made my experience at CSU some of the best years of my life; my past teachers including Mr. Cliff Jones, Mr. Jason Sneath, Mr. Dave Worley, Ms. Carrie Anderson, Dr. Ronald Davis, Professor Suzanna Pavlovsky, Dr. Danny Jenkins, Dr. Steve McKeithen, Dr. Jayme Taylor, Dr. Nikki Gross, Dr. Adam Kehl, Dr. Erik Johnson, and Professor Stephen Dombrowski, who have shared their knowledge and wisdom throughout my education. I would especially like to thank Eric Willoughby, Heath Jones, and Roger Simpson for their mentorship throughout my career. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Rebecca Phillips, for her invaluable instruction, encouragement, and foresight throughout both of my degree programs. Her guidance has greatly shaped my identity as a musician and educator. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to study with her.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
LIST OF FIGURES	vi
Chapter I – Background Information	1
Introduction	1
Significance	1
Methodology	1
Review of Literature.....	2
Vincent Persichetti – Biographical Information.....	4
Childhood.....	4
Secondary and Post-Secondary Education.....	5
1940s	8
1950s	10
1960s	12
The Final Years	12
Persichetti’s Compositional Style	14
Melodic Structure.....	15
Rhythmic Structure	16
Tonal Structure.....	17
Harmonic Structure	17
Orchestration & Texture Structure.....	18
Conclusion	19
Martha Graham – Biographical Information	20
Childhood.....	20
Adolescence	21
College and Training.....	22
Early Career	23
World War II.....	27
Chapter II – Background Information on <i>Eye of Anguish</i> and <i>King Lear</i>	29
<i>Eye of Anguish</i>	29
Summary of Shakespeare’s <i>King Lear</i>	30
Timeline of the Graham-Persichetti Collaboration and Subsequent Receptions	31
Chapter III – Theoretical Analysis of <i>King Lear</i> , Op. 35	34
Overview of Theoretical Analysis.....	34
Curse Fanfare Theme	34
Death Theme	36
Three Daughters Theme.....	37
Sarabande Theme	37
Ensnarement Theme.....	40
Grief Theme	40
Good Friday Theme	41
Fool and Philosopher Theme	43
Mock Trial Theme	44
Madness Theme	45
Movement I – Lear’s Dance of Challenge	46

Movement II – Vision of the Three Daughters	50
Movement III – Cordelia’s Dance of Serenity	54
Movement IV – Lear’s Dance of Grief	57
Movement V – The Fool and the Philosopher	62
Movement VI – The Mock Trial	70
Movement VII – Ensnarement of Lear.....	73
Movement VIII – Cordelia’s Dance of Grief	78
Movement IX – Final Union Between Lear and Cordelia	79
Chapter IV – Rehearsal Analysis	82
Overview	82
Movement I – Lear’s Dance of Challenge	82
Movement II – Vision of the Three Daughters	83
Movement III – Cordelia’s Dance of Serenity	83
Movement IV – Lear’s Dance of Grief	84
Movement V – The Fool and the Philosopher	85
Movement VI – The Mock Trial	86
Movement VII – Ensnarement of Lear.....	87
Movement VIII – Cordelia’s Dance of Grief	87
Movement IX – The Final Union Between Lear and Cordelia	88
Conclusion.....	88
Bibliography	89
Archived Sources	89
Secondary Sources	89
Appendix A – Works for Wind Instruments by Vincent Persichetti	91
Appendix B – List of Martha Graham Works with Wind Composers	93
Appendix C – List of Errata.....	94
Appendix D – Copyright Permission.....	95

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 - Themes in Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	34
Figure 2 - mm. 1 – 5 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	35
Figure 3 - mm. 73 – 78 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	36
Figure 4 - mm. 10 – 12 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	36
Figure 5 - mm. 61 – 64 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	37
Figure 6 - mm. 79 – 89 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	38
Figure 7 - mm. 759 – 763 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	39
Figure 8 - mm. 641 – 642 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	40
Figure 9 - mm. 116 – 117 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	41
Figure 10 - mm. 140 – 145 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	41
Figure 11 - mm. 145 – 152 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	42
Figure 12 - Theme from Wagner's Good Friday Spell	42
Figure 13 - mm. 163 – 178 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	43
Figure 14 - mm. 163 – 178 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	44
Figure 15 - mm. 675 – 679 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	45
Figure 16 - Dynamic Chart of “Lear’s Dance of Challenge”	46
Figure 17 - Form Chart of “Lear’s Dance of Challenge”	47
Figure 18 - mm. 1 – 5 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	47
Figure 19 - mm. 5 – 7 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	48
Figure 20 - mm. 10 – 12 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	48
Figure 21 - m. 13 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	49
Figure 22 - mm. 23 – 25 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	49
Figure 23 - m. 35 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	50
Figure 24 - Form Chart of “Vision of the Three Daughters”	51
Figure 25 - mm. 38 – 44 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	51
Figure 26 - mm. 42 – 44 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	51
Figure 27 - m. 50 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	52
Figure 28 - mm. 52 – 54 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	52
Figure 29 - mm. 54 – 55 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	52
Figure 30 - mm. 69 – 72 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	53
Figure 31 - mm. 72 – 73 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	53
Figure 32 - mm. 78 – 79 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	53
Figure 33 - Form Chart of “Cordelia’s Dance of Serenity”	54
Figure 34 - mm. 79 – 86 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	55
Figure 35 - mm. 79 – 80 & mm. 23 – 25 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	55
Figure 36 - mm. 89 – 90 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	56
Figure 37 - m. 97 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	56
Figure 38 - m. 105 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	56
Figure 39 - m. 112 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	56
Figure 40 - mm. 108 – 111 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	57
Figure 41 - Form Chart of “Lear’s Dance of Grief”	57
Figure 42 - m. 115 of Persichetti's <i>King Lear</i>	57

Figure 43 - mm. 115 – 116 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	58
Figure 44 - mm. 119 – 122 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	58
Figure 45 - mm. 116 – 117 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	58
Figure 46 - mm. 130 – 133 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	59
Figure 47 - mm. 125 – 127 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	59
Figure 48 - mm. 140 – 142 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	60
Figure 49 - mm. 141 – 142 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	60
Figure 50 - mm. 145 – 152 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	61
Figure 51 - mm. 149 – 152 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	61
Figure 52 - mm. 157 – 161 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	62
Figure 53 - Form Chart of “The Fool and the Philosopher”	62
Figure 54 - mm. 163 – 179 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	63
Figure 55 - mm. 171 – 179 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	64
Figure 56 - mm. 187 – 179 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	64
Figure 57 - mm. 223 – 230 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	65
Figure 58 - mm. 231 – 234 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	65
Figure 59 - mm. 287 – 294 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	66
Figure 60 - mm. 299 – 313 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	67
Figure 61 - mm. 313 – 316 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	67
Figure 62 - mm. 359 – 360 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	68
Figure 63 - mm. 425 – 429 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	68
Figure 64 - mm. 454 – 457 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	69
Figure 65 - mm. 464 – 467 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	69
Figure 66 - mm. 486 – 492 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	70
Figure 67 - mm. 544 – 547 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	70
Figure 68 - Form Chart of “The Mock Trial”	71
Figure 69 - mm. 554 – 559 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	71
Figure 70 - mm. 578 – 579 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	71
Figure 71 - mm. 579 – 581 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	72
Figure 72 - mm. 593 – 596 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	72
Figure 73 - mm. 630 – 633 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	73
Figure 74 - Form Chart of “Ensnarement of Lear”	73
Figure 75 - mm. 641 – 642 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	74
Figure 76 - mm. 653 – 654 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	74
Figure 77 - Form Chart of Madness Section	74
Figure 78 - mm. 665 – 666 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	75
Figure 79 - mm. 670 – 671 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	75
Figure 80 - mm. 676 – 678 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	76
Figure 81 - mm. 696 – 698 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	76
Figure 82 - mm. 702 – 703 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	77
Figure 83 - mm. 716 – 719 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	77
Figure 84 - Form Chart of “Cordelia’s Dance of Grief”	78
Figure 85 - mm. 739 – 741 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	79
Figure 86 - mm. 754 – 755 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	79
Figure 87 - Form Chart of “Final Union Between Lear and Cordelia”	80
Figure 88 - mm. 757 – 760 of Persichetti’s <i>King Lear</i>	80

Figure 89 - m. 772 of Persichetti's *King Lear* 81

Chapter I – Background Information

Introduction

Vincent Persichetti's *King Lear* was originally composed for choreographer Martha Graham and her 1949 production, *Eye of Anguish*. The work is an adaptation of William Shakespeare's *King Lear*. Graham describes her production in a letter to the composer as "not a dance version of King Lear with the words omitted. Rather it is enactment, in dance terms, of the ultimate wholeness of man through the imaginative use of suffering and experience." The production was considered a failure and eventually contributed to Martha Graham divorcing her husband, Erick Hawkins, the male lead in the work. The production has not been performed since its European tour in 1950. Persichetti admired his own portion of the collaboration and argued that it would stand on its own merit as a chamber work; however, he waited to publish the piece until later in his career (1977). Since publication of the chamber work, *King Lear* has had few documented performances and received little published scholarly research.

Significance

This thesis represents the only significant study of Vincent Persichetti's *King Lear*. It is a guide for conductors and chamber ensembles in preparing an informed performance. On a larger scale, this research will hopefully bring light to a significant, yet forgotten chamber wind piece composed by one of America's great composer.

Methodology

Original documents were examined, including the original score and parts of Persichetti's *King Lear*, Op. 35, located in the Library of Congress, and Persichetti's sketch of the work, notes, and communications with Martha Graham, found in the archives of the New York City Public Library, and choreography from *Eye of Anguish*, discovered in the archives of the Martha

Graham Dance Company Studio. The information gathered resulted in a new level of insight into the 1977 chamber publication, as well as Martha Graham's 1949 production, *Eye of Anguish*, for which the chamber piece was originally written.

Review of Literature

Much of the published literature on Vincent Persichetti presents the same brief biographical information. This includes *Vincent Persichetti: A Bio-Bibliography* by Donald and Janet Patterson, as well as *The Music of William Schuman, Vincent Persichetti, and Peter Mennin* by Walter Simmons.¹ Both texts are two of the most respected sources on Persichetti. Walter Simmons also wrote the leading *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* article on Persichetti's life.² The most comprehensive look at Persichetti's life is Donald Morris's dissertation, *The Life of Vincent Persichetti, with Emphasis on his Works for Band*. He interviewed members of the Persichetti family and helped sort and itemize the Vincent Persichetti Papers collection at the New York City Public Library Performing Arts Center before it was available to the public.

The Vincent Persichetti Papers collection, located in the New York City Public Library, is the largest repository of primary source information on Vincent Persichetti. The collection contains hundreds of boxes of documents, correspondences, and manuscripts. The majority of the information presented in this thesis was garnered from this valuable site. Original correspondence between Martha Graham and Vincent Persichetti about *Eye of Anguish* is contained within this collection, and the original music manuscript is housed there as well.

¹ Donald Patterson and Janet Patterson, *Vincent Persichetti: A Bio-Bibliography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1988); Walter Simmons, *Voices of Stone and Steel: The Music of William Schuman, Vincent Persichetti, and Peter Mennin* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2011).

² Walter Simmons, "Persichetti, Vincent," in *Grove Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/article/grove/music/21384>.

Another source on Persichetti, also housed in the New York collection, is his wife's unpublished monograph, *A Monograph: Vincent Persichetti's Music*.³ Dorothea Persichetti completed the project in 1960; the monograph provides extensive background information on her husband's works that were published by that time.

Although many articles and scholarly papers have been published on Persichetti's works, notably on his works for band, none of the publications are solely dedicated to *King Lear*, Op. 35. These publications only refer to *King Lear* or *Eye of Anguish*, recognizing Persichetti collaboration with Martha Graham, yet provide little analysis of the work.

There are many publications about Martha Graham, offering her biographical information in detail. She penned her autobiography, *Blood Memory*, an invaluable source for information about her life and works.⁴ Several of her former company members authored their own texts as well, providing different views on what the company was like during the post-World War II era when the company was extremely active with new productions and often collaborated with wind composers.

The Martha Graham Collection at the Library of Congress is one of the largest repositories of primary sources related to Martha Graham and her company. Like the Vincent Persichetti Papers collection in the New York City Public Library, the Martha Graham Collection encompasses hundreds of boxes containing documents, correspondences, and manuscripts. This collection is also imperative to the research of Persichetti's *King Lear* because the original conductor score and programs are held within the collection.

³ New York Public Library, Dorothea Persichetti, *A Monograph: Vincent Persichetti's Music* (Unpublished monograph, 1960), Box 103, Folders 15-18.

⁴ Martha Graham, *Blood Memory* (New York: Doubleday, 1991).

Vincent Persichetti – Biographical Information

Childhood

Vincent Persichetti was born on June 6, 1915 in Philadelphia and was born a first-generation American. His father, Vincenzo Ruggiero Persichetti, was brought to the United States from Italy at the age of eleven.⁵ Vincent’s mother, Martha Buch, who was of German descent, immigrated to the United States as an infant.⁶ She was born in Bonn, the same city as Ludwig van Beethoven, which has led to confusion regarding Persichetti’s given middle name. Many published works state Persichetti’s middle name as Ludwig, but according to his birth certificate in the archives of the New York City Public Library, his middle name is Lewis.⁷ Ludwig appears for the first time on a legal document with his registration certificate for the military draft during World War II. From that point on, all archived legal documents contain the name Vincent Ludwig Persichetti.

Persichetti grew up in South Philadelphia in an Italian neighborhood. This aided his development as a musician, as the community was very supportive of musical scholarship. Persichetti recalls, “Music in those days was as important as basketball.”⁸ His parents were also supportive, despite not having musical backgrounds themselves.⁹ Vincent was the oldest of three children, having a brother, Karl, and a sister, Nina, who never shared his musical passion.¹⁰ In a 1984 interview with David Dubal, Persichetti discussed how he was fascinated with a player piano his family owned. He commented that this was his first exposure to music, specifically emphasizing his enjoyment of listening to works by Robert Schumann.¹¹

⁵ Simmons, *Voices of Stone and Steel*, 174.

⁶ Patterson and Patterson, *Vincent Persichetti*, 5.

⁷ New York Public Library, *Vincent Persichetti Papers Collection*, Box 2, Folder 13.

⁸ Patterson and Patterson, *Vincent Persichetti*, 4.

⁹ Simmons, *Voices of Stone and Steel*, 174.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ New York Public Library, *Vincent Persichetti Collection of Noncommercial Recordings*, LTC2915.

A second benefit of Persichetti's South Philadelphia Italian community was his time spent with musically inclined friends from his elementary school.¹² Practice sessions included close friends, like the Angelucci brothers: Radames, Ernani, and Adelchi. All three Angelucci brothers would later become wind players in major American orchestras. During their music rehearsals, Persichetti covered any missing parts on the piano.

A third benefit of his community was that Gilbert Combs, president and founder of Combs Broad Street Conservatory of Music (presently known as Combs College of Music), lived six houses down from the Persichetti family.¹³ The conservatory was one of the best on the East Coast, equipped with over one hundred teachers, two orchestras, a military band, and over three thousand students.¹⁴ Vincent, eager to learn, often asked his neighbor questions about music. This connection led to Persichetti beginning piano lessons at the age of five with Warren Stanger at Combs Conservatory. Stanger also taught organ lessons to the boy when Vincent became tall enough to reach the pedals.¹⁵ In addition, Persichetti eventually studied tuba, double bass, and audited Russell King Miller's theory class at the age of nine. Persichetti regarded Miller as his most influential teacher.¹⁶ Vincent progressed quickly in his studies at Combs, which led to his first performance on the radio when he was six.¹⁷

Secondary and Post-Secondary Education

At fourteen, Persichetti was asked to leave Miller's theory class because he challenged the curriculum by composing and submitting "forbidden music" that did not follow academic rules.¹⁸

¹² Patterson and Patterson, *Vincent Persichetti*, 5.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁴ Donald Morris, "The Life of Vincent Persichetti, With Emphasis on his Works for Band" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 1991), 13.

¹⁵ Patterson and Patterson, *Vincent Persichetti*, 4.

¹⁶ Simmons, "Persichetti, Vincent," in *Grove Music Online*.

¹⁷ Patterson and Patterson, *Vincent Persichetti*, 5.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

By this time, he had composed his opus one and two. These pieces were written ten years prior to any of his other published works because most of his compositions from this period were exercises, not intended for publication. The following ten years are referred to as his “silent decade” by most scholars because of his lack of compositional output. Persichetti dedicated many hours to score study during this period of his life. He regularly went to the Logan Square Library and studied the literature being performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra that week. At the concert, he compared his mental realization with how the piece sounded when performed. This quickly led to an extensive knowledge of orchestral works.

While attending South Philadelphia High School, Persichetti performed frequently on piano at weddings, church services, radio performances, and accompanied a harmonica band. Also during this time, he played double bass in the All-Philadelphia High School Orchestra. At sixteen, he began studying piano with Gilbert Combs himself. When Combs passed away three years later, Persichetti studied with Alberto Jones.¹⁹ At seventeen, Persichetti was appointed as organist of Arch Street Presbyterian Church and eventually became choirmaster. This experience contributed to his knowledge of church hymns, even though he did not consider himself a very religious person.²⁰ During church services he would improvise on the organ and play excerpts that ranged from Haydn to Verdi and Tchaikovsky to Stravinsky.²¹ He held this position for more than fifteen years.

