

THE PIANO MUSIC OF CHARLES T. GRIFFES

BY

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## PREFACE

The piano music, which comprises approximately one-fifth of the total published work by Charles T. Griffes, has not to this writer's knowledge been previously treated in an individual study. This paper is basically limited to a stylistic analysis of his published piano pieces. Originally, it was intended to include an analysis of the composer's unpublished manuscripts, but the necessary information arrived too late to be adequately treated. They will, however, be the subject of a forthcoming study by this writer.

Due to a general lack of existing scholarly work on Griffes' piano music, the primary source of information for this paper has been the scores.

Chapter I of this study reviews significant sources of information concerning Griffes and his music. A brief biographical sketch of the composer has also been included to facilitate an understanding of the people and events that influenced his style of writing.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON GRIFFES AND HIS MUSIC

A relatively small amount of published writing exists on the work of Charles T. Griffes. With the exception of the biography, Charles T. Griffes, by Edward M. Maisel,<sup>1</sup> the only major works extant are in the form of doctoral dissertations written in 1962 and in 1966. The few articles on Griffes and his music, published in periodicals, will be discussed below. Music history books generally give Griffes no more than passing acknowledgement as a composer of importance on the American musical scene.

In the bibliography at the end of his book, Music in the 20th Century,<sup>2</sup> William W. Austin considers Maisel's book "...the chief source of information needing no revision despite the bitter critique of Carl Engel in Musical Quarterly XXIX (1943)."<sup>3</sup>

Maisel's book is a detailed account of Griffes' life. Much of his material is abstracted from letters written by Griffes to his family, teacher, publishers, and friends.

<sup>1</sup> Edward M. Maisel, Charles T. Griffes: the life of an American Composer, (New York, 1943)

<sup>2</sup> William W. Austin, Music in the 20th Century: from Debussy through Stravinsky, (New York, 1966)

<sup>3</sup> The "bitter critique" Austin refers to centered around Maisel's lengthy detailed passages referring to Griffes' homosexuality. Engel thought this was greatly exaggerated. Austin says, "Maisel's interpretation of Griffes' personality offended friends and patrons, but remained unrefuted." p.484.

Except for a structural analysis of the Sonata, the book contains no detailed analyses of compositions by the composer. Maisel's book, being the only major biographical study of Griffes, is a valuable source of information. Although many statements and quotations are not documented, the contents of the book are generally reliable. The book is organized in a chronological fashion, with events in Griffes' life recorded month by month, year by year. This method of organization makes it easy to trace Griffes' stylistic growth as a composer throughout his creative life. Because of Maisel's style, this book would probably appeal to the layman as well as to the professional musicologist who is more interested in the factual data contained in it. It is the opinion of this writer that the strengths of the book far outweigh its weaknesses.

A monograph on Griffes, by John Tasker Howard<sup>4</sup>, is considered by Maisel to be of little worth because of the great number of inaccuracies contained in the work. Maisel devotes most of the introduction to his book to correcting inaccuracies in this work as well as in other previously published material on Griffes.

Donna K. Anderson in her doctoral dissertation, "The Works of Charles T. Griffes: A Descriptive Catalogue",

<sup>4</sup>John Tasker Howard, Charles T. Griffes, (New York, 1923).

completed at Indiana University, 1966, has produced a valuable contribution to an understanding of the scope of Griffes' work. This paper, in outline form, is a lengthy, detailed work containing information concerning the unpublished as well as the published compositions. In form and content it is, as the title indicates, a catalogue of Griffes' works. It contains information regarding dates of composition, dates of publication, first performance dates, and other data confirming or correcting previously published statements about his music. Miss Anderson had access to primary sources for most of her research, and the paper is well documented. An abundance of musical examples illustrate Griffes' method of writing and revising his work. This study by Miss Anderson is, to this writer's knowledge, the only work that contains reliable information concerning the unpublished manuscripts. The material presented in this section confirms the opinion of this writer that the label "impressionistic", which has so often been indiscriminately applied to Griffes, is not entirely accurate. This label is appropriate if one considers only the piano pieces that brought Griffes a measure of acceptance during his lifetime. This dissertation is a logical starting point from which basic work can be carried on in the future.