Persichetti received his bachelor’s degree in 1936 from Combs Conservatory. Upon graduation, when he was twenty-one years old, he was invited to be the head of the theory and composition department at Combs. The following year he began two additional degree programs,

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Simmons, *Voices of Stone and Steel*, 299.

²¹ Ibid., 175

one at the Philadelphia Conservatory and the other at the Curtis Institute of Music, where he studied conducting with Fritz Reiner.²² Persichetti reflects on his experience at Curtis, saying, “I haven’t been able to shed Reiner’s quick wrist-jerk or small beats for loud, precarious entrances. Nor could I forget his kindness and gentleness that permeated the surroundings—until the first mistake was made.”²³ This experience helped Persichetti later in his career, when he traveled and conducted his music with several collegiate ensembles.²⁴ He received his diploma from the Curtis Institute of Music in 1938.

Persichetti studied piano with Olga Samaroff and composition with Paul Nordoff at the Philadelphia Conservatory. Persichetti had mixed feelings about this period. It is unapparent if it occurred during his pursuit of his master’s degree or after, but a rift (the specifics of which are unknown) developed between Nordoff and Persichetti during these years. Persichetti was unwilling to discuss the situation, even toward the end of his life.²⁵ As for Samaroff’s effect on Persichetti’s career, he commented in a joking tone that, “She had a way of helping people and promoting their careers and it was very nice.”²⁶ He then commented that the best thing Samaroff did for his career was introduce him to Dorothea Flanagan, his future wife. Flanagan was also a pianist in Samaroff’s studio, the more skilled performer of the two. After their marriage, she became a major influence and advocate in his life, and they would even perform together occasionally.²⁷ Persichetti was awarded his master’s degree in 1941 from the Philadelphia Conservatory. Flanagan and Persichetti married on June 3 the same year.²⁸ The following year he was invited to become chairman of the theory and composition department at the Philadelphia

²² Ibid., 176.

²³ Morris, “The Life of Vincent Persichetti,” 13.

²⁴ Ibid., 41-42.

²⁵ Ibid., 49

²⁶ New York Public Library, *Vincent Persichetti Collection of Noncommercial Recordings*, LTC2915.

²⁷ Simmons, *Voices of Stone and Steel*, 176.

²⁸ Morris, “The Life of Vincent Persichetti,” 55.

Conservatory while pursuing his doctorate. Persichetti accepted and held the position until 1962, but this forced him to resign from Combs Conservatory due to time constraints.²⁹

1940s

In 1940, Persichetti was approached by Martha Graham for the first time. He was recommended to Graham by Persichetti's keyboard teacher, Nordoff, and Graham's music advisor, Louis Horst.³⁰ Graham asked Persichetti to write a short prelude for a solo dancer. Persichetti's initial composition was rejected by Graham because the pacing was inappropriate. When she met with him to discuss her rejection, she concluded the meeting with, "I have planted something in my mind and I'll be in touch with you later."³¹ The next time they worked together was on *Eye of Anguish*, which would later become *King Lear*.

In 1943, Persichetti won the Julliard Publication Award for his orchestral piece *Dance Overture*. In the summer of 1943 he traveled to Colorado Springs to study with Roy Harris during the city's music festival. Persichetti was interested in learning about his "autogenetic form."³² This instruction only lasted three weeks, but Persichetti finished his third piano sonata and premiered it at the festival. In March 1944, Harris introduced Persichetti to William Shuman, who was receiving national attention for his *Symphony No. 3*. The relationship that followed would be very beneficial to both composers.³³ The same year, Dorothea Persichetti gave birth to their first child, Lauren, and in 1946, to their second, Garth. Persichetti began writing music criticism for *Modern Music* and *Musical Quarterly* during this period as well.

²⁹ Simmons, *Voices of Stone and Steel*, 176.

³⁰ Morris, "The Life of Vincent Persichetti," 77-78.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 78.

³² Simmons, *Voices of Stone and Steel*, 177.

³³ *Ibid.*

Persichetti received his doctorate from the Philadelphia Conservatory in 1945. In April of that year, his piece entitled *Fables* was performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Eugene Ormandy. This marked the first professional performance of his work.³⁴ Additionally, Igor Stravinsky asked Persichetti to join him in a concert performance of his works for two pianos. In 1945, William Schuman was named president of The Julliard School. Schuman was in the process of revamping the curriculum in 1947 when he offered Persichetti a position teaching a course entitled Literature and Materials of Music.³⁵ This class took the unique approach of combining theory, ear training, history, and analysis into one comprehensive literature course. Persichetti accepted the position. He continued to live in Philadelphia and teach at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia (formally the Philadelphia Conservatory). He commuted from Philadelphia to New York on Mondays and Tuesdays, as well as Thursday and Friday afternoons. On Wednesdays, Thursday mornings, and Saturdays he remained in Philadelphia. On Sundays, he continued to lead church services.³⁶

Persichetti was approached by Martha Graham in 1948 about composing the music for her *Eye of Anguish*. The resulting production was considered a failure, but Persichetti's contribution would later be considered for a Pulitzer Prize.³⁷ His music was published as a standalone chamber work in 1977. Despite falling short of the Pulitzer, he was awarded a grant from the National Academy of the Arts in 1948.³⁸ In 1949, the Persichettis purchased a three-story house in Philadelphia's Fairmont Park on a hill overlooking Wissahickon Creek. The Persichetti family called the home "Hillhouse." At Hillhouse, Persichetti composed from his

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., 178

³⁶ Patterson and Patterson, *Vincent Persichetti*, 11.

³⁷ Simmons, *Voices of Stone and Steel*, 279.

³⁸ Patterson and Patterson, *Vincent Persichetti*, 11-13.

third-floor studio and spent time gardening the five-acre grounds. Persichetti never lived outside of Philadelphia and remained in Hillhouse until his death.

1950s

Persichetti was hired by music publisher Elkan-Vogel as an editorial assistant in 1952. He eventually became Director of Publishing and remained associated with the firm the rest of his life. In the 1950s Persichetti was the recipient of many commissions, prizes, and awards. In 1950, the Louisville Philharmonic Society, on the recommendation of William Schuman, commissioned Persichetti for a new work. This resulted in his *Serenade No.5* for orchestra and also led to his *Symphony No. 5* for strings in 1953. Roy Harris asked Persichetti to commission a large-scale work for two pianos in 1952 to be performed at the Pittsburgh International Contemporary Music Festival. The result was his *Concerto for Piano, Four Hands*. The Persichetti duo performed the premiere and Ray Harris was pleased with the work.

During this period, musicologist Carleton Sprague Smith requested that Persichetti write a hymn to be included in his collection, *American Hymns: Old and New*. This idea prompted Persichetti to spend the summer of 1956 writing hymns for his own collection, *Hymns and Responses for the Church Year, Vol. 1*, which was published later that year.³⁹ This collection became source material for many of Persichetti's works, including four of his band works: *Symphony No. 6 for Band*, *Chorale Prelude: So Pure the Star, Turn not thy Face*, and the chorale prelude, *O God Unseen*. In 1958, Persichetti was awarded his first of three Guggenheim Fellowships, which allowed him to take a year off to focus on composing.⁴⁰ During this period, he wrote his *Symphony No. 7*, *Third String Quartet*, *Song of Peace*, *Mass*, and several other choral works. It was also during this period he began writing his book that compiled 20th century

³⁹ Morris, "The Life of Vincent Persichetti," 97.

⁴⁰ Patterson and Patterson, *Vincent Persichetti: A Bio-Bibliography*, 13.

harmony techniques. The book would later be titled *Twentieth Century Harmony* and published in 1961. Despite his large output as a composer of orchestra, piano, choral, and chamber music, the 1950s brought many accolades from his contributions to the band medium.⁴¹

Persichetti's first piece for band was *Divertimento*, premiered by the Goldman Band in 1950. The piece was quickly published, which resulted in demand for more original band music from Persichetti. In a 1981 article, Persichetti stated why he wrote his *Divertimento*. "I soon realized the strings weren't going to enter, and my *Divertimento* began to take shape. Many people call this ensemble Band. I know that composers are often frightened away by the sound of the word "band," because of certain qualities long associated with this medium—rusty trumpets, consumptive flutes, wheezy oboes, disintegrating clarinets, fumbling yet amiable baton wavers, and gum-coated park benches! If you couple these conditions with transfigurations and disfigurations of works originally conceived for orchestra, you create a sound experience that's as nearly excruciating as a sick string quartet playing a dilettante's arrangement of a nineteenth-century piano sonata. When composers think of the band as a huge, supple ensemble of winds and percussion, the obnoxious fat will drain off, and creative ideas will flourish."⁴² Persichetti's *Psalms for Band* and *Pageant* would quickly follow *Divertimento* to publication. They were both listed in a 1958 *Instrumentalist* article entitled "The Best in Band Music." His *Symphony No. 6 for Band* was commissioned by Washington University in St. Louis. It was one of the top ten most performed works by college ensembles between 1961 and 1966.⁴³ Persichetti was worried about developing a reputation as a band composer, because it might his other works from being

⁴¹ Simmons, *Voices of Stone and Steel*, 188.

⁴² Rudy Shackelford, "Conversation with Vincent Persichetti," *Perspective of New Music* 20, no. 1/2 (1981-1982), 120.

⁴³ Karl Holvik, "An Emerging Band Repertory, A Survey of the Members of the College Band Directors National Association" *American Bandmasters Association Journal* 6, no. 2 (1970): 19-24.

taken seriously.⁴⁴ His last original work for band was his *Parable IX for Band*, completed in 1972.

1960s

By the 1960s Persichetti was a well-known musician in the United States. He divided most of his time between composing, teaching, and guest lecturing. His leisure time was spent with his family, gardening, sailing, sculpting, and with his friends. He was known to stay very busy and he did not find pleasure in relaxation.⁴⁵ Persichetti's *Twentieth Century Harmony*, which he started writing during his first Guggenheim Fellowship in 1958, was published in 1961. The book received mixed reviews but is still in print as of 2018. The book was the source of inspiration for his 1965 publication, *Masquerade for Band*.⁴⁶ Persichetti used excerpts from the text to show how they could be applied in a composition. In 1963, he became head of the composition department at Juilliard.⁴⁷ Baldwin-Wallace College awarded Persichetti his first Honorary Doctorate of Music degree in 1966. Several universities would follow throughout the next two decades with the same honor.⁴⁸

The Final Years

On December 15, 1972 Persichetti was asked to write a piece for the inauguration of Richard Nixon's second term as President of the United States.⁴⁹ This would result in *A Lincoln Address for Narration and Orchestra*. The piece was the most controversial composition by Persichetti because of the media attention it received. It was dropped from the program days

⁴⁴ Patterson and Patterson, *Vincent Persichetti*, 13.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴⁶ Simmons, *Voices of Stone and Steel*, 188.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Patterson and Patterson, *Vincent Persichetti*, 15.

⁴⁹ Morris, "The Life of Vincent Persichetti, With Emphasis on his Works for Band," 130.

before the inauguration because of the use of text from President Lincoln's second inaugural speech. Ironically, the text was originally selected by the inauguration committee, not Persichetti himself. The inauguration committee's intention was to draw parallels to Lincoln's speech because a peace agreement to end the Vietnam War was in sight, just as the end of the Civil War was in sight for Lincoln. However, the events in Vietnam changed and peace was no longer foreseen prior to the inauguration. The committee wanted Persichetti to change the text to the Declaration of Independence, but Persichetti refused and the piece was taken off the program.⁵⁰ *The New York Times* ran a front-page article entitled "Inaugural-Concert Work Deleted as 'Not in Spirit'."⁵¹ The story was then picked up by many other news outlets who reported with varying degrees of accuracy.⁵²

By the early 1970s Persichetti had completed all nine symphonies, ten of his eleven piano sonatas, ten of the pieces for band, most of his choral works, and his magnum opus *The Creation*. At this point in his life, he shifted his focus to solo instruments, with thirty-eight of his compositions between 1971 and his death being written for this medium. This period would result in a series of "parables," many for instruments that were neglected by past composers, such as piccolo or tuba. During this time, his compositions reflected on his own past works, with many pieces employing material from former pieces.⁵³ *A Lincoln Address* borrowed material from *Symphony No. 7. Auden Variations, Dryden Liturgical Suite, and Chorale Prelude: O God Unseen* were sourced from the *Hymns and Responses, Vol. 1*. He also sought publication of his *Eye of Anguish* collaboration with Martha Graham under the title of *King Lear, (Op. 35)*. In the

⁵⁰ Patterson and Patterson, *Vincent Persichetti*, 17.

⁵¹ Allen Hughes, "Inaugural-Concert Work Deleted as 'Not in Spirit,'" *The New York Times* (January 14, 1973), 1.

⁵² Morris, "The Life of Vincent Persichetti," 131.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 125.

last ten years of Persichetti's life he turned his focus to keyboard instruments. New compositions for Baroque instruments were being written during this period and Persichetti contributed with his own compositions, including his *Little Harpsichord Book* in 1983 and his *Serenade* Op. 161 in 1984.⁵⁴ He also composed three more works for organ during this period. His final work for piano, *Winter Solstice*, op. 165, was published in 1986.

In 1987 Persichetti was diagnosed with lung cancer.⁵⁵ Despite this, he continued to work until his death. During this time, he worked on a complete edition of the piano sonatas and on his last opus, *Hymns and Responses, for the Church Year*, vol. 2, Op. 166. He died at his home on August 14, 1987. There was no funeral because he requested that his body be donated to medical science. Dorothea Persichetti died shortly after due to a stroke on Thanksgiving Day the same year. At the time of his death he had completed hundreds of works across many mediums including band, orchestra, choir, opera, and chamber ensembles. His students included Peter Schickele and Pulitzer Prize winners Phillip Glass and Jacob Druckman.⁵⁶ It is still too early to judge if Persichetti's works will stand the test of time, but his impact on the twentieth century through compositional pedagogy and wind band literature is undeniable.

Persichetti's Compositional Style

Vincent Persichetti is known for a unique compositional style that is easily recognizable due to his combination of timbres and the utilization of his own theory of harmonization, developed and described in his book *Twentieth-Century Harmony*. His style can be described simply as neo-romantic with heavy use of twentieth century composition techniques, often employed simultaneously. Persichetti's works cannot be broken into "periods" of style because

⁵⁴ Patterson and Patterson, *Vincent Persichetti*, 14.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.

he employed the same style throughout his career.⁵⁷ To discuss every aspect of his style would go beyond the scope of this research, thus only the elements applicable to *King Lear* will be introduced here to provide a broad view of his characteristic style.

Persichetti wrote *Twentieth-Century Harmony* to provide insight on harmonic materials commonly used by twentieth century composers.⁵⁸ In the text, Persichetti defines and provides examples of many different compositional techniques. In the opening paragraph, he writes “Any tone can succeed any other tone, any tone can sound simultaneously with any other tone or tones, and any group of tones can be followed by any other group of tones, just as any degree of tension or nuance can occur in any medium under any kind of stress or duration.”⁵⁹ This statement is a perfect description of his own style. To have Persichetti’s own writing on theory and composition is very insightful, and the ideal primary source.

Melodic Structure

Persichetti’s use of melodic material is very repetitious. He is known for taking a simple musical idea and employing it throughout an entire piece. Persichetti states in *Twentieth-Century Harmony*, “A melodic kernel of two or more tones may form the nucleus from which the subject matter of an entire work is shaped and harmony derived. The compositional process is meaningless unless thematic statements are identifiable, for continuity and coherence are effected through aural retention of motifs.”⁶⁰ These motifs often appear in many different forms throughout his works: modulation, inversion, truncation, etc. This provides a sense of development and progression for the listener. Musical stress contributes significantly to

⁵⁷ Patterson and Patterson, *Vincent Persichetti*, 12.

⁵⁸ Vincent Persichetti, *Twentieth-Century Harmony; Creative Aspects and Practice* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1961), 10.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 275.

Persichetti's compositional style. Persichetti writes, "musical stress is created by pitch, intensity, color, or duration; the more factors contributing to an accent the more complete the accent."⁶¹ This implies that Persichetti uses more than just articulation markings to create emphasis, but rather a conglomeration of the elements in the composition to create the melodic structure.

Rhythmic Structure

Persichetti is not commonly known for employing complex rhythmic figures. Instead, he uses a combination of multiple musical lines to create complexity. Persichetti explains in *Twentieth-Century Harmony* that "Meter is a measure of rhythm. It has no rhythm of its own; it only appears to have when rhythmic pulse coincides with the metric points."⁶² Persichetti expresses that simple rhythms may be combined under one time signature, however rhythm is not bound by its unit of measure. He demonstrates this in example 10-3 on page 213 when he writes a 3/4 passage with a melodic line written in four over an accompaniment in three. This allows for the demand on the individual technique to be relatively low while still expressing complex rhythmic ideas.

Syncopation is an often-used element in Persichetti's compositions. He incorporates syncopation in opposing ways. For example, "The melodic line syncopated against the harmonic pulse, harmonic rhythm syncopated against melodic pulse, or both harmonic and melodic pulse heard in comparison with a contrasting pulse of preceding measures."⁶³ This allows for complex rhythmic ideas while once again keeping the demand on the performer's technique somewhat minimal.

⁶¹ Ibid., 215.

⁶² Ibid., 213.

⁶³ Ibid., 216.