Another doctoral dissertation, "The Music of Charles T. Griffes", submitted at Florida State University, 1962, by Daniel Boda is, by contrast, an attempt to define the musical style of Griffes. This paper concerns itself only with the published works of the composer and includes all of the compositions for all media. After a brief biographical sketch, Mr. Boda gets to the music. Rather than studying each work in detail, the author, using many musical illustrations, defines what he believes to be Griffes' distinguishing characteristics as a composer. According to the author, Griffes' work is divided into three style periods. The first, or "early period", produced the bulk of his songs. Mr. Boda considers these songs to be influenced by Griffes' study in Germany and proceeds to indicate the techniques employed that corroborate his conclusion. The years 1911-1917, considered Griffes' "impressionistic period", encompass most of the composer's published piano pieces; and from 1917 to 1919, a "modern period" has evolved represented by the Sonata and orchestral pieces. In each of the last two periods, Mr. Boda uses the same method of describing techniques of composition to support his conclusions. The author describes in detail the people and factors that influenced each of the composer's style periods. One particularly interesting chapter discusses Griffes' orchestration of his works for piano. With musical

examples the author shows the changes Griffes made in his scores to make them "sound" orchestrally. A chapter on form in Griffes' music contains many generalizations and one might desire more specific detail when doing research in this area. Despite any shortcomings which could be singled out, Boda's dissertation is a valuable contribution to an understanding of Griffes' music. This work and the dissertation by Donna K. Anderson combine to make a reliable source of information for anyone interested in writing a more definitive study of particular areas in Griffes' work.

One of the best studies of the songs is the article, "The Songs of Charles T. Griffes", by William Treat Upton.<sup>5</sup> This is a comprehensive study, limited to the published songs, and explores harmonic style, form, techniques of accompaniment, and influences on Griffes' style. The article also contains a detailed catalogue of the published songs, including dates of composition and publication.

An article, "Charles T. Griffes as I Remember Him", by the American composer and writer Marion Bauer,<sup>6</sup> is a general biographical sketch of the composer with personal comments by the author regarding her first-hand experiences with Griffes.

<sup>5</sup>W. T. Upton, "The Songs of Charles T. Griffes", MQ IX, 1923.

<sup>6</sup>M. Bauer, "Charles T. Griffes as I Remember Him", MQ XXIX, 1923.

It is very similar in content to Maisel's book except, that being in the form of an article rather than a book, it contains considerably less detail. Very little space is given to style analysis, the bulk of the material being biographical.

There is little information regarding Griffes to be found in general studies. Donald Jay Grout in A History of Western Music mentions Griffes only once, as one of the composers influenced by the works of Debussy. No reference is made to his life or works. Lang, Music in Western Civilization, makes no mention of Griffes anywhere in his book.<sup>7</sup> The most extensive accounts of Griffes and his music, in history books, are to be found in studies of twentieth century music. In America's Music,<sup>8</sup> Gilbert Chase provides concise, informative statements regarding Griffes' style. Chase includes Griffes in a section on eclectic composers, with a lengthy list of the people and other factors that influenced his style throughout his creative life. The author defines Griffes' style as "exotic eclecticism", but adds that throughout his life the composer maintained a personal style.

<sup>7</sup> Griffes' name is mentioned once, as an impressionist, in One Hundred Years of Music in America, ed. Paul Henry Lang, (New York, 1961).

<sup>8</sup> Gilbert Chase, America's Music: from the Pilgrims to the Present, (New York, 1955).

William W. Austin, whose book was mentioned above, also gives more than the usual amount of space to Griffes. Important in this account is the statement that "Griffes showed both by his playing and by his comments an extraordinarily intelligent sympathy with Schoenberg and Stravinsky."<sup>9</sup> In her study of twentieth century music,<sup>10</sup> Marion Bauer makes frequent references to Griffes using examples of his music to illustrate twentieth century techniques.

A brief survey of the articles on Griffes in Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians (third and fifth editions), The Oxford Companion to Music (ninth edition), Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians (fifth edition), The International Encyclopedia of Music and Musicians (ninth edition), and Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart, reveal a remarkable similarity in content. Minor differences result from emphasizing different elements in the biographical data. The article in Groves III was written by Richard Aldrich. In Groves V, the same basic article appears with additions (and changes) by Peggy Glanville-Hicks. Groves V contains a more complete listing of Griffes' works. The article in

<sup>9</sup>Austin 485.

<sup>10</sup>Marion Bauer, Twentieth Century Music: How it Developed, How to Listen to It, (New York, 1947).

MGG was written by Nathan Broder. The articles in the other volumes listed above are unsigned. The International Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians states, "For several years he taught in Berlin." This writer has found no evidence to support that statement. Groves III makes the same statement, but it has been removed from the fifth edition. Groves V states, "His composition master, Humperdinck, persuaded him to specialize in creative work." This statement, not documented in the article, also appears to be erroneous, as evidence in other sources suggests that Griffes was well on the road to a creative career before he met Humperdinck.

In most of the works mentioned above, Griffes is presented as a talented American composer who died before reaching a fully mature style of writing. That his style was still evolving at the time of his death is demonstrated by Donna K. Anderson, particularly in the sections on the unpublished manuscripts. The usual implication in works on Griffes is that, had he lived longer, Griffes might have become a "great" American composer. Although highly esteemed, his music is not ranked with that of Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Bartok, or Ives.

With the exception of the article on the songs of Griffes by Upton, most of the works have attempted to discuss all the published music of the composer. This study will be limited to Griffes' music for piano. The emphasis will be

on what is to be found in the music, without attempting to fit the information into a "Griffes method", or a style period.

#### SUMMARY

Except for Maisel's book and the article on Griffes' songs by Upton, the most thorough studies of Griffes and his music have been done in the last decade. Earlier historians have given the composer only slight recognition, or have ignored him altogether. Insufficient knowledge or lack of awareness of his later work (particularly the unpublished compositions) has led to the somewhat narrow idea that Griffes was an "impressionistic" composer. While this is true of a portion of his work, it by no means tells the whole story, as Daniel Boda's study clearly illustrates. Due to his early death, it is impossible to judge what his fully mature style might have been. Ultimately Griffes may still be considered a relatively minor composer, important mainly because of his sensitive, refined style, and the high quality of craftsmanship displayed in his work. It is probable, however, that future investigation and performances of his unpublished works will increase his stature in the ranks of twentieth century composers.

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF CHARLES T. GRIFFES

Charles Tomlinson Griffes was born 17 September, 1884 in Elmira, New York and was reared in a middle-class milieu. Wilber Griffes, his father, worked in a men's furnishing store, an establishment he formerly owned in partnership with his brother-in-law. Charles' mother, Clara, was a pianist of modest accomplishment and his father also had some lessons on the piano. Griffes' grandmother, Mrs. Delinda P. Tomlinson, a self-styled missionary, lived with them. (It is interesting to note that despite his grandmother's religious zeal and the environment of the religion-oriented Hackley School where he later taught, Griffes personally did not believe in an omnipotent, supernatural God. Whether or not this attitude is reflected in his music, the fact remains that he is not known to have written sacred compositions.) Family life was generally happy for the young Griffes. Frequent walks through the woods with his father brought him in contact with natural beauty and could have been the cause for his unusual sensitivity to nature throughout his early life. In the graphic arts he experimented with drawing and painting. Photography also attracted him.

Early in life Griffes showed a sensitivity to color, his favorite color being orange. This trait bears importance in the light of his preoccupation with color in its relation to music. In 1912 he wrote, "...a beautiful color

is lovely in itself quite aside from any part it plays in the design of the picture." <sup>1</sup> The key of E flat was to him the color yellow or gold, and C major was the most brilliant of keys. <sup>2</sup>

Except for the companionship of his family and their acquaintances, Griffes was not a gregarious youth. He preferred reading, art, music, and solitary walks to the amusements more commonly enjoyed by other boys his age.

Griffes' years in Elmira were formative ones which molded the personality which was to characterize him throughout the remainder of his life. Early in his youth Griffes showed an aptitude for music but resisted any formal training. Jack Raynes, an acquaintance of Wilber Griffes, was a singer in a musical troupe. During frequent visits at the Griffes home, he taught Charles the popular ballads and hymns that he sang on his tours. Griffes began studying piano with his sister, Katherine, when at the age of eleven he demonstrated considerable evidence of talent in music. At fifteen, formal study was started with Mary Selena Broughton, a "Professor of Piano Playing", at Elmira College. With her he studied the music of Liszt,

<sup>1</sup>This quotation appears in Maisel's book, p.10, but is not documented.