Another important element of Persichetti's rhythmic structure is a percussive use of harmony to create vertical progression. Persichetti writes, "Reiteration of the melodic tone is a rhythmic force that often stimulates repeated-chord activity."⁶⁴ This is most often used in a call and response situation. Persichetti states, "In answer to a drum figure, a chord may function percussively."⁶⁵ This technique is typically utilized when wind instruments mimic a figure that is stated by the percussion.

Tonal Structure

Persichetti's compositions explore a wide range of tonal centers. He states, "Tonality does not exist as an absolute. It is implied through harmonic articulation and through tension and relaxation of chords around a tone or chord base."⁶⁶ This flexibility of tonality allows Persichetti to use the harmonic structure for which he is most recognized. Persichetti also develops tonal centers by providing the material outside of the center with which he is working. He states, "Music may be brought into key focus by forces other than the tonal pull of chordal pillars. Key feeling may be created by an extremely dissonant chord refusing to become consonant."⁶⁷ This relieves him from the task of composing in the traditional western chord progression, commonly used to establish a key, and provides him freedom to deepen the harmonic pallet used to create his characteristic sound.

Harmonic Structure

Harmonic structure is one of the most important elements in Persichetti's compositional style. In chapter three of *Twentieth-Century Harmony*, he discusses the construction and use of chords written in thirds. Although this concept is not unique to his work or that of the twentieth

⁶⁴ Ibid., 220.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 221.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 248.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 249.

century, his discussion and use of twelve-note chords is notable when studying his compositional style. Twelve-note chords include all twelve tones. Persichetti states that they “are so complex and thick that special attention must be given to the register and instrumentation.”⁶⁸ He explains the best way to lighten the texture is by either writing the chord in the upper register or writing consonant portions performed by separate orchestral choirs. Persichetti employed this compositional technique in his *Symphony No. 6 for Band*. In the final chord of the fourth movement, he writes a twelve-note chord to close the entire piece. Analysis reveals the employment of consonant portions of the chord being played by different choirs within the band setting.

In chapter seven, Persichetti discusses the use of polychords. Polychords are the simultaneous combinations of two or more chords from different harmonic areas. Persichetti describes how to identify and properly write polychords. The first guideline stated by the author is that polychords are seldom polytonal.⁶⁹ Polytonality would happen if the different chords were in different keys. However, they most often stay within the same key. He also states that the chords must have a clear grouping within chordal units, or the effect will be lost.⁷⁰ This technique allows for a wider range of color within a composition. Persichetti is not bound to the traditional chords of western art music when using two chords simultaneously.

Orchestration & Texture Structure

Persichetti has written extensively for large and small ensemble settings. He often incorporates techniques from his chamber pieces into his larger works. This is achieved by writing for small choirs within larger ensembles and allowing the remainder of the ensemble to

⁶⁸ Ibid., 87.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 136.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 137.

rest. Persichetti writes, “In multi-voice florid writing, voices rest periodically so that individual imitative parts are not obscured. Rests, preceding fresh entrances, add interest to long melodic lines. When transparency in texture is sought, voices are widely spaced and rest often.”⁷¹

Allowing voices to rest allows Persichetti to change the color palette of his pieces as well as create a larger effect when the full ensemble plays.

Persichetti does not limit his use of texture while writing. Like many other aspects of his characteristic style, he is willing to explore different settings by employing multiple concepts simultaneously. He writes, “Acceptance of one procedure does not necessarily mean the exclusion of others. A fugue may be written over a cantus firmus, a hymn placed under a tone row, and quartal harmony blended with tertian.”⁷² He often employs this tactic within a full ensemble setting, however it is the chamber choirs within the ensembles that produce the different concepts to create the contradiction within the large ensemble.

Conclusion

Persichetti’s contribution to twentieth century music was not the creation of new theoretical concepts. He cites in his own book where most of his concepts can be found in other literature. However, Persichetti demonstrated a process of melding many different twentieth century techniques into one composition. The resulting effect is a sound palate that is distinctly colorful and can be identified as Persichetti’s own voice.

⁷¹ Ibid., 226.

⁷² Ibid., 271.

Martha Graham – Biographical Information

Childhood

Martha Graham was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania on May 11, 1894. Allegheny was a blue-collar town, built upon the iron and coal industries. Her father, George Graham, MD, specialized in mental disorders, a profession known as an “alienist” during that period.⁷³ Her mother, Jane Beers Graham, was a direct descendent of Miles Standish, one of the Pilgrims who arrived in the New World seeking religious freedom during the seventeenth century. Religion played an important part in the Graham family and in Martha’s early years. Graham had two younger sisters, Mary and Georgia, who would later dance for one season in Martha’s company (1931).⁷⁴ Graham was very close with her father. He instilled in her many valuable lessons throughout her childhood, including how to tell if a person was lying based on his or her movements. He learned from his patients that if words and movements were inconsistent, the patient was not being truthful; he would often say, “Movement doesn’t lie,” words Graham would repeat several times throughout her life.⁷⁵ This focus on body language influenced her choreography later in life.

Graham’s parents restricted their children’s lives to school during the week and church on Sunday.⁷⁶ They rarely went out alone and were protectively reared as “little ladies”. On Sunday mornings they attended the United Presbyterian Sunday School and in the evening, they attended meetings of the Christian Endeavor Society. Dr. Graham made his library available to his daughters, encouraging Graham to be a voracious reader. Graham was interested in theatre as

⁷³ Don McDonagh, *Martha Graham: A Biography* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), 8.

⁷⁴ Marian Horosko, *Martha Graham: The Evolution of Dance Training* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1991), 1.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ McDonagh, *Martha Graham*, 9-11.

a child; she and her siblings often created plays in their home. Graham enjoyed making them as realistic as possible. At one point, this dedication to realism led to starting a small fire in their home due to the use of a candle prop combined with dressing her terrier in doll's clothing. Graham was fascinated by animals and observed their movements carefully. She would reflect on this period of her childhood in a *Dance Magazine* interview, recalling that "My people were strict religionists who felt that dancing was a sin. They frowned on all worldly pleasures... My upbringing led me to fear it myself."⁷⁷

Adolescence

When Graham was fourteen, her family moved to Santa Barbara, California with the hope that the changing climate would help her sister Mary's chronic asthma.⁷⁸ At the time, Santa Barbara was a sheltered community surrounded by wooded mountains and the ocean. The population consisted of a sizable Spanish and Chinese population, but this would change as many Anglo-Saxon families moved further west. It was a drastic change from the rigorous Presbyterian community of western Pennsylvania. Graham later said that California was the place where she came upon the "power of the Indian and knew the freedom of the Negro."⁷⁹ She also comments in a *Dance Magazine* article that "No child can develop as a real Puritan in a semitropical climate. California swung me in the direction of paganism, though years would pass before I fully emancipated."⁸⁰ This drastic awakening and change in life can be seen in Graham's productions, many of which include themes of younger generations living in the shadow of older generations.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 13.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 11-12.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 12.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 13.

In high school, Graham was known for her quiet determination rather than for physical beauty.⁸¹ She was captain of the girls' basketball team, and spent a lot of time reading and writing. She wrote a two-scene play for the school magazine dealing with the confusion and horseplay of the girls' locker room. In 1911, Graham went to Los Angeles with her father to see a concert by Ruth St. Denis, one of the most famous exotic concert dancers of the time.⁸² It was the first time Graham witnessed a dance performance of any kind. This would have a lasting impact on Graham, motivating her to begin training as a dancer at seventeen, an age considered extremely late for a beginner in the dance world.⁸³ The following August, Graham made her first amateur dance appearance at a local theater. When she returned to school, she quit the basketball team to focus on dramatics. In 1913, Graham graduated from high school and her parents encouraged her to pursue academics back east. However, Graham decided to attend Cumnock Junior College in Los Angeles, a school that emphasized expression.⁸⁴

College and Training

The Cumnock School was located in the Mid-Wilshire district of Los Angeles. The school provided an education not only in academic subjects, but also in "expression" subjects such as dance and drama. At the end of Graham's first year, her father died. Graham stayed at the college for three full years. After graduating in 1916, Graham enrolled in the Denishawn Dance Company's summer sessions. Denishawn was created by Graham's idol, Ruth St. Denis, and her husband, Ted Shawn. They recalled that Graham's determination was much greater than her actual skillset when she arrived at the company.⁸⁵ St. Denis would eventually tell Shawn that

⁸¹ Ibid., 14-18.

⁸² Exotic dance during this period was a style that expressed themes from other cultures

⁸³ Martha Graham, *Blood Memory*, 56.

⁸⁴ McDonagh, *Martha Graham*, 18.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 22.

she could not do anything with Graham and did not want her in class, which led Shawn to become Graham's primary teacher. She developed her skills and eventually Graham was called upon to demonstrate in St. Denis's classes.

In the summer of 1916, Graham made her first professional dance appearance in *A Dance Pageant of Egypt, Greece, and Italy* in a minor role.⁸⁶ The first performance was at the University of California, Berkley followed by a small tour of the San Diego area. When a shortened version of the production was made for a vaudeville concert tour, Graham was cut from the production. Her next opportunity to perform would come with the rise of World War I. When Ted Shawn volunteered for the Ambulance Corps, he invited Graham and other dancers to live in the studio and teach lessons. She stayed with Denishawn until the early 1920s and eventually had opportunities to perform on both U.S. and European tours.

Early Career

In 1923, Graham moved to New York City after being hired for the fifth annual production of *The Greenwich Village Follies*.⁸⁷ Her position in *Follies* made her self-sufficient and gave her the prospect of a future in dance. However, this time in her career would be short-lived because Graham did not enjoy the rigorous performance schedule.⁸⁸ After *Follies* she was hired, along with Esther Gustafson, by Reuben Mamoulian to direct the dance department at the newly established Eastman School of Dance and Dramatic Action.⁸⁹ Graham was not fond of teaching, but this opportunity allowed her to establish her own studio and pupils. This gave Graham the resources to experiment with her own sense of what dance movement should be. Concurrently, she held a position at the Anderson-Milton School in New York City and therefore

⁸⁶ Ibid., 23.

⁸⁷ Martha Graham, *Blood Memory*, 90.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 103.

⁸⁹ McDonagh, *Martha Graham*, 44-45.

commuted from New York City to Rochester every other week. Although she continued to develop her own technique at Anderson-Milton, Graham's job at Eastman ended after she experienced difficulty with the other faculty who did not understand her direction. Nonetheless, the Eastman job was significant because some students saw the value in Graham's instruction and would eventually become members of her company early in its development.⁹⁰ This eventually led to Graham presenting her first independent dance recital on April 18, 1926.

Graham spent a great deal of time teaching and developing her own style of dance throughout the remainder of the 1920s. She was greatly influenced by Mary Wigman, a German who created percussive dances and utilized dark costumes.⁹¹ She was also influenced by Ronny Johansson, who inspired Graham's heavy use of the floor and the torso, more so than traditional classical ballet was utilizing at the time.⁹² Graham stripped layers away from her teachings, bringing simplicity to her technique. She incorporated a clear focus on one of the most important fundamentals—contraction and release.⁹³

By the late 1920s, newspaper critics had begun using the term “modern dance” in columns.⁹⁴ This term was most often applied to the generation of dancers who emerged from Denishawn. Modern dance was a stark contrast to traditional ballet, as it was more aggressive and thoroughly American. This was a blessing and a curse for pioneers of the movement; they were free to create and explore a new world of dance, but the public as a whole did not care for most modern American art.⁹⁵ European art and artists were considered to be superior to any American counterpart in the early twentieth century. This led to many American artists training

⁹⁰ Ibid., 47-48.

⁹¹ See below for information on the importance of Wigman's background from Germany

⁹² Ibid., 54.

⁹³ Ibid., 62.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 58-59.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 59-60.

in Europe to gain interest and legitimacy when they returned home to continue their careers. Many in the modern dance community, including Graham, struggled financially because of this stigma.

During these early years, modern dance was often performed on Sundays, when theaters were not typically booked. The modern dance community heavily relied on lighting and costuming to set the tone and scene for their works because props were not in the budget. During these early days, Graham was financially strained to support her company, but managed to draw large enough crowds to make ends meet. In 1929, Graham introduced a permanent company called The Dance Company.⁹⁶ This group worked year-round, rather than being reassembled for each concert. However, the timing made it difficult to keep the group running, as the stock market crashed in October of that year.

The beginning of the 1930s were an even more financially difficult time for modern dancers. Graham banded her company together with other companies and soloists to create the Dance Repertory Project. This collaboration was intended to help shoulder the burden of expenses by combining multiple entities who performed within the same concert series.⁹⁷ Graham not only managed to keep her company performing in the New York area, but took them on tour throughout the United States.⁹⁸ These were short concert tours that were mostly in the eastern half of the United States in 1930, but expanded throughout the decade, eventually becoming a fully-funded transcontinental tour. Graham also had the opportunity to promote herself by performing in the first American production of Igor Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Ibid., 62.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 68.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 75.

⁹⁹ Graham, *Blood Memory*, 127.

This opportunity brought her to the attention of world-famous choreographer Massine, who was a direct descendent of Sergei Diaghilev, the original mastermind behind *The Rite of Spring*.

The 1930s continued to be decade of growth for Martha Graham and her reputation as a dancer and choreographer. She rejected an invitation to perform at a competition in Berlin that was associated with the Olympics out of moral obligation.¹⁰⁰ She states “I would find it impossible to dance in Germany at the present time. So many artist whom I respected and admired been persecuted, have been deprived of the right to work for ridiculous and unsatisfactory reasons.”¹⁰¹ Eleanor Roosevelt became a fan of her work, attending concerts and eventually inviting her to the White House.¹⁰² Graham’s company was also invited to perform at the 1938 World’s Fair in Chicago.¹⁰³ Much of this growth was possible because of the academic system in the United States.¹⁰⁴ Many colleges and universities not only had useful performance venues, but provided audiences that were genuinely accepting and interested in modern dance.

Graham also modified elements of her productions in the 1930s. While on a trip to Santa Barbara, she took interest in the Native American culture of the southwestern United States.¹⁰⁵ This led to her studying and incorporating Native American movement into her works. In the middle of the decade she began to incorporate props into her sets, providing a more significant visual backdrop than mere lighting. She also wrote works that protested the Spanish Civil War, speaking out against atrocities that took place during that period. These social and artistic strides led Graham to become an American icon in the post-World War II era.

¹⁰⁰ McDonagh, *Martha Graham*, 112.

¹⁰¹ Graham, *Blood Memory*, 151.

¹⁰² McDonagh, *Martha Graham*, 120.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 132.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 112.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

World War II

Graham's company was in the unique position of being able to continue performing during World War II. The company was still composed of female dancers, in contrast with ballet companies that needed more male dancers for the traditional storylines of their productions. As young men were drafted and shipped overseas to fight the war, several traditional dance companies had to suspend operations; this was not the case for Martha Graham Dance Company. During this period a young, up-and-coming male dancer named Erick Hawkins joined Martha Graham's studio. Hawkins was drawn to Graham's style of dance. Once he joined the studio in 1938, he quickly became a prominent influence within the company.¹⁰⁶ Graham grew close to Hawkins, which was unusual given her typically private life.

During the war years, Martha Graham Dance Company still performed, but like most Americans, they conserved for the war effort and funding was tight. Erick Hawkins advocated for the company and created a donor base to fund their projects.¹⁰⁷ It was through his dealings and communications with funding sources that Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, a patron of the arts, was invited to come watch a Graham performance. Coolidge was impressed and commissioned three musical scores for Graham to choreograph. This was one of the most significant moments in Graham's career, as the works were to be performed in the Library of Congress, with selections composed by Darius Milhaud, Paul Hindemith, and Aaron Copland.

Martha Graham's success in 1944, especially her collaboration with Aaron Copland to create *Appalachian Spring*, brought her career to new heights.¹⁰⁸ Graham married Hawkins in 1948, though the marriage did not last.¹⁰⁹ She became an American icon in the performing arts,

¹⁰⁶ Horosko, *Martha Graham*, 52.

¹⁰⁷ Mark Franko, *Martha Graham in Love and War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 48-50.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Horosko, *Martha Graham*, 52.

honored by multiple Presidents of the United States for her contributions to dance. Graham died in 1991, but her company is still active and touring today, continuing as one of the oldest dance companies in New York City.

Chapter II – Background Information on *Eye of Anguish* and *King Lear*

Eye of Anguish

When Persichetti was interviewed regarding *Eye of Anguish*, he stated that Martha Graham's ultimate goal was to create a vehicle for her husband, Erick Hawkins, to display his talents.¹¹⁰ This led Graham to create her first production with a male lead. Graham's *Eye of Anguish* is not a dance version of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, but rather a journey of the emotions experienced by the characters in the play. Graham uses *King Lear* as a vehicle to express her message of "the ultimate wholeness of man through the imaginative use of suffering and experience."¹¹¹

She states in her notes to Persichetti that the scene and backdrop for the dance is a storm. The storm is realistic and symbolic, as it is part of Lear's purgatorial experience. His endurance of the storm is an anodyne for the pain caused by the conduct of his daughters. Graham envisioned a journey to the center of a hurricane or typhoon, where there is calm. The center of the storm is a metaphor for Lear's journey to utter awareness, when he realizes his flaws that led to the banishment of the only daughter that truly loved him. Graham provided this vision to Persichetti for her production through the subject, time, place, and action.

- The subject is the anguish of a soul bound upon a "wheel of fire."
- The time is that instant when a being is catapulted by his actions into the madness of a storm raging in his own heart.
- The place is a heath – that "alone place" which is man's heart during a storm.¹¹²
- The action is concerned with the purgatorial journey toward awareness.

¹¹⁰ Shackelford, "Conversation with Vincent Persichetti," 121.

¹¹¹ New York Public Library, Persichetti, *A Monograph*, 64.

¹¹² A "heath" is an area of open, uncultivated land, especially in Britain.

Summary of Shakespeare's *King Lear*

King Lear is a tragedy featuring the elderly king of Britain who decides to relinquish his power to his three daughters; Cordelia, Regan, and Goneril. Lear intends to gift the largest plot of land to the daughter who loves him the most. He asks his daughters to state their love for him in front of the court. Goneril and Regan lie to the king and trick him into believing they love him far more than they actually do, while Cordelia tells the king she loves him as a daughter should. This angers the king and he disowns Cordelia, believing her love for him is not strong enough. He allows the King of France to take her hand in marriage, knowing it will in essence remove Cordelia from his life.

Once Regan and Goneril gain power over the kingdom, their true intentions are made clear. They treat their father poorly, greatly reducing the number of knights serving him and ignoring his requests. Lear goes mad with the realization of what he has done to the only daughter who truly loved him. His trusted advisors learn that Cordelia has raised an army and is planning to land in Dover to counter her evil sisters. Lear and what remain of his men head to Dover.

Regan and Goneril learn of their sister's intentions and send their armies to Dover as well. Lear sleeps through the battle because he is exhausted from travelling. When he wakes, he discovers that Regan and Goneril won the battle and that he has been imprisoned. He takes the news well, believing he will be reunited with Cordelia in jail. However, Cordelia is ordered to be executed. After Cordelia's death, Lear is overtaken with grief and dies.

Timeline of the Graham-Persichetti Collaboration and Subsequent Receptions

Martha Graham approached Persichetti in November 1948, suggesting he write the music for *Eye of Anguish*. Persichetti agreed to the commission and finished the score in six weeks. Even though the work was commissioned for Graham's vision, the dance was created in such a way that Persichetti was not simply writing music to choreography.¹¹³ Martha Graham gave detailed notes to Persichetti as to how she wanted the storyline of the dance to progress. Then, Persichetti wrote music while Martha Graham created the choreography. This process allowed Persichetti to have complete musical freedom while creating a product that would meet Graham's needs.

The dance originally premiered under the title *King Lear* on January 31, 1949 in Montclair, New Jersey. The work was taken on tour three times throughout the United States: in spring 1949, fall 1949, and spring 1950.¹¹⁴ The title *Eye of Anguish* appeared for the first time during the fall tour of 1949. At the beginning of the spring tour in 1950, the production was performed for the first time in New York. The dance received poor reviews in New York, but more favorable responses on tour.¹¹⁵ Those favorable responses may have been a result of Graham scheduling the tours at college campuses, where audiences seemed more open to modern dance.¹¹⁶

In the summer of 1950, Graham was encouraged by one of her largest donors, Bethsabée de Rothschild, to tour Europe.¹¹⁷ Tension had been growing between Graham and her husband, mainly over *Eye of Anguish* and its lack of success in catapulting his career. Graham allowed

¹¹³ New York Public Library, Persichetti, *A Monograph*, 64.

¹¹⁴ New York Public Library, *Vincent Persichetti Papers Collection*, Box 111, Folder 12.

¹¹⁵ Franko, *Martha Graham in Love and War*, 136-138.

¹¹⁶ Clifford Gessler, "You Have to Go to College to See Martha Graham This Season; Mills Lauds Dance," *The Oakland Tribune* (March 17, 1950), n.p..

¹¹⁷ McDonagh, *Martha Graham*, 215.

Hawkins to choreograph some of the production and much of the criticism was specifically related to his performance.¹¹⁸ Regardless, Graham programmed the work on the European tour because she thought the audiences would be more receptive. *Eye of Anguish* was performed in Paris with Eleanor Roosevelt in attendance, but received a less than welcoming reception.¹¹⁹ The tour was cut short when Graham injured herself during one of the performances.¹²⁰ Graham and Hawkins divorced shortly thereafter and *Eye of Anguish* was never performed again by the Martha Graham Dance Company.

Although Persichetti did not publish the work as a standalone chamber piece until 1977, he shared the septet with selected chamber music ensembles. In a letter from Austin McDowell of the University of Illinois (dated October 6, 1958), McDowell asks Persichetti for a program note to *King Lear* because the faculty woodwind quintet programmed the work on a contemporary music concert at Fullerton Hall in Chicago.¹²¹ McDowell mentioned they performed the septet at the national MENC convention in Los Angeles that year, and it received a “fine reception” with Halsey Stevens, Lukas Foss, Ingolf Dahl, and Robert Ward as members of the audience. Another indication that the piece was performed between 1950 and 1977 is a program from The Suwannee Summer Music Center (dated July 15, 1962) with the faculty woodwind quintet performing *King Lear*.¹²²

After publication in 1977, *King Lear* was performed by Montclair State College and the University of Missouri in the same year. Both directors wrote letters to the composer saying the piece was well-received and that they enjoyed programming the work. In 1981, *The Clarinet*

¹¹⁸ Franko, *Martha Graham in Love and War*, 136-138.

¹¹⁹ McDonagh, *Martha Graham*, 215.

¹²⁰ Franko, *Martha Graham in Love and War*, 139-140.

¹²¹ New York Public Library, *Vincent Persichetti Papers Collection*, Box 26, Folder 37.

¹²² *Ibid.*, Box 111, Folder 12.

provided a review of *King Lear*, wherein the piece is described as “beautiful music.”¹²³ Another significant documented performance is by the University of Texas New Music Ensemble on March 28, 1982.¹²⁴ In the early 1990s, the Albemarle Ensemble, a woodwind quintet consisting of University of Virginia faculty, performed the work in a new music concert, and would later produce the only known digital recording of the piece.¹²⁵ *The Washington Post* reviewed two of their concerts, stating once in 1991 that *King Lear* was “too-little-heard.”¹²⁶ A different review by *The Washington Post* in 1992 said that the Persichetti incidental music to *King Lear* was “well wrought.”¹²⁷ The ensemble would perform the piece again in 2000.

¹²³ Bruce Bullock, “New Music Reviews” *The Clarinet* 8, 2 (Winter, 1981): 57.

¹²⁴ New York Public Library, *Vincent Persichetti Papers Collection*, Box 26, Folder 37.

¹²⁵ Vincent Persichetti, *American Camerata Performs*, Albemarle Ensemble, John Stephens, Amcam Records ACR-10305CD, 1992, compact disc.

¹²⁶ Mark Adamo, “Albemarle Ensemble,” *The Washington Post* (March 11, 1991), n.p..

¹²⁷ Mark Carrington, “American Camerata for New Music,” *The Washington Post* (October 26, 1992), n.p..

Chapter III – Theoretical Analysis of *King Lear*, Op. 35

Overview of Theoretical Analysis

Persichetti employs thematic material throughout *King Lear*. These themes do not always resemble a character, but often an emotion or state of being. Many are written in fragments or truncated variations before their first full statement. There are ten themes in the music of *King Lear*. In order to provide a clear picture for the theoretical analysis of *King Lear*, the main themes will be identified first, followed by theoretical analysis for each movement of the piece.

Movement	Themes with Full Statements	Themes with Fragmented or Variation Statements
“Lear’s Dance of Challenge”	<i>Curse Fanfare Theme</i> <i>Death Theme</i>	<i>Curse Fanfare Theme</i>
“Vision of the Three Daughters”	<i>Three Daughters Theme</i>	<i>Curse Fanfare Theme</i> <i>Three Daughters Theme</i> <i>Ensnarement Theme</i>
“Cordelia’s Dance of Serenity”	<i>Sarabande Theme</i>	<i>Sarabande Theme</i> <i>Ensnarement Theme</i>
“Lear’s Dance of Grief”	<i>Grief Theme</i> <i>Good Friday Theme</i>	<i>Grief Theme</i> <i>Good Friday Theme</i>
“The Fool and the Philosopher”	<i>Fool and Philosopher Theme</i>	<i>Good Friday Theme</i> <i>Grief Theme</i>
“The Mock Trial”	<i>Mock Trial Theme</i>	<i>Good Friday Theme</i>
“Ensnarement of Lear”	<i>Ensnarement Theme</i> <i>Madness Theme</i>	<i>Ensnarement Theme</i> <i>Sarabande Theme</i>
“Cordelia’s Dance of Grief”	<i>Sarabande Theme</i>	<i>Ensnarement Theme</i>
“Final Union Between Lear and Cordelia”	N/A	<i>Death Theme</i> <i>Curse Fanfare Theme</i> <i>Grief Theme</i> <i>Good Friday Theme</i>

Figure 1 - Themes in Persichetti’s *King Lear*

Curse Fanfare Theme

Persichetti opens the piece with a *Curse Fanfare Theme* derived from the *Sarabande Theme* in the third movement. It received its name from Martha Graham, when she described the first dance to Persichetti and stated, “There is a violence and somewhat the nature of a curse as

well.”¹²⁸ Persichetti then labels the first dance for Lear as “curse” in his notes. It consists of a series of leaps that change in intervallic value several times as the theme is employed throughout the work. The rhythmic construction in conjunction with the leaps creates the sensation of a fanfare, however the word “fanfare” itself never appears in Persichetti’s notes. The rhythmic construction is also written in the same style as the *Sarabande Theme*. This intentional similarity is probably due to the fact that both themes represent an emotional state of being for Lear.

The image shows a musical score for the first five measures of Persichetti's *King Lear*. The score is written for a full orchestra and piano. The instruments listed are Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, Horn in F, Bassoon, Timpani, and Piano. The music is in 4/4 time with a tempo marking of quarter note = 92. The key signature has one flat (Bb). The score features a series of leaps and rhythmic patterns across the woodwinds and strings, with the piano providing harmonic support. The woodwinds play a melodic line with various intervals and rhythms, while the strings play a rhythmic accompaniment. The timpani has a simple rhythmic pattern. The piano part consists of chords and arpeggiated figures.

Figure 2 - mm. 1 – 5 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

The fanfare consists of four rhythmic landing points. The landing points are created through a series of alternating short-long rhythmic patterns, which can be observed in many different parts of the piece.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 67.



Figure 3 - mm. 73 – 78 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

Death Theme

The *Death Theme* is employed during the last movement of the dance, when Lear holds the deceased Cordelia in his arms. It is titled the *Death Theme* because Persichetti refers to the thematic material as “death” in his notes.¹²⁹ The theme begins with an ascending perfect fifth followed by an ascending tritone. The tritone communicates to the listener a feeling of sadness when something terrible has happened.



Figure 4 - mm. 10 – 12 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

Fragments of the theme are incorporated throughout the piece, but never in length great enough to label them as truncated variations. The fragments serve more as foreshadowing motifs rather than as themes in this setting. The only full statement of the theme is in the first movement, though there is a truncated version in the ninth movement.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 73.

Three Daughters Theme

The second movement of the dance production correlates to the section of Shakespeare's play in which Lear has a vision of his three daughters. The melody is named the *Three Daughters Theme* because it is first heard when all three of Lear's daughters appear for the first time in the dance. It is stated in its full version twice, once in a homophonic setting and again in a polyphonic setting. Persichetti quotes the melody later in the piece, signaling to the audience that Lear is thinking of his daughters.

The image shows a musical score for five instruments: Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, Horn in F, and Bassoon. The music is in 3/4 time and consists of four measures. The Flute, Oboe, and Clarinet in Bb parts are marked 'dolce' and play a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes in the final measure. The Horn in F part is marked 'dolce' and plays a similar melodic line. The Bassoon part is marked 'dolce' and plays a bass line with a triplet of eighth notes in the final measure. The dynamic markings are 'dolce' for the first two measures, 'mp dolce' for the third measure, and 'p' for the final measure.

Figure 5 - mm. 61 – 64 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

The melodic material is simple in structure, allowing the theme to evoke a passive style, which fits the original intent of the dance. After deeper analysis, one can identify further symbolism within the theme by connecting the three ascending eighth notes in the melodic material to each of the three daughters.

Sarabande Theme

The *Sarabande Theme* is first employed in the third movement, "Cordelia's Dance of Serenity." The melodic material does not meet the criteria for a traditional sarabande, largely due to the fact that it is not written in triple meter. The theme acquired the title from Martha Graham when she requested that the music for Cordelia's dance be "serene, passionate in a certain deep sense, almost like a sarabande in inner quality in that it has some of the richness and deep ritual

significance of such a dance.”¹³⁰ Persichetti also refers to the thematic material as “sarabande” throughout his notes while mapping out the structure of the piece.¹³¹

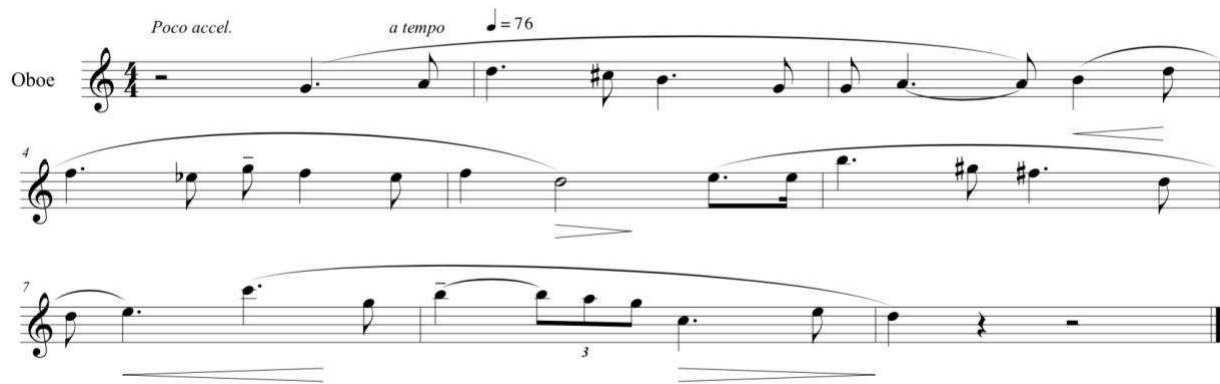


Figure 6 - mm. 79 – 89 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

The horizontal and consonant structure of the melodic line makes this theme one of the most lyrical moments of the piece. The dotted quarter eighth rhythmic grouping creates a forward motion that evokes a feeling of endearment and longing every time the melody lands on a dotted quarter note.

It might appear that the *Sarabande Theme* could also be called “Cordelia’s Theme,” because it is employed whenever her character is on stage. Initially, one might draw the conclusion that the melodic material is written as a lyrical statement of the opening fanfare (*Curse Fanfare Theme*). Further study of Persichetti’s notes on *King Lear* actually conclude the opposite; the fanfare material from the first movement is derived from the *Sarabande Theme*. In his notes for the third movement, Persichetti writes, “Everything that Lear loves,” implying that the melodic material is invoking the imagery of an emotional state of Lear, not the presence of Cordelia.¹³² Lear also writes in his notes, “Tie for 3 & 8.”¹³³ Persichetti uses the words “tie” and

¹³⁰ New York Public Library, Persichetti, *A Monograph*, 67.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 70.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ When Persichetti originally wrote the piece, it was written to its full published length, but divided into eight movements rather than nine.

“link” in his notes to remind himself to use thematic material in another movement of the piece. When examining the notes for the eighth movement, Persichetti writes “sarabande obbligato.”¹³⁴ This implies that a statement of the *Sarabande Theme* from movement three should appear in movement eight. However, the theme in movement eight more closely relates to the opening *Curse Fanfare Theme* (described in the next section of this document). The relationship of material in movement eight to material in movement one, along with Persichetti’s notes “Tie for 3 & 8,” implies that the *Curse Fanfare Theme* is derived from the *Sarabande Theme*.

The image displays a musical score for measures 759 through 763 of Persichetti's *King Lear*. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with seven staves. From top to bottom, the staves are: Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, Horn in F, Bassoon, Timpani, and Piano. The Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, and Horn in F parts feature melodic lines with slurs and accents, often moving in parallel motion. The Bassoon part provides a similar melodic line in the lower register. The Timpani part consists of rhythmic patterns, including a series of eighth notes in measure 760. The Piano part is the most complex, featuring dense chordal textures and intricate rhythmic patterns, including a prominent eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a more active bass line in the left hand.

Figure 7 - mm. 759 – 763 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

¹³⁴ New York Public Library, Persichetti, *A Monograph*, 73.

Ensnarement Theme

Although the seventh movement is entitled “Ensnarement of Lear,” the *Ensnarement Theme* is employed to evoke the imagery of literal and metaphorical ensnarement throughout the entire work. It can be heard in its most simplistic form in mm. 641 – 642.

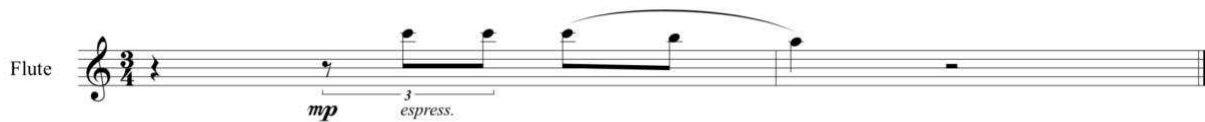


Figure 8 - mm. 641 – 642 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

Persichetti extensively adds on to this theme at several different points in the piece; the key to identifying it is the three repetitive notes that begin each figure. Just as in the *Three Daughters Theme*, one could argue that the three repetitive notes each represent one of the daughters. The repetitive use of this theme could also be Persichetti’s way of foreshadowing and reflecting on Lear’s main source of conflict.