<sup>2</sup>Maisel, p.11.

Chopin, Wagner, Raff, Grieg, Schumann, Brahms, Mendelssohn, Beethoven, Weber, Schubert, Moskoski, and others.<sup>3</sup> While he disliked the organ, Griffes studied the instrument for a short time with a Mr. George Morgan McKnight who exposed him to the music of Bach, in whose works he showed a strong interest throughout his life. Griffes proved an apt piano student under Miss Broughton's teaching. She also gave him a few lessons in harmony and counterpoint. It was Miss Broughton who encouraged and financed the largest portion of his study abroad. While at Elmira Academy he composed some songs which were performed by a soprano at his farewell recital May 21, 1903. The compositions were dated 1901. Griffes graduated from Elmira Academy in June of 1903 and sailed for Europe in August of the same year.

Although he was not a regular Conservatory student, Griffes was enrolled at the Stern Conservatory in Berlin. His piano teacher was Ernest Jedliczka, a former pupil of Nicholas Rubinstein and Tchaikowski. His composition teacher was Philippe Bartholome Rufer, composer of two operas and many instrumental works; and with Max Julius Loewengard, a former pupil of Raff and author of textbooks

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, p.22.

on music, he studied theory. In addition he studied piano for a brief period with Gottfried Galston, theory with Wilhelm Klatte, and composition with Humperdinck. Throughout his four years of study in Berlin, Griffes received a solid education in traditional musical practice. He also got to see and hear many of the world's great musicians in the concert halls of that city. Among these were Edvard Grieg, Geraldine Farrar, Pablo de Sarasate, Richard Strauss, Leoncavallo, Feruccio Busoni, Enrico Caruso, Zaver Scharwenka, and Wanda Landowska. At the National Art Gallery in Berlin he became acquainted with impressionist paintings. While in Europe, Griffes became aware of the need for musicians to be knowledgeable not only in their particular specialty, but in all phases of their art. Consequently, although he went to Germany to become a pianist, he returned a composer.

Returning to America in 1907 Griffes obtained a teaching position at the Hackley School in Tarrytown, New York, a school founded with the express purpose of preparing boys of well-to-do families for entrance into colleges such as Harvard, Princeton, and Yale. Although Griffes found his teaching duties boring because of the general disinterest in the cultural aspects of education on the part of the administration and the students, the position nevertheless afforded him the measure of security

he felt necessary while pursuing a career in composition. The school's location within commuting distance of New York City enabled him to hear numerous concerts, and to meet artists and others concerned with music who were eventually to assist him in achieving a measure of success from his compositional endeavors. Although continually dissatisfied with his position at Hackley School he remained there for the rest of his life.

Throughout most of his creative years Griffes was continually thwarted in his attempts to have his work published and performed. Much time away from Hackley School was spent in trying to get musicians to perform his music. Publishers felt his work was too "modern" and therefore a poor risk commercially. In addition to a few early works in a less advanced style, Griffes did however, succeed in having published a few collections of simple teaching pieces for children. The latter were published under the pseudonym, "Arthur Tomlinson". G. Schirmer Inc., of New York, was the sole publisher of his work during his lifetime and immediately thereafter. A piano work entitled Three Preludes is currently in the process of publication by C. F. Peters, New York.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup>This work is being edited by Donna K. Anderson whose dissertation was discussed in the preceding chapter.

Persistence and faith in what he had to say musically finally brought Griffes recognition from performers and critics alike, but it came only a year or two before his untimely death.

Charles T. Griffes died 8 April, 1920 of an illness diagnosed as empyema, abscesses of the lungs, which was brought on by pneumonia. A run-down physical condition caused by excessive work and continual fatigue probably precipitated his final illness. "Copland, Varese, Prokofiev, and Milhaud were among the many who mourned his early death."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Austin, p.485.

## THREE TONE-PICTURES OPUS 5

I

The Lake at Evening

II

The Vale of Dreams

III

The Night Winds

## I

Published by G. Schirmer Inc., in 1915 under the title, Three Tone Pictures: For the Piano, Opus 5 consists of three short pieces in impressionistic style. Since various studies differ in assigning dates to these compositions, this writer has chosen to accept the authority of Donna K. Anderson in this matter. Throughout the study of Opus 5, 6, and 7, dual analyses occasionally seem equally correct. Where this situation occurs, both analyses will be presented. This procedure seems appropriate in view of the fact that Griffes, in his letters and conversations, seldom discusses his compositional style in detail. In other studies one can find only broad generalizations concerning the piano music. Consequently, the music is the primary source from which the following analyses are derived.

The Lake at Evening, Opus 5, number 1, was composed in 1911. The score bears the dedication, "To Leslie Hodgson". Hodgson was the pianist who performed the piece 3 April, 1914, at Chamber Music Hall, New York City. This was the first public performance of the work. A dancer, Albertina Rasch, requested a copy for possible choreographing. The composition was danced to during the 1926-27 season by the Neighborhood Playhouse of New York City. William Butler Yeats is the author of the poetry that appears beneath the title. These lines are taken from his poem, The Lake at Innisfree,

written in 1893. (Some writers imply that Griffes wrote music to fit the poetry. This is not true. Usually, having completed a piece, the composer went to the public library to seek out a poem that portrayed the mood of his music. On one occasion he wrote his own poetic introduction.) Griffes orchestrated this piece for chamber ensemble in 1915. The instrumentation included flute, two oboes, two clarinets in A, two bassoons, two horns in F and an optional part for harp. In 1919 he again arranged it, this time for double quintet and piano. The arrangement is scored for flute, oboe, clarinet in A, horn in F, bassoons I and II, violins, viola, cello, bass, and piano.

The Lake at Evening, sixty-seven measures long, is a work in three sections. Boda refers to this as ternary form. The term "ternary form" might be misleading if one expects to find new material in the second section. Griffes uses the same basic material in all three sections, the differences lying in the treatment of that material. Here, the second section is development of thematic material from the first section, while the third section is more similar in style to the first.

Griffes employs three techniques to lend unity to this composition; a single thematic idea, a practically continuous rhythmic ostinato figure, and similar chromatic countermelodies. The strongest unifying element in the composition is

the rhythmic ostinato figure which, except for three measures in the second section, runs through the entire piece. The poetic lines Griffes selected, "...for always I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore", appear to characterize this rhythmic figure. At measure 45 the figure is altered, probably to emphasize the cadence at the end of the development section. A less obvious unifying factor, distinctive in much of Griffes' writing, is the series of chromatic lines (usually descending) which form countermelodies in the accompaniment parts. Occasionally, a whole step appears in these lines when the basic harmony requires it.

The Lake at Evening, in the key of A, is in  $\frac{3}{4}$  meter and is marked "Tranquillo e dolce". This piece and Notturmo are the only piano compositions in which Griffes maintains a single meter throughout. Two measures of the rhythmic ostinato figure serve as introduction. This figure, continuing throughout the first twenty measures serves also as a pedal point on A. The melody entering in the treble at measure 3 outlines the A major triad. Harmonically, measure 3 could be considered either as a chord on the lowered submediant, or as an A major chord with the F an appoggiatura to the E at measure 5. The basic melody contains three motives which are extended by sequential repetitions and variations. Harmonies are basically traditional with diminished

seventh chords the chief source of color and tension. The entire first section is in the key of A. A half cadence at measure 21 is achieved through the use of a ninth chord with a lowered fifth. The root of this chord is B and marks the change from the pedal point on A to one on B.

The second section beginning at measure 24 functions as a development of the first section. In contrast to the static tonality of the first section, the second encompasses the keys of G sharp minor, E minor, A major, and G minor. These keys however, are transitory in nature and perhaps would not even be considered definite tonal centers in the traditional sense. Measures 34-40 can best be described as rhapsodic, their purpose being to bring about a climax in the section. Most of the dissonance results from the employment of appoggiatura chords on strong beats. Chromatic progressions are also prominent in this section. The third section, in the key of A major, is arrived at through a series of chromatically descending dominants beginning at measure 42.