Grief Theme

Persichetti labels the *Grief Theme* in his notes as “band piece.”¹³⁵ This is because he reset an unused movement from his *Divertimento for Band* to as the main melodic material of the fourth movement, “Lear’s Dance of Grief.” In his original *Divertimento for Band*, the material appears between the published fifth and sixth movements. This can be only be seen in his first reduced manuscript for the piece that is housed at the New York Public Library Archives.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ Ibid., 71.

¹³⁶ Morris, “The Life of Vincent Persichetti,” 184-186.



Figure 9 - mm. 116 – 117 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

The *Grief Theme* repeats several times throughout the work whenever Lear experiences grief. It is intended to be performed very percussively and heavy, creating some of the most impactful moments in the piece. The weight of the music correlates with the heavy heart Lear has when he realizes the consequences of his actions.

Good Friday Theme

The *Good Friday Theme* resulted from another direct request from Martha Graham. In the fourth movement, “Lear’s Dance of Grief,” she states “he is really alone before his gods. It is like the Day of Wrath. It is almost like the Good Friday of remembrance.”¹³⁷ Persichetti grants her request with a theme that is made of up two sections. The first section consists of two simple statements of what could be considered a standard chorale.



Figure 10 - mm. 140 – 145 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

¹³⁷ New York Public Library, Persichetti, *A Monograph*, 67.

After closer examination, the construction of rhythmic values matches those of the *Gloria Tibi* #32 from Persichetti's *Hymns and Responses for the Church Year, Vol. 1*.¹³⁸ The lyrics to *Gloria Tibi* are "Glory be to Thee, O Lord." One might argue that Persichetti's vast knowledge of church hymns suggests the matching use of rhythmic value is probably not coincidental. The second part of the *Good Friday Theme* is more complex than its chorale introduction. At first observation, it is more similar in construction to the *Sarabande Theme*.

The image shows a musical score for three woodwind instruments: Flute, Oboe, and Clarinet in Bb. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 145, 146, and 147. The second system contains measures 148, 149, and 150. The Flute part is in the upper register, playing a melodic line with long notes and some grace notes. The Oboe part plays a similar melodic line, often in unison with the Flute. The Clarinet in Bb part provides a harmonic accompaniment with a steady eighth-note pattern. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

Figure 11 - mm. 145 – 152 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

Persichetti's deep knowledge of music literature cannot be overlooked when examining the flute voice in mm. 150 – 151. These two measures are the climax of the theme, which closely resembles the main theme of Wagner's *Good Friday Spell*.¹³⁹

The image shows a single melodic line in a treble clef. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The melody consists of a series of eighth notes: F#4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G#4, F#4. The notes are connected by a long slur, indicating a single phrase.

Figure 12 - Theme from Wagner's *Good Friday Spell*

¹³⁸ Vincent Persichetti, *Hymns and Responses for the Church Year, Vol. 1* (Bryn Mawr, PA: Elkan-Vogel, 1956), 21.

¹³⁹ Richard Wagner, *Parsifal* (Mainz: Schott & Company), 5-7.

Both sections of this theme serve to communicate Martha Graham’s vision. The chorale setting is indicative of a church hymn, urging the listener to recall religious imagery. The second melody of the section, which is closely related to the Wagner’s *Good Friday Spell*, rises in dynamics and range as it reaches the climax, ushering in feelings of Lear reaching out to his God.

Fool and Philosopher Theme

Martha Graham instructed Persichetti to create contrasting melodic material between the fourth and fifth movements that is ironic in nature.¹⁴⁰ Persichetti achieves this irony by writing the lightest and most playful theme of the piece, the *Fool and Philosopher Theme*.



Figure 13 - mm. 163 – 178 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

The theme consists of contrasting melodies. The melodic material in the clarinet voice is one of the most rhythmic melodies of the entire piece. It is indicative of the Fool and the Philosopher characters in that the musical line is constantly moving up and down the range of the instrument,

¹⁴⁰ New York Public Library, Persichetti, *A Monograph*, 68.

communicating a sensation of jumping or bouncing to the listener. The contrasting melody is written in the nature of a horn call, and is similar to the *Curse Fanfare Theme*, though not closely related enough to label it as a variation. For the second melody, Graham instructs Persichetti to write in a manner that showcases how “Lear’s madness is...progressing.”¹⁴¹ This progression is achieved when the horn call material develops from single voice scoring to being orchestrated for all of the wind voices, making it more obvious to the listener.

Mock Trial Theme

The *Mock Trial Theme* is employed in the sixth movement of the same name. This theme is also light in nature in order to fulfill Graham’s request that the music be “elegant.”¹⁴²



Figure 14 - mm. 163 – 178 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

The elegant style is achieved through staccato style markings, thinly scored orchestration, and the use of consonant writing. This allows the theme to be distinctly unique by communicating a sense of sarcasm, which has not yet been heard in the work. This elegant setting is meant to depict the two daughters who betray Lear. The music is a spoof on the dance choreography, because this is the moment when Lear sees his two dishonest daughters as animals and realizes how they have betrayed him for the first time.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

Madness Theme

Lear's narrative involves his journey through several stages of emotion, the pinnacle being madness. Persichetti quotes the *Madness Theme* early in the fourth movement, but does not employ the theme again until the seventh movement. The theme is very rhythmic and vertically shaped.

The image shows a musical score for the Madness Theme from Persichetti's *King Lear*, measures 675-679. The score is written for a full orchestra and piano. The instruments listed are Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in B \flat , Horn in F, Bassoon, Timpani, and Piano. The music is in 4/4 time and features a complex, vertically shaped rhythmic pattern. The Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in B \flat , Horn in F, and Bassoon parts all play a similar rhythmic figure, while the Piano provides a harmonic accompaniment. The dynamics range from *f* (forte) to *ff* (fortissimo). The score is marked with *f* and *ff* dynamics, indicating a strong, powerful sound. The Flute part starts with a *f* dynamic and then moves to *ff*. The Oboe, Clarinet in B \flat , Horn in F, and Bassoon parts also start with *f* and then move to *ff*. The Piano part starts with *f* and then moves to *ff*. The score is marked with *f* and *ff* dynamics, indicating a strong, powerful sound. The Flute part starts with a *f* dynamic and then moves to *ff*. The Oboe, Clarinet in B \flat , Horn in F, and Bassoon parts also start with *f* and then move to *ff*. The Piano part starts with *f* and then moves to *ff*.

Figure 15 - mm. 675 – 679 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

The vertical shape of the theme is in sharp contrast with the primarily horizontal, lyrical themes in the work. This contrast, with complex rhythmic groupings, creates a sudden feeling of chaos, implying that Lear has lost this mind.

Movement I – Lear’s Dance of Challenge

The first movement, “Lear’s Dance of Challenge,” which Martha Graham originally entitled “Lear’s Dance of Challenge and Arrogance,” is inspired by two quotes from Act Three, Scene Two of the Shakespearean play, in which Lear yells at a storm.¹⁴³

Blow, winds and crack your cheeks! Rage! Blow! You cataracts and hurricanes,
spout until you have drenched our steeples, drown’d the cocks!¹⁴⁴

Let the great gods that keep this dreadful pother o’er our heads, Find out their
enemies now.

It is significant that the opening dance is inspired by lines that come from Act Three and not Act One of Shakespeare’s original play. This is because Graham is not telling the story of *King Lear*, but using it as a vehicle to convey her message, making the plot development in the beginning of the story irrelevant to her goal. Graham describes the dance as violent and somewhat in the nature of a curse. This violence is not aimed at the elements, but rather at Lear’s daughters. The energy of the dance is built upon a great wrath that borders on madness.

The formal structure of “Lear’s Dance of Challenge” is explained through one of Graham’s requests. She wanted the music to drop in energy after the opening so that it could rise again leading into the second movement, “Vision of the Three Daughters.”¹⁴⁵ The dynamic structure delineates the overall structure of “Lear’s Dance of Challenge” and acts as a road map:

Measures	1 – 4	5 – 12	13 – 23	24 – 32	33 – 35	36 – 38
Dynamic	ff	f	mf - mp	mp - solo f	mf - f	f - ff

Figure 16 - Dynamic Chart of “Lear’s Dance of Challenge”

¹⁴³ Ibid., 67.

¹⁴⁴ Act 3, Scene 2

¹⁴⁵ New York Public Library, Persichetti, *A Monograph*, 67.

Measures	1 – 23	24 – 24
Form	A	B
Plot	A storm that is realistic and symbolic	The curse against his daughters
Thematic Material	<i>Curse Fanfare</i>	Lyrical variation of the fanfare

Figure 17 - Form Chart of “Lear’s Dance of Challenge”

Graham requested that the opening have a feeling of shock rather than overture, and that the audience should be catapulted into action.¹⁴⁶ Persichetti achieves this by opening the piece with a dissonant fanfare in A minor, created through intervals of a seventh and a sixth in the melody. This is the *Curse Fanfare*.

The image shows a musical score for measures 1 through 5 of Persichetti's *King Lear*. The score is written for a full orchestra and piano. The instruments listed are Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, Horn in F, Bassoon, Timpani, and Piano. The music is in 4/4 time with a tempo marking of quarter note = 92. The key signature is A minor. The score features a dissonant fanfare in the wind instruments, characterized by intervals of a seventh and a sixth in the melody. The piano part provides harmonic support with tonic and dominant chords.

Figure 18 - mm. 1 – 5 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

Despite the juxtaposition of quartal and compound chords throughout this section, the tonal center of A minor is achieved through the use of tonic and dominant chords in the piano part. The unison melodic line in the wind voices anchors the tonal center by landing on the tonic and dominant. The opening statement finishes in m. 5 with a major second interval that includes the

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

notes A and B. The piano then becomes a solo voice, continuing the fanfare in a polyharmonic setting.

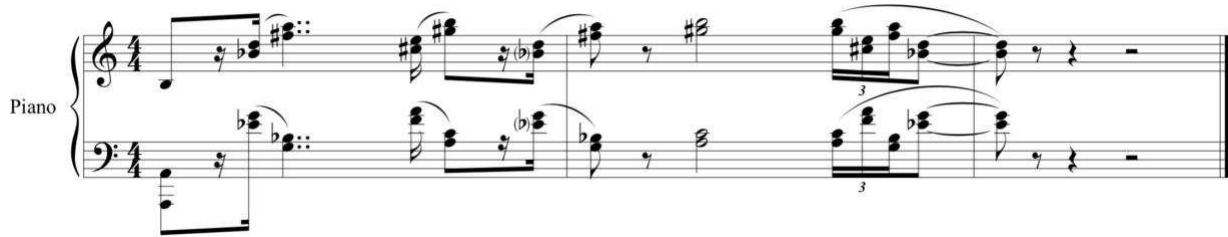


Figure 19 - mm. 5 – 7 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

Persichetti employs a counter-chordal technique that he discusses in *Twentieth Century Harmony*.¹⁴⁷ The counter-motion in the outer voices of the polyharmony gives direction to the piano part in mm. 5 – 7, moving the piece forward. At m. 10, the winds take over from the piano with the *Death Theme*. Persichetti brings the listener back to A minor by highlighting the dominant at the beginning and the end of the phrase, and temporarily landing on the tonic in the middle.



Figure 20 - mm. 10 – 12 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

¹⁴⁷ Persichetti, *Twentieth-Century Harmony*, 145.

Persichetti uses mm. 13 – 23 to bring clarity and calm to the listener. While the melodic line centers on the dominant, the chords underneath played by the piano voice repetitively return to a minor triad with an added note.



Figure 21 - m. 13 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

Throughout this section Persichetti employs a special category of added-note chords. This type of added-note harmony uses a traditional triad in the upper voices, while a major or second from any of the members of the chord is placed in the bass voice, often in octaves to create balance.¹⁴⁸ In mm. 18 – 23 these chords allow the tonal center to shift to B major and then Bb major, before returning to A major at m. 24. The primary purpose of this section is to provide a transition to achieve Graham's request for energy to relax after the powerful opening.

The beginning of the oboe solo at m. 23 is the softest dynamic point in the music, which then builds toward the second movement. This solo is a lyrical variation of the opening fanfare and foreshadows the second movement, which is written in a reflective tone.



Figure 22 - mm. 23 – 25 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

The solo becomes a duet with clarinet until it lands on the same major second interval with notes A and B, like the opening fanfare. The duet gives way to a bassoon solo that drives the

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 117.

movement forward dynamically. The piano takes over from the bassoon, incorporating polyharmonic and secundal chords, creating a sense of rising and uncertainty within the music. The winds enter over the piano, progressing in contrary motion until they arrive at a secundal chord on m. 35.

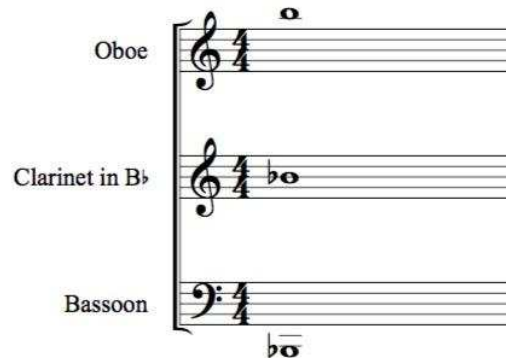


Figure 23 - m. 35 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

The flute becomes the focal point, with a solo in m. 35. The phrase uses a combination of eighth and sixteenth notes to bring rhythmic acceleration into the second movement. The flute begins by outlining a quartal choral, and when other wind voices join (mm. 37 and 38), the transition progresses into a conglomerate of different chord qualities, with compound harmony being the most prevalent. This creates a sense of derailment until the grounding opening horn solo of the second movement.

Movement II – Vision of the Three Daughters

The velocity and intensity subsides in the “Vision of the Three Daughters.” Lear leans against a tree and has a vision of his three daughters dancing under a transparent material. Graham explains this is to give the impression that the girls are in this venture together.¹⁴⁹ She also explains that the dance will be in a single place, implying that they are coming from the

¹⁴⁹ New York Public Library, Persichetti, *A Monograph*, 67.

underworld. At the end of the movement Cordelia escapes, setting the stage for the third movement, “Cordelia’s Dance of Serenity.”

Measures	39 – 53	54 – 73	74 – 79
Form	A	B	Coda
Plot	Lear leans against a tree and the three daughters enter	Lear has a vision of his three daughters dancing	Cordelia escapes
Thematic Material	Lyrical curse fanfare	<i>Three Daughters Theme</i>	Combination of lyrical curse fanfare and <i>Three Daughters Theme</i>

Figure 24 - Form Chart of “Vision of the Three Daughters”

The second movement opens with a horn solo that elides the first movement with the second. Like the oboe solo in m. 24, it starts with an octave leap, then gives way to the major and minor seventh that was prominent in the first movement. The melody sets a temporary tonal center of F major, with the phrase starting on the dominant and ending on the tonic.



Figure 25 - mm. 38 – 44 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

The three daughters enter the stage in m. 42 with the piano part. The chord progression in the piano contradicts the horn solo above it, creating clashing polytonality.

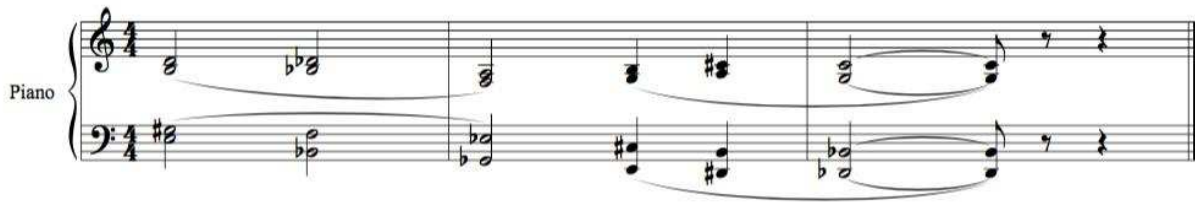


Figure 26 - mm. 42 – 44 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

The horn solo is passed to the clarinet in m. 44, continuing the melody in the dominant. The solo is accompanied by added note chords in the piano, which continue to create a clashing polytonality. The clarinet melody ends on E major, the mediant of C major, which allows the bassoon to become the focal point and bring an abrupt end to the melodic line in m. 50, which begins a transition.



Figure 27 - m. 50 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

The bassoon horn call quickly gives way to a B diminished chord in third inversion with the third omitted. A new time signature of 3/4 is established by the flute and oboe, foreshadowing the *Three Daughters Theme* that is embellished throughout the movement until the coda.



Figure 28 - mm. 52 – 54 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

The piano becomes the focal point in m. 54, completing the transition into the B section. During mm. 54-55, the voice introduces the use of the polychords that will be the foundation for the *Three Daughters Theme*, which the piano begins in m. 56.

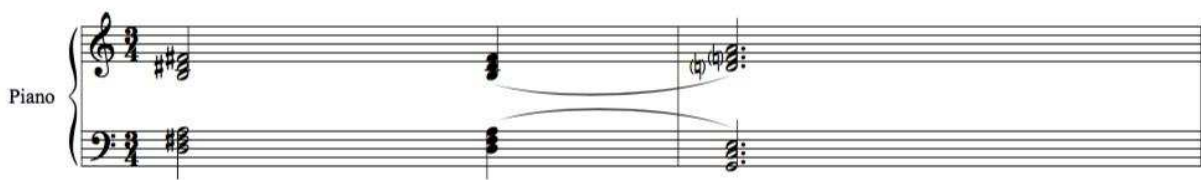


Figure 29 - mm. 54 – 55 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

In m. 61, the winds take over the melodic line, which is developed into a polyphonic texture with the bassoon and horn parts introducing new material reflective of the fanfare. The piano provides another two-measure interlude before the winds reenter in m. 67. The melodic material here is closely related to m. 10. The focal point in this section is the clarinet in m. 69, introducing the first statement of the *Ensnared Theme*.



Figure 30 - mm. 69 – 72 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

The winds continue from m. 67 – 71, until the melody ends on a secundal chord in m. 71, which the piano takes over until the coda begins in m. 74.



Figure 31 - mm. 72 – 73 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

When the horn and bassoon voices begin a horn call in the pickup to m. 74, this signals Cordelia's escape from her two sisters and is the focal point of the coda, leading into "Cordelia's Dance of Serenity." It is important to note that this horn call is similar to the beginning of the second movement, with an octave interval. Persichetti provides a polyharmonic foundation below the horn and bassoon parts that eventually connect the two movements in m. 79.



Figure 32 - mm. 78 – 79 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

Movement III – Cordelia’s Dance of Serenity

Graham describes “Cordelia’s Dance of Serenity” as “serene, passionate in a certain deep scene, almost like a sarabande in inner quality, in that it has some of the richness and deep ritual significance.”¹⁵⁰ This dance is still part of Lear’s vision, in which he realizes his lapse in judgment, leading to his dance of grief in the fourth movement.

The melodic content for Cordelia’s dance is still derived from the opening fanfare in the first movement. It is used in two different ways, creating a binary structure for the movement.

Measures	79 – 96	97 – 117
Form	A	B
Plot	Cordelia dances alone, almost like a sarabande with a deep ritual significance	Continuation of the plot from A. The addition of the <i>Ensnarement Theme</i> is foreshadowing
Thematic Material	<i>Sarabande Theme</i>	<i>Sarabande Theme</i> with <i>Ensnarement Theme</i>

Figure 33 - Form Chart of “Cordelia’s Dance of Serenity”

The dance begins in m. 79 with a trio of the oboe, clarinet, and bassoon. The oboe plays the *Sarabande Theme* over a harmonizing clarinet line. The bassoon provides a bass line that is more characteristic of a counter-melody, creating a polyphonic texture. The three voices create polyharmony that shifts frequently in quality.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

The image shows a musical score for six woodwind instruments: Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, Bassoon, Oboe (Ob.), Bb Clarinet (Bb Cl.), and Bassoon (Bsn.). The score is for measures 79 through 86 of Persichetti's *King Lear*. The tempo is marked "Poco accel. a tempo" with a quarter note equal to 76 beats per minute. The music features a complex rhythmic structure with various notes, rests, and articulations across the six staves.

Figure 34 - mm. 79 – 86 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

The rhythmic structure of the oboe melody at m. 79 is where the connection between the *Sarabande Theme* and the *Curse Fanfare Theme* is first heard. This correlation is most prevalent in mm. 79 – 80, when the long-short rhythmic pattern that appears in the first two movements re-occurs.

The image shows a musical score for the Oboe part, measures 79-80 and 23-25 of Persichetti's *King Lear*. The score highlights a long-short rhythmic pattern in the oboe melody. The first part shows measures 79 and 80, and the second part shows measures 23 and 25. The tempo is marked "m.79" and "m.23".

Figure 35 - mm. 79 – 80 & mm. 23 – 25 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

In m. 87 the flute becomes the focal point over the piano and Bb drone in the horn voice. The flute line begins with an octave leap, which is indicative of a horn call that's later used to represent Lear's growing madness. At m. 89 the clarinet voices enter with the long-short rhythmic pattern under the flute voice, which then employs the figure itself in m. 90.

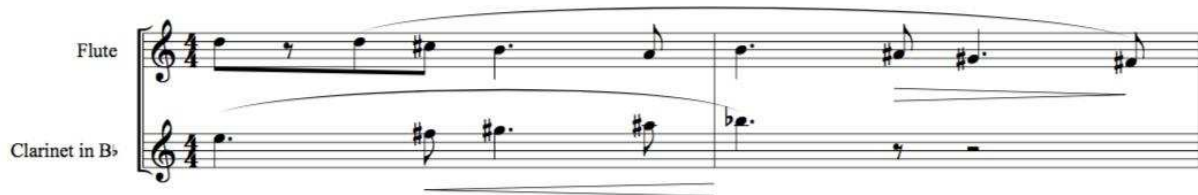


Figure 36 - mm. 89 – 90 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

At m. 91, the oboe, clarinet, and bassoon trio returns with a truncated variation of the *Sarabande Theme*.

At m. 97 the piano begins the B section of the piece with the *Ensnarement Theme*, which was first introduced in the clarinet voice in m. 69 of the second movement. The theme is heard three more times throughout this movement, twice in in the flute melodic line beginning in m.105 and once in the clarinet in m. 112.

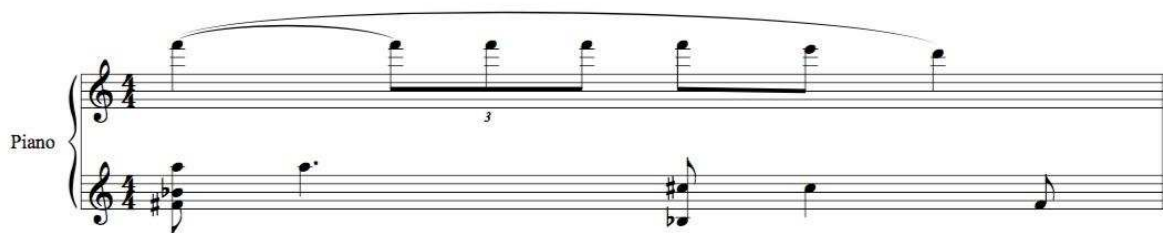


Figure 37 - m. 97 of Persichetti's *King Lear*



Figure 38 - m. 105 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

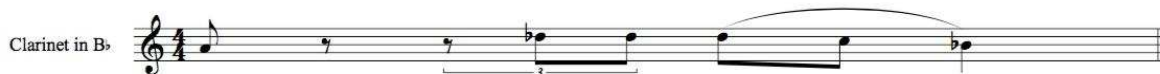


Figure 39 - m. 112 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

This material is stated in several different settings, mostly in a polyphonic texture. Extension material reflective of the *Sarabande Theme* is found in mm. 108 – 111. This builds to a final peak of the music, before a restatement of the *Ensnarement Theme* by the clarinet in m. 112.



Figure 40 - mm. 108 – 111 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

Movement IV – Lear’s Dance of Grief

Lear has realized the consequences of his actions, ushering in one of the more aggressive and symbolic dances in the work. This intense moment is a sharp contrast from Cordelia’s dance. Halfway through the movement, Lear shifts his focus from his intrinsic emotions to looking for answers from above.

Measures	80 – 96	97 – 117
Form	A	B
Plot	Lear realizes his mistake in punishing Cordelia	Lear stands alone before his gods
Thematic Material	<i>Grief Theme</i> with interjection of <i>Madness Theme</i>	<i>Good Friday Theme</i>

Figure 41 - Form Chart of “Lear’s Dance of Grief”

The fourth movement begins in m. 115 with an abrupt change in style from Cordelia’s dance. This sudden shift also brings back the thin texture that was prevalent in the first movement, creating a very sharp and angular statement.



Figure 42 - m. 115 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

This four-note melodic material is employed throughout the entire A section of the movement. It is never seen in its original form again, but in variations. For example, the horn part in conjunction with this initial statement is an elongated version of the material.



Figure 43 - mm. 115 – 116 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

This movement features the most extensive use of the timpani in the entire piece. It is employed as a solo voice in mm. 119 – 122. Statements of the four-note melodic material can be heard throughout the timpani feature.



Figure 44 - mm. 119 – 122 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

The part of the *Grief Theme* that is most recognizable throughout the piece is introduced in the left hand of the piano in mm. 116 – 117.



Figure 45 - mm. 116 – 117 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

It is a chromatic figure that moves systematically in groupings of three. This grouping of three is characteristic of this bass line and is retained when the figure is stated by the upper wind voices in mm. 130 – 133.

Figure 46 - mm. 130 – 133 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

In this setting, the horn and bassoon are shifting the emphasis to different parts of the three-note grouping, creating contrast in mm. 131 before bringing clarity to the figure in mm. 132 – 133 by accenting the first note within each grouping.

The *Madness Theme* can be seen in the upper wind voices in mm. 125 – 127. The clarinet, flute, and oboe trade off, playing one measure quotes from the theme. This contrast helps propel the movement forward by changing the melodic material, which allows a restatement of the chromatic material in the wind voices beginning at m. 130.

Figure 47 - mm. 125 – 127 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

The B section begins in m. 140 with the first statement of the *Good Friday Theme*. The voicing in the chorale creates a fuller texture that contrasts the thinly voiced A section.

Figure 48 shows a musical score for five instruments: Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in E \flat , Horn in F, and Bassoon. The score is in 4/4 time. Each instrument has a melodic line that begins with a three-note grouping (F \sharp , G, A) in the first measure, which is then repeated in the second measure. The third measure of each staff contains a rest, followed by a final melodic phrase in the fourth measure.

Figure 48 - mm. 140 – 142 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

Contrasting material from the piano is incorporated in between the statements of the themes.

These lines are reflective of the *Grief Theme* as they incorporate three-note groupings.

Figure 49 shows a musical score for the Piano. The score is in 4/4 time. The upper staff begins with a melodic line that includes a three-note grouping (F \sharp , G, A) in the first measure, which is then repeated in the second measure. The lower staff provides a rhythmic accompaniment with a similar three-note grouping in the first measure. The score concludes with a final melodic phrase in the fourth measure of the upper staff.

Figure 49 - mm. 141 – 142 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

The movement begins building toward its climax in m. 146. The introduction of running eighth notes creates a sense of lift, allowing the penultimate moment of the movement to develop gradually (mm. 150 – 151) rather than abruptly.

Figure 50 is a musical score excerpt from mm. 145 to 152 of Persichetti's *King Lear*. It features six staves: Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in B \flat , Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), and Bassoon (B \flat Cl.). The music is in 4/4 time. The Flute part begins with a melodic line that is repeated in the Fl. part. The Oboe and Bassoon parts play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The Clarinet part plays a melodic line that is repeated in the B \flat Cl. part. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Figure 50 - mm. 145 – 152 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

The Wagnerian statement can be heard in the flute (mm. 149 – 152) and can be heard again by the bassoon in mm. 152 – 153.

Figure 51 is a musical score excerpt for the Flute part from mm. 149 to 152 of Persichetti's *King Lear*. The score is in 4/4 time and shows a melodic line with various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Figure 51 - mm. 149 – 152 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

The movement ends with a quote from the choral section of the *Good Friday Theme* in the wind voices beginning at m. 156. The upper wind voices settle on a quartal chord comprised of F \sharp , B, and E to finish the movement. Underneath the chord, the timpani and piano play a repetitive three-note figure reflective of the *Grief Theme* from the A section of the movement.

The image shows a musical score for two instruments: Timpani and Piano. The Timpani part is written in a bass clef, 4/4 time signature, and consists of a series of quarter notes with rests. The dynamics are marked as *p* (piano) and *molto rit.* (molto ritardando). The Piano part is written in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs), 4/4 time signature, and consists of a series of quarter notes with rests. The dynamics are marked as *mp* (mezzo-piano).

Figure 52 - mm. 157 – 161 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

Fragments of this can be found in the closing of the fifth and sixth movements and in the closing of the ninth movement, the finale of the work.

Movement V – The Fool and the Philosopher

“The Fool and the Philosopher” is the longest movement of the entire piece, encompassing many different plot points which progress the storyline. In this movement, Lear is crowned King—a symbolic jest as he is now powerless. Lear then dances with his Fool, implying that Lear himself has transformed into one. The depth of the movement allows for a more complex structure that closely resembles Rondo form:

Measures	163 – 222	223 – 262	263 – 358	359 – 418	419 – 553
Form	A	B	A'	C	A''
Plot	Entrance of the Fool and Edgar (m.163) and Mock Processional (m.187)	Crowning	Fool’s solo dance, Edmund joins.	King Lear begins to dance as the Fool.	King Lear completes transformation, dancing with the Fool and Edmund.
Thematic Material	Two contradicting themes	Return of the <i>Good Friday Theme</i>	Return of A with embellishment and variation	Return of the <i>Grief Theme</i>	Return of A material with emphasis on a duet setting

Figure 53 - Form Chart of “The Fool and the Philosopher”

The movement opens with a duet depicting the entrance of the Fool and Edgar (the Philosopher). Graham instructs that the opening material of this movement should be

contradictory and ironic to the pervious dance of grief.¹⁵¹ Persichetti achieves this irony by utilizing the clarinet, which plays many running eighth notes in 6/8 time at a tempo that correlates to the dotted half note equaling 104 bpm. This results in a frantic melodic line that not only drives the piece forward, but gives a sense of vertical leaps as the melodic line continuously rises and falls.



Figure 54 - mm. 163 – 179 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

The clarinet voice is accompanied by the horn voice. The horn begins with a horn call in m. 164, indicating that the Fool and Edgar (The Philosopher) are being announced to Lear’s court. In Shakespeare’s story Edgar is disguised as a beggar who has escaped from a psychiatric insinuation. Lear seeks council from the Fool and Edgar, which is ironic because both characters are more comedic in nature, rather than serious political advisors. In m.171 the horn introduces melodic material that rhythmically contradicts the clarinet line. This contradiction is Graham’s request that the music clearly depict how Lear’s madness is growing; Persichetti achieves this by making the melodic material in the horn more prevalent throughout the movement.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 68.

¹⁵² Ibid.

Figure 55 - mm. 171 – 179 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

As indicated in Graham's layout of the dance, a mock processional begins at m. 187.¹⁵³ At this point, the horn melodic line is employed by the entire wind section. The piano continues to contradict the melody by performing the opening clarinet line. This setting is utilized until the B section. The material is stated twice, once at m. 187 and again at m. 203. Both are variations on the original statement, with the m. 203 statement employing a four-bar extension (mm. 219 – 222) to transition in the B section.

Figure 56 - mm. 187 – 179 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

¹⁵³ Ibid.

The crowning begins at m. 223 with the return of the *Good Friday Theme*. King Lear is crowned as a mock king with a crown of weeds. Graham infers this parallels the mock crowning of Jesus.¹⁵⁴



Figure 57 - mm. 223 – 230 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

The piano is the primary voice in this setting of the *Good Friday Theme*, featuring only the initial introductory choral setting of the theme. This time, the wind voices interject between chorale statements with material from the A section of the movement, while the piano sustains a B major chord.



Figure 58 - mm. 231 – 234 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

The A section returns at m. 263 for the *Fools Dance*. The section from mm. 263 – 286 is a facsimile of the opening section, but deviates at m. 287, creating a new setting for the whimsical melodic material, originally stated in the clarinet.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for woodwind instruments. The first system includes parts for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, and Bassoon. The second system includes parts for Fl., Ob., Bb Cl., and Bsn. The notation is complex, with many notes beamed together and various accidentals, indicating a polyphonic texture. The time signature is 3/8.

Figure 59 - mm. 287 – 294 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

This statement features a much more polyphonic setting. The flute and clarinet provide the melodic line, while the oboe provides a counter-melody that interjects between melodic statements.

At m. 295, Persichetti returns to simplicity by bringing the focus back to the piano with the winds in a supporting role. The change in color and complexity in orchestration allows forward motion to build with the re-entrance of the winds in m. 299, who present the melodic voice in the most impactful statement of the A section at m. 303.

Figure 60 - mm. 299 – 313 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

Persichetti develops his whimsical melodic line into a dance melody that is reminiscent of an Irish jig.

At m. 313 Persichetti introduces new material that is loosely related to the *Fool and Philosopher Theme*.

Figure 61 - mm. 313 – 316 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

This material is employed in the piano while the winds provide an accompanying harmony. At m. 399 the material becomes a call and response with the piano starting the call and the winds mimicking in m. 403. This gives way to a transition that sets up Lear's dance with the Fool.

In m. 359, Lear begins to dance again. The bass line employed during his entrance is reflective of the *Grief Theme*, most notably for the repetitive three-note descending figure notated in the fourth movement.

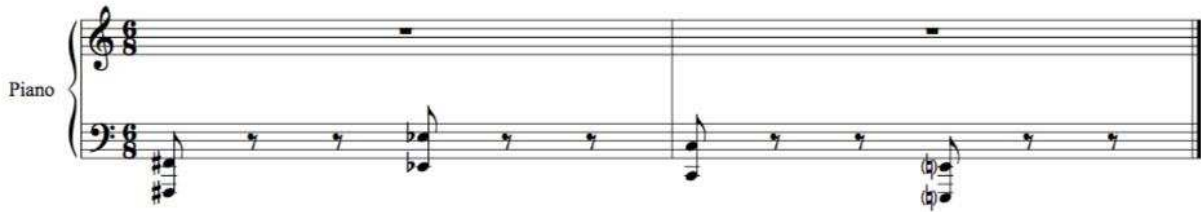


Figure 62 - mm. 359 – 360 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

Lear is joined periodically by the Fool and Edgar throughout his dance. This begins the transition of Lear from king to fool. As in the fourth movement, the timpani is once again featured in this section, with an extensive fourteen-measure solo beginning at m. 383. The piano becomes the focus again before the timpani reenters, transitioning back into the third statement of the A material.

Lear has completed the transition and continues to dance with the Fool and Edgar. A'' begins with the piano utilizing the *Fool and the Philosopher Theme*. Over the piano, the horn plays horn calls, continuing the descent to madness that will fully arrive in the seventh movement.



Figure 63 - mm. 425 – 429 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

This setting continues until m. 448 when the oboe enters with melodic material that is loosely related to lyrical material from the first three movements of the work. The melody is set

in a homophonic setting with the flute, clarinet, and horn voices providing a quartal drone in the background.

Figure 64 - mm. 454 – 457 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

This moment was originally intended by Persichetti to be the “King’s Dance,” but Graham noted in the choreography score that this would be used to feature Edgar, the Philosopher.¹⁵⁵ His dance gives way to transitional material related to the Fool’s dance in m. 464.

Figure 65 - mm. 464 – 467 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

The final section of the fifth movement is largely constructed around duets. The piano provides a bass line over which two of the wind instruments play. Persichetti rarely uses more than two wind instruments throughout this section. He employs dueling instruments that switch back and forth between unison and competing figures.

¹⁵⁵ Library of Congress, *Martha Graham Collection*, Box 81, Folder 3.

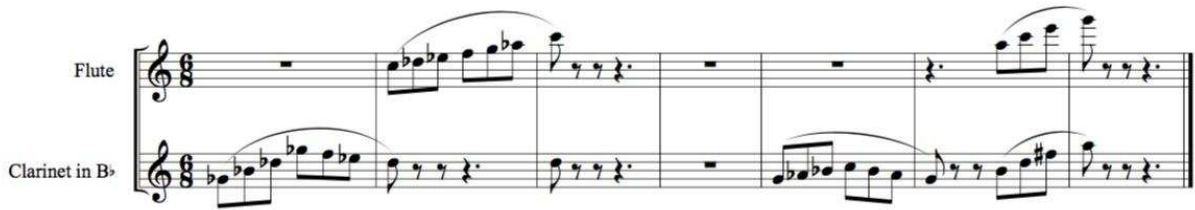


Figure 66 - mm. 486 – 492 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

This section gives way to closing material beginning in m. 544. Closer examination reveals the bassoon performing a portion of the *Grief Theme*, the three descending note grouping employed at the end of the fourth movement.



Figure 67 - mm. 544 – 547 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

Movement VI – The Mock Trial

“The Mock Trial” features Goneril, Regan, and Edmund. The dance is derived from Act Three, Scene Six of the Shakespearean play, immediately following Lear’s rant at the storm, when Lear holds a mock trial to judge the actions of his two oldest daughters. This is the moment when Lear sees Goneril and Regan for who they really are for the first time. Graham writes in her notes to Persichetti that Goneril, Regan, and Edmund are reminiscent of animals during their dance.¹⁵⁶ Goneril and Regan are completely romantically involved with Edmund. The dance is sensual and the scene is one of lust and evil. The music accompanying this dance is called the *Mock Trial Theme*.

¹⁵⁶ Persichetti, *Vincent Persichetti’s Music*, 68.

Measures	554 – 577	578 – 609	610 – 625	626 – 635
Form	A	B	A'	Coda
Plot	Goneril and Regan fight over Edmund	Goneril and Regan take turns dancing with Edmund	Lear clearly sees them as animals and evil	Continuation or A'
Thematic Material	The <i>Mock Trial Theme</i>	Light piano melody with <i>Good Friday Theme</i> fragments	The <i>Mock Trial Theme</i>	Fragment of the <i>Grief Theme</i>

Figure 68 - Form Chart of “The Mock Trial”

The movement opens with a light melody in the piano voice in m. 554. It is simplistic in structure and employs a monophonic texture.



Figure 69 - mm. 554 – 559 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

The *Mock Trial Theme* is stated three more times, alternating between the wind and piano voices. The wind statements are more complex in development. Polyphonic structure is introduced through a counter-melody in the bassoon voice.

The B section begins in m. 578 with the piano. It introduces a one-measure statement that is repeated nine times throughout the B section and develops into the melodic focal point.

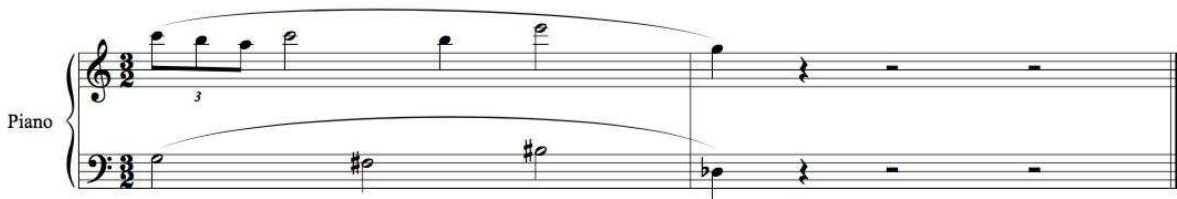


Figure 70 - mm. 578 – 579 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

Over the piano line, the winds interject counter material, which first appears at m. 579 in a homophonic setting.

The image shows a musical score for three woodwind instruments: Flute, Clarinet in Bb, and Bassoon. The score covers measures 579 to 581. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb) and the time signature is 3/2. The Flute part is in the treble clef, the Clarinet in Bb is in the treble clef, and the Bassoon is in the bass clef. All three parts are marked *pp* (pianissimo). The music consists of simple, homophonic rhythmic patterns with some chromatic movement.

Figure 71 - mm. 579 – 581 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

The next two interjections at m. 593 and m. 597 are reflective of the *Good Friday Theme*. The connection is in the rhythmic duration rather than the note and harmonic construction.

The image shows a musical score for five woodwind instruments: Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, Horn in F, and Bassoon. The score covers measures 593 to 596. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb) and the time signature is 3/2. The Flute, Oboe, and Clarinet in Bb are in the treble clef, while the Horn in F and Bassoon are in the bass clef. The dynamics range from *mf* (mezzo-forte) to *f* (forte). The music features sustained, melodic lines with dynamic swells and decays, characteristic of the *Good Friday Theme*.

Figure 72 - mm. 593 – 596 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

The A material returns at m. 610 with the melodic material in the winds. Once again, the winds setting is made more complex by adding counter lines in the piano and horn. The melody is handed back to the piano at m. 618. The clarinet and flute have sustained trills in major thirds to provide support to the line. The coda section begins in m. 626. In m. 630, the *Grief Theme* is once again reflected via the three descending note groupings found at the end of the two previous movements.



Figure 73 - mm. 630 – 633 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

Movement VII – Ensnarement of Lear

The seventh movement is divided into two sections: The ensnarement of Lear and the madness that follows. Persichetti originally intended for the madness section that begins at m. 665 to be labeled as its own movement, but the final publication reflects a different organization of the movements. Of this movement, Graham writes to Persichetti, “It is reminiscent of the first scene when they were in the mesh from which Cordelia escapes.... there must be the helplessness of Lear and entrapped feeling and the resulting mad rage which then loses its rage and becomes a phantasy of madness and deeply poignant.”¹⁵⁷

Measures	636 – 664	665 – 735
Form	A	B
Plot	Lear feels helpless and entrapped	Lear’s madness
Thematic Material	<i>Ensnarement Theme</i>	<i>Madness Theme</i>

Figure 74 - Form Chart of “Ensnarement of Lear”

The movement begins with a quote from the *Three Daughters Theme* in mm. 636 – 637. The piano voice transitions the focus to the *Ensnarement Theme*, beginning in m. 641. Here, the

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

flute and clarinet voices play the melody simultaneously, but displaced by two octaves. The horn and bassoon voices provide an ostinato to keep the momentum moving forward.

Figure 75 - mm. 641 – 642 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

In m. 647, transitional material from the first movement (m. 13) is utilized. This gives way to a flute melody reflective of the *Sarabande Theme* at m. 653.

Figure 76 - mm. 653 – 654 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

The juxtaposition of the *Three Daughters Theme* and *Sarabande Theme* with the *Ensnarement Theme* are symbolic of the things which are ensnaring Lear, making him feel trapped and helpless. The section ends with a transition beginning at m. 663 in the winds as they employ a series of dissonant compound and cluster chords.

The madness section is divided into a binary sub form with an introduction. Although the *Madness Theme* is the focal point, many other themes are quoted throughout, illustrating the development.

Measures	665 – 675	676 – 695	696 – 735
Sub Form	Intro	a	b

Figure 77 - Form Chart of Madness Section

The introduction to the B section returns with thin unison texture in the wind voices, creating a very angular statement that pierces through the accompanying piano part. The piano voice provides a highly rhythmic accompaniment that contrasts the wind voices.

Figure 78 is a musical score for measures 665 to 666 of Persichetti's *King Lear*. It features seven staves: Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in B \flat , Horn in F, Bassoon, Timpani, and Piano. The wind instruments (Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in B \flat , Horn in F, and Bassoon) play a unison line with accents and slurs, creating a thin texture. The piano part provides a highly rhythmic accompaniment with complex patterns and triplets.

Figure 78 - mm. 665 – 666 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

A quote from the fourth movement can be heard in m. 670 – 671. The horn voice embellishes the opening statement of the dance of grief.

Figure 79 is a musical score for measures 670 to 671 of Persichetti's *King Lear*, specifically for the Horn in F. The horn plays a melodic line with accents and a marcato dynamic marking, embellishing the opening statement of the dance of grief.

Figure 79 - mm. 670 – 671 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

The *Madness Theme* begins at m. 676 and is used throughout the sub a section. It is very rhythmic and percussive in nature.

Figure 80 - mm. 676 – 678 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

This sub b section is more complex in its construction of thematic material. It quotes from many different themes, opening with a variation of the *Three Sisters Theme* that contradicts the construction of the *Madness Theme*. This evokes a feeling of complete solitude.

Figure 81 - mm. 696 – 698 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

The sub section picks up speed and moves forward with new material that is only heard in the seventh movement, from mm. 702 – 711.

This musical score shows the woodwind section for measures 702 and 703. It includes staves for Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, Horn in F, and Bassoon. All instruments are marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The music features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some melodic lines in the Oboe and Bassoon.

Figure 82 - mm. 702 – 703 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

This rhythmic, melodic material becomes the background in the next section while the winds play an aggressive, truncated variation of the *Sarabande Theme*.

This musical score shows the woodwind and piano sections for measures 716 through 719. It includes staves for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, Horn in F, Bassoon, and Piano. The woodwinds are marked with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic and play a truncated variation of the Sarabande Theme. The piano part provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The score includes triplets and accents, and ends with a *sfz* (sforzando) marking.

Figure 83 - mm. 716 – 719 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

The sarabande statement gives way to a solo by the timpani that reflects the dance of grief. The transition that follows brings the movement to the closing coda at m. 729. Once again, Persichetti

uses the horn calls that, since the fifth movement, have been communicating growing madness. The calls begin as the focal point in this closing section, but diminuendo and give way to another statement of the *Three Daughters Theme*, creating a direct connection to the source of Lear's madness.

Movement VIII – Cordelia's Dance of Grief

After Lear's dance of madness, a final scene with Cordelia takes place. This movement is the catalyst to reaching the final movement, allowing Lear to enter the last stage of his transformation and realization.

Measures	736 – 746	747 – 755
Form	A	B
Plot	Cordelia dances one last time before her death	Continuation of A
Thematic Material	<i>Sarabande Theme</i> with flute descant	<i>Sarabande Theme</i> with <i>Ensnarement Theme</i>

Figure 84 - Form Chart of "Cordelia's Dance of Grief"

The movement opens with an independent melody in the flute, one that has not been seen in any other portion of the piece. The melody contradicts the *Sarabande Theme* with a very rhythmic construction. The intention of this melody is unclear, as at no point in her notes does Graham request this contradiction, but it does act as a metaphorical weight on the *Sarabande Theme*, trying to fight and overshadow it.

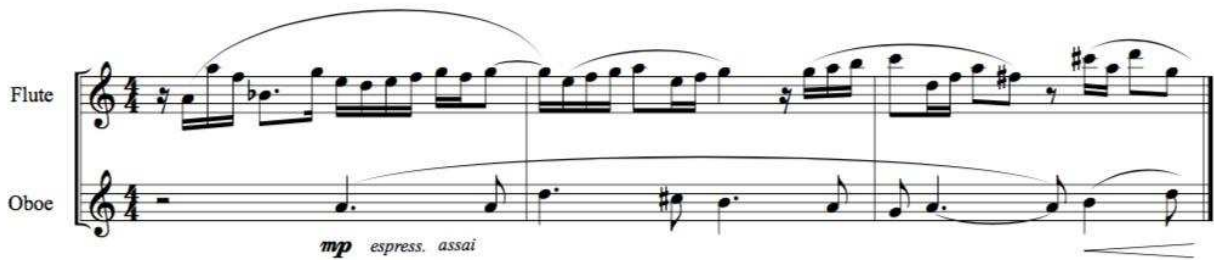


Figure 85 - mm. 739 – 741 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

The B section of the movement includes a return of the *Ensnarement Theme*. This is the last time in the piece the theme is employed, foreshadowing Cordelia’s imminent end. The last two measures of the movement introduce a statement in the winds that is reflective of the fourth movement, “Lear’s Dance of Grief.” This ending is Persichetti’s way of implying Lear’s sentiments and emotions, and of connecting the last two movements.

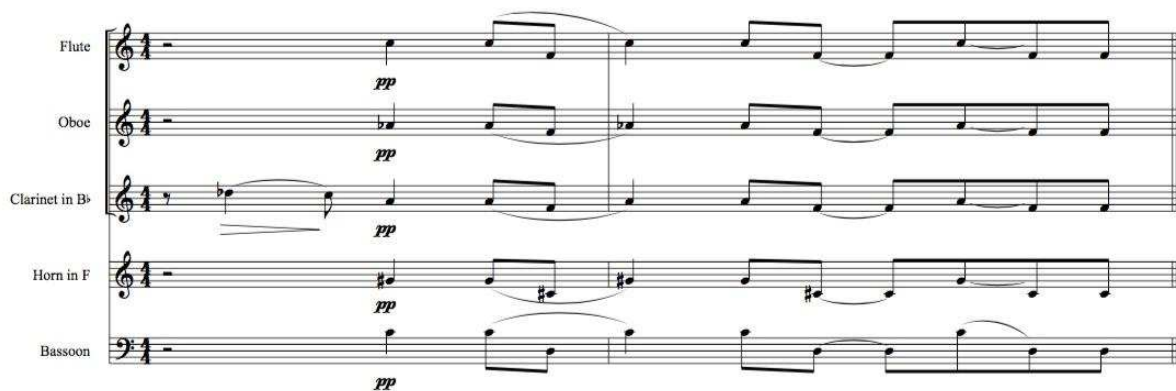


Figure 86 - mm. 754 – 755 of Persichetti’s *King Lear*

Movement IX – Final Union Between Lear and Cordelia

The final movement features Lear with Cordelia in his arms. Graham describes it as “the moment of revelation and the utter joy at being united with Cordelia as an inseparable part of himself (Lear).”¹⁵⁸ She goes on to say that this is the point when, spiritually, Lear rises through the course of his anguish to a wisdom that he has never before approached, including a

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

sympathetic appreciation of suffering among the world's unfortunates and a full realization of Cordelia's love.

Measures	756 – 780
Form	Through Composed
Plot	Lear holds the deceased Cordelia in his arms
Thematic Material	Recap of many themes

Figure 87 - Form Chart of "Final Union Between Lear and Cordelia"

The last movement opens with the *Death Theme* that was first heard in the opening movement of the work. It quickly gives way to a statement reflective of the opening *Curse Fanfare Theme*, which is eventually accompanied by the bass line found in the *Grief Theme* from the fourth movement.

The image shows a musical score for five instruments: Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, Horn in F, and Bassoon. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of four measures. The Flute part is in the treble clef and features a melodic line with slurs and accents. The Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, Horn in F, and Bassoon parts are in their respective clefs and provide harmonic support with sustained notes and rhythmic patterns. The Bassoon part has a more active, descending line in the lower register.

Figure 88 - mm. 757 – 760 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

In m. 766, the *Good Friday Theme* returns to become the focal point. This time it is fully developed to restate the Wagnerian quote in mm. 770 – 771. The codetta features material that's indicative of a hymn from the wind voices. Under this hymn, Persichetti restates the three-note descending figure that he used to end many of the movements in the piece.

The image shows a musical score for the final measure of a piece. It consists of two staves: Timpani (top) and Piano (bottom). The time signature is 4/4. The Timpani staff has a single note on E in the final measure. The Piano staff has a series of notes in the final measure, including a drone on E.

Figure 89 - m. 772 of Persichetti's *King Lear*

Lear finds closure in the final measure of the piece with a drone on E, left over from a E minor chord employed in the wind instruments.

Chapter IV – Rehearsal Analysis

Overview

Persichetti's *King Lear* should be approached with an abundance of research and study before the first rehearsal. A conductor can only convey the true conviction of the work if he or she has an understanding of Shakespeare's original story, Martha Graham's contribution to modern dance, Vincent Persichetti's compositional style, and the collaboration that took place between the two artists. This rehearsal analysis will approach two main topics necessary to rehearse the piece only after a core understanding of history and context has been acquired, the potential difficulties presented to the conductor, and the tendency of the instrumentalists that have been observed.

There is one topic crucial to the entire work that should be addressed before a breakdown of each movement: intonation on unison melodic material. Persichetti employs unison writing, displaced by octaves, many times throughout the work, including the opening fanfare. These passages should be approached differently for each unique situation and consideration of intonation issues within different registers must be taken into account.

Movement I – Lear's Dance of Challenge

The piece opens with a dissonant fanfare with all voices contributing. This statement demands conviction from the conductor and it is suggested that a dry pattern be employed for clear communication to the ensemble. A dead beat could be used so that the pick-up note is played precisely in time by the wind instruments. The same dry style is used throughout the entire A section of the first movement. The pattern becomes smaller as the piano part begins a diminuendo toward the B section.

The arrival of the B section includes a change to a lyrical conducting style. The oboe and clarinet duet should be balanced; one part should not overshadow the other. It is in the best interest of the ensemble if the conductor returns to a dry conducting style in m. 33. It is also imperative that the ensemble subdivides leading to the transition into the second movement; otherwise, vertical alignment in m. 38 will be difficult.

Movement II – Vision of the Three Daughters

During this lyrical section, an immediate pattern change, with regard to size and style, is important for contrast from the rhythmic ending of the first movement. The horn and clarinet solos balance the accompanying piano voice. Both melodic lines need to tune to the piano for obvious reasons. These two statements are expressive and should be allowed to breathe. Pattern style is shifted in m. 50 to reflect a more marcato style with the transition to the B section.

The first statement of the *Three Daughters Theme* is played without any breaks in the phrase. The tendency might be for wind players to add a breath after the dotted quarter note, but this should be avoided so that the line matches the piano's statement in m. 56. Attention should be given to the first statement of the *Ensnarement Theme* in m. 69. The clarinet voice is the focal point and all other voices should balance to the melody. The conductor could help bring attention to the subtle theme by gesturing to the clarinet player; this will help the listener know the importance of the theme. During the movement's close, equal attention should be given to both the winds and piano.

Movement III – Cordelia's Dance of Serenity

The *Sarabande Theme* should be balanced, with the oboe serving as the most important voice. The clarinet and bassoon voices should be the audible secondary presence to the melody. Although the flute solo continues until m. 91, the clarinet is the focal point in m. 89. The clarinet

line builds and is passed off to the flute line in m. 90. In m. 97 the winds decrescendo quickly to allow for the *Ensnarement Theme* in the piano voice. It is important that this transition section is not treated as an afterthought or taken too slowly. The tempo markings that Persichetti provided are important to the pacing of this section. In addition, each voice contributes to the overall melodic progression at some point. The flute and bassoon voices remain the solo voices, however the accompaniment should be audible.

The *Ensnarement Theme* returns in m. 106. Each voice should know their role and carefully balance to the melodic flute line. If dynamic markings are closely followed, the ensemble will rebuild momentum toward the extension and climax of the theme in m. 111. The clarinet has the last statement of the *Ensnared Theme* and will need to adjust pitch in favor of the piano.

Movement IV – Lear’s Dance of Grief

The opening section of the fourth movement should be approached with a very percussive mindset. The wind parts will need to be mindful of the rhythmic placement and length of note. Persichetti has indicated throughout the section that a staccato accent is needed on most notes. The idea is to create light notes so that the pulse does not slow. Smaller conducting patterns will be helpful and it might be best if the conductor gets out of the way of the ensemble and helps maintain pulse. When the *Madness Theme* is quoted at m. 125, the rhythm and articulation of the sixteenth note figures will allow those parts to be heard without raising the dynamics. This holds true for the melodic line in the flute, oboe, and clarinet voices beginning at m. 30.

The *Good Friday Theme* at m. 140 could be treated by the winds as a Bach-like chorale. Each line is important in its own unique manner, but balance should be dictated by the bassoon’s

bass line and the melodic line in the flute voice. Conductors need to maintain strict pulse throughout this section because of the piano sixteenth note passages. At m. 146, wind voices will enter softly and pay heed to not crescendo too quickly, thus allowing the line to organically grow to the Wagnerian statement in m. 150.

The quartal chord at the end of the movement should be tuned carefully by the flute, oboe, and clarinet. Each note should have equal representation within the chord. The piano voice is the true focal point of the closing and needs to be balanced accordingly over the accompanying chord. Persichetti instructs the conductor to bring attention to this three-note theme by taking great liberty with the *molto ritardando*.

Movement V – The Fool and the Philosopher

With the agility of the clarinet part, macro conducting patterns will work until the B section at m. 223, and a combination of a two and four pattern may be best. Strict pulse is imperative throughout this section for the sake of the clarinet and piano. From mm. 187 – 222 it is important that the wind voices accurately place their notes and breathe in time so as to vertically align passages with the piano.

In the B section, a four pattern is useful until m. 243, at which point the conductor might consider switching to a two pattern for the transition into the A section. One exception is mm. 251 – 254, when a four pattern might be helpful for entrances. Throughout this section the same caution should be taken as in the fourth movement. A steady pulse will allow the non-chorale part to perform precisely in time.

The return of the A section offers many of the same pitfalls as the opening A section. A three-pattern grouping between mm. 291 – 296 might prove useful. The rest of the section can be conducted in two or a combination of four and two. One of the most energetic moments of the

piece is the statement starting at m. 303. The ensemble should allow plenty of room to grow dynamically in this section. Persichetti's style marking should be adhered to in order to create the emphasis and groove until m. 313.

The wind voices mimic the piano at m. 343. When the piano originally states the figure in m. 339 it is marked *subito forte*. For the winds to achieve the same style as the piano they should articulate each note with a slight decay following, similar to a pianist striking the key on the piano.

The C section includes elements of the *Grief Theme*. The tendency is for this section to become bogged down. Steady pulse is critical. Conductors should thoroughly study the final return of the A section to close the movement. Clarity by the conductor will aid players with their entrances.

Movement VI – The Mock Trial

The sixth movement features a lighter melody, not previously heard. A clear change in style is necessary. It is imperative that the bassoon keeps strict time through both statements of the melody in the wind voices.

There is a clear dynamic contrast between the A and B sections. Caution is suggested so that the light and detached figure accompanying the piano does not rush. Strictly follow Persichetti's dynamic markings when the hymn is quoted at m. 593.

Once again, a clear dynamic contrast should be evident with the return to the A section. The piano provides a strict pulse beginning at m. 610. Wind players may need to fight the tendency to slow down during the passage with the louder dynamic and longer note length. The piano should be the focal point at m. 618 when it restates the *Curse Fanfare Theme*. It should

continue to be the focal point through the codetta when it restates the three-note theme from the end of the fourth movement.

Movement VII – Ensnarement of Lear

The seventh movement employs a wide variety of emotions and styles. This movement can be one of the most challenging parts of the piece for the conductor. In the opening section, the change in dynamics should be communicated to the ensemble. Paying close attention to the pulse of accompanying voices will allow the melodic line to be successful.

The *Madness Theme* shares many similarities with the *Grief Theme*. Steady pulse is important, as is avoiding the temptation to slow down the passage at m. 665 due to heavy accents. The same consideration should be taken at m. 676 when the theme becomes very rhythmic. The technical passage will easily be heard without over-playing dynamics.

At the sub b section of the *Madness Theme*, listening priorities switch to a chorale setting. One goal is to keep strict pulse so that the piano passage fits into the chorale. At m. 702, tempo control is critical and at m. 709, the accurate placement of the rhythmic passage is important. Intonation may be an issue for the clarinet, horn, and bassoon in the closing section of the unison concert A that decrescendos to end the movement.

Movement VIII – Cordelia’s Dance of Grief

The flute takes the lead throughout the eighth movement and the *Sarabande Theme* needs to be expressive while accompanying winds are mindful of pulse. The B section should be balanced so that the *Ensnarement Theme* can be the center of attention until the final quote of the *Grief Theme*.

Movement IX – The Final Union Between Lear and Cordelia

Consideration of the form and structure of this movement will help with understanding which theme should be prevalent. The piano voice at the end of the work should take priority over the chorale being performed in the background. The final note on the piano should be allowed to ring for a significant amount of time at the end of the work.

Conclusion

Vincent Persichetti's contribution to wind instrument literature in the mid-twentieth century was important to the growth of the medium. His characteristic style and approach to composition was part of a larger movement that developed a new voice for American composers. *King Lear* reflects this movement of growth and is worthy of study and programming for several reasons: the collaboration and influences of American icon Martha Graham, the incorporation of Persichetti's compositional style, and the promotion of mid-twentieth century wind chamber music. Although the piece can be complex, it represents a period in which the performing arts were expanding in the United States and creating a style that was uniquely American. The piece sheds light on the creative collaboration of two art forms, allowing applicable study by either contributor.

Bibliography

Archived Sources

Library of Congress. *Martha Graham Collection*. Box 81, Folder 3.

New York Public Library. *Vincent Persichetti Collection of Noncommercial Recordings*. LTC2915.

New York Public Library. *Vincent Persichetti Papers Collection*. Box 2, Folder 13.

New York Public Library. *Vincent Persichetti Papers Collection*. Box 26, Folder 37.

New York Public Library. *Vincent Persichetti Papers Collection*. Box 111, Folder 12.

New York Public Library. Persichetti, Dorothea. *A Monograph: Vincent Persichetti's Music*. Unpublished monograph, 1960. Box 103, Folders 15-18.

Secondary Sources

Adamo, Mark. "Albemarle Ensemble." *The Washington Post*. March 11, 1991.

Bullock, Bruce. "New Music Reviews." *The Clarinet* 8, no. 2 (Winter, 1981): 56-57.

Carrington, Mark. "American Camerata for New Music." *The Washington Post*, October 26, 1992.

Franco, Mark. *Martha Graham in Love and War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Gessler, Clifford. "You Have to Go to College to See Martha Graham This Season; Mills Lauds Dance," *The Oakland Tribune*, March 17, 1950.

Graham, Martha. *Blood Memory*. New York: Doubleday, 1991

Holvik, Karl. "An Emerging Band Repertory, A Survey of the Members of the College Band Directors National Association." *American Bandmasters Association Journal* 6, no. 2 (Spring 1970): 19-24.

Horosko, Marian. *Martha Graham: The Evolution of Dance Training*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1991.

Hughes, Allen. "Inaugural-Concert Work Deleted as 'Not in Spirit.'" *The New York Times*, January 14, 1973.

McDonagh, Don. *Martha Graham: A Biography*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973.

Morris, Donald. "The Life of Vincent Persichetti, With Emphasis on his Works for Band." PhD Dissertation, Florida State University, 1991.

Patterson, Donald, and Janet Patterson, *Vincent Persichetti: A Bio-Bibliography*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1988.

Persichetti, Vincent. *Twentieth-Century Harmony; Creative Aspects and Practice*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1961.

_____. *Hymns and Responses for the Church Year*, Vol. 1. Bryn Mawr, PA: Elkan-Vogel, 1956.

_____. *American Camerata Performs*. Albemarle Ensemble. John Stephens. Amcam Records ACR-10305CD, 1992. Compact disc.

Shackelford, Rudy. "Conversation with Vincent Persichetti." *Perspective of New Music* 20, No.1/2 (Autumn, 1981-Summer, 1982): 104-133.

Simmons, Walter. *Voices of Stone and Steel: The Music of William Schuman, Vincent Persichetti, and Peter Menin*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2011.

_____. "Persichetti, Vincent." In *Grove Music Online*. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/article/grove/music/21384>.

Wagner, Richard. *Parsifal*. Mainz: Schott & Company, 1882.

Appendix A – Works for Wind Instruments by Vincent Persichetti

Works for Wind Band

Title	Premiere	Publisher	Commission
Divertimento for Band, Op. 42	1950	Oliver Ditson Co.	N/A
Psalm for Band, Op.53	1952	Pikaron Music	Pi Kappa Omicron National Band Fraternity
Pageant for Band, Op. 59	1953	Carl Fischer	Edwin Franko Goldman for the American Bandmasters Association
Symphony for Band, Op.69	1956	Elkan-Vogel	Washington University, St. Louis
Serenade No.11, Op.85	1960	Elkan-Vogel	Ithaca High School Band
Bagatelles for Band, Op.87	1961	Elkan-Vogel	Dartmouth College
Chorale Prelude: So Pure the Star, Op.91	1962	Elkan-Vogel	Duke University
Masquerade for Band, Op.102	1965	Elkan-Vogel	Baldwin-Wallace College Conservatory of Music
Celebrations for Chorus and Wind Ensemble, Op.103	1966	Elkan-Vogel	Wisconsin State University at River Falls
Chorale Prelude: Turn Not Thy Face, Op.105	1966	Elkan-Vogel	Ithaca High School Band
O Cool Is the Valley, Op. 118	1971	Elkan-Vogel	Ohio Music Education Association
Parable IX, Op.121	1972	Elkan-Vogel	Drake University College of Fine Arts
A Lincoln Address, Op.124A*	1974	Elkan-Vogel	Version for band by the Arkansas Polytechnic College
Chorale Prelude: O God Unseen, Op.160	1984	Elkan-Vogel	East Carolina University

*Transcription

Solo and Chamber Music for Winds

Title	Premiere	Instrumentation
Serenade No.1, Op. 1	1929	Woodwind Quintet & Brass Quintet
Pastoral, Op. 21	1943	Woodwind Quintet
King Lear, Op. 35	1948	Woodwind Quintet, Timpani, and Piano
Serenade No.12, Op.88	1961	Solo Tuba
Serenade No.13. Op. 95	1963	Two Clarinets
Parable I, Op.100	1965	Solo Flute
Parable II, Op. 108	1968	Brass Quintet
Parable III, Op. 109	1968	Solo Oboe
Parable IV, Op. 110	1969	Solo Bassoon
Parable VIII, Op.120	1972	Solo Horn
Parable XI, Op. 123	1972	Solo Alto Saxophone
Parable XII, Op. 125	1973	Solo Piccolo
Parable XIII, Op. 126	1973	Solo Clarinet
Parable XIV, Op. 127	1973	Solo Trumpet
Parable XV, Op. 128	1973	Solo English Horn
Parable XVIII, Op. 133	1975	Solo Trombone
Parable XXII, Op. 147	1981	Solo Tuba
Parable XXV, Op. 164	1986	Two Trumpets

Mixed Ensembles with Winds and Percussion

Title	Premiere	Instrumentation
The Hollow Men, Op. 25	1944	Trumpet and string Orchestra, or trumpet and piano or organ
Serenade No. 6, Op. 44	1950	Trombone, Viola, and Cello
Serenade No. 10, Op. 79	1957	Flute and Harp
Winter Cantata, Op. 97	1964	Women's Chorus, Flute, and Marimba
The Pleiades, Op. 107	1967	Chorus, Trumpet, and String Orchestra
Concerto for English Horn and String Orchestra, Op. 137	1977	English Horn and String Orchestra

Appendix B – List of Martha Graham Works with Wind Composers

Post WWII to 1955

Title	Year	Composer
Imagined Wing	1944	Darius Milhaud
Hérodiade	1944	Paul Hindemith
Appalachian Spring	1944	Aaron Copland
Cave of the Heart	1946	Samuel Barber
Night Journey	1947	William Schuman
Diversion of Angels	1948	Norman Dello Joio
King Lear/Eye of Anguish	1949	Vincent Persichetti
Judith	1950	William Schuman
The Triumph of St. Joan	1951	Norman Dello Joio
Voyage	1953	William Schuman

Appendix C – List of Errata

Part	Correction
Flute	N/A
Oboe	N/A
Clarinet in Bb	1. m. 132 – F sharp should be F natural on the “&” of beat four.
Bassoon	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. m. 3 – the first note should be G sharp. 2. m. 10 – Add a bass clef at the beginning of the measure. 3. m. 669 – The bass clef should be a tenor clef. 4. m. 717 – The bass clef should be a tenor clef.
Horn	N/A
Timpani	N/A
Piano/Score	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Add stave break marking between Timpani line and piano line 2. m. 142 – E should be natural on the “&” of beat four. 3. m. 719 – Bassoon part should have a tenor clef

Appendix D – Copyright Permission



November 30, 2017

Mr. Andrew Gillespie
814 Whedbee Street
Fort Collins, CO 80524

Re: Dissertation Permission

Dear Andrew:

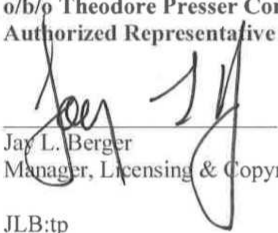
Carl Fischer, LLC on behalf of the Theodore Presser Company, authorized representative of Elkan-Vogel, Inc. (the "Owner"), hereby grants to you (the "Licensee") non-exclusive permission to include the copyrighted musical composition entitled *King Lear* by Vincent Persichetti (the "Musical Work") in your dissertation (the "Dissertation") to the Colorado State University ("CSU"). The Dissertation is to be published by CSU and ProQuest in any format per the following terms:

Term: Perpetuity
Media: Distribution through CSU and ProQuest only
Fee: Twenty-Five Dollars (\$25.00)

The copyright notice, as it appears in the Musical Work, shall appear in the Dissertation along with an indication that it was included with permission.

Please sign and return one copy of this agreement.

Carl Fischer, LLC
o/b/o Theodore Presser Company
Authorized Representative of Elkan-Vogel, Inc.


Jay L. Berger
Manager, Licensing & Copyright

JLB:tp

Andrew Gillespie


Andrew Gillespie

48 Wall Street 28th floor, New York, NY 10005
P (212) 777-0900 • F (212) 477-6996 • www.carlfischer.com