The third section, while not a literal repetition, appears nevertheless to be a recapitulation of the first. It is entirely in the key of A, and the "Tempo I<sup>o</sup>" marking further emphasizes the character of the first section. The harmonies are basically the same except for the last six measures where Griffes employs a plagal cadence to end the

composition. The final chord is a tonic with an added sixth. In measures 56-67, the rhythmic ostinato appears as an inverted pedal point. This technique lends a coda-like quality to those measures.

#### SUMMARY

The Lake at Evening is a short piece, interesting because of its economical use of thematic material. A rhythmic ostinato figure, used as a pedal point, dominates the entire work. This figure is characterized by the poetic lines at the beginning, especially the word "always". The composition is in three sections but all contain the same thematic material. They are distinguished primarily by the treatment of the theme. Tonality is easily recognized, even when partly obscured by Griffes' use of appoggiatura tones and chords on strong beats. The plagal cadence and the added sixth in the final chord are characteristic of the composer's avoidance of completely traditional cadences.

## II

The Vale of Dreams is the second number from Three Tone Pictures, published by G. Schirmer Inc., in 1915. Griffes composed the piece in 1912, and added a poetic text that served as introduction to the mood of the music. The lines of verse are from Edgar Allen Poe's, The Sleeper. They appeared in the 1915 edition, but have been deleted from the 1943 edition. On 5 May 1917, pianist Candance Meakle played this work at the Eugene Heffley Studio, Carnegie Hall, New York City. It was the first public performance of the piece. Griffes twice orchestrated this music. In 1915 he arranged it for woodwinds and optional harp part. The instrumentation is as follows: flute, two oboes, two clarinets in B flat, two bassoons, two horns in F, and harp. In 1919 he arranged it for double quintet and piano. Flute, oboe, clarinet in B flat, horn in F, bassoons I and II, violins, viola, cello, bass, and piano make up the instrumentation.

The Vale of Dreams is basically in the key of E flat. Sixty measures in length, all but three are in  $\frac{3}{4}$  meter. Measures 30-32 are in  $\frac{2}{4}$  meter. This change in meter emphasizes the "agitato" character, intended by Griffes, at this point. The piece is in three principal sections with the middle section a development of the material from the first

and the third is a recapitulation of the first section. Griffes uses this technique in all three numbers of Opus 5.

Measures 1-2 are introductory. They set forth the basic rhythm and harmony of the accompaniment throughout the first section, which extends to measure 19. This first section is a miniature ternary form, with measures 3-10 representing a, measures 11-14 representing b, and measures 15-18 representing a return of a. The entire first section is based upon the dominant chord of the tonic key. The chord at measure 12 appears to be an appoggiatura to the dominant chord. Similarly, the chord on F sharp at measure 15 is an appoggiatura chord leading to the augmented dominant at measure 16. The thematic material in the first section is based upon a whole-tone scale. Tones foreign to this scale are the result of passing notes and appoggiaturas. Both forms of the whole-tone scale are employed, as can be observed by comparing measures 3 and 7. The spelling of notes in the treble, measures 3-10 seems to indicate a concern on the part of the composer to keep the appearance of thirds (possibly for the convenience of the performer). The rhythm of the first three melodic notes in measure 4 represents the most unifying factor in the entire composition (example 1). This motive appears in every section.



chromatically to F at measure 37. This F acts as a dominant preparation for the B flat chord at measure 41. The bass in measures 41-42 functions in the same manner as the chords in measures 1-2. They prepare for the entrance of the third section at measure 43. Griffes employs a variety of styles in the accompaniment parts of the development section. This continual change imparts a rhapsodic character to the work. This element is heightened in the transitional section at measures 30-36. Unity is preserved by maintaining the basic contour of the themes. While measures 19-27 represent development of a from the first section, measures 37-40 function as development of b.

The third section, marked Tempo I<sup>o</sup>, contains a and b from the first section, omitting the return of a. The static dominant harmony is present in the accompaniment, but the chords are figured, adding movement to this section. The chords begin on the beat, thereby eliminating the syncopated effect which was prominent in the first section. While it is characteristic of Griffes that a piece nearly always ends with a restatement of the initial thematic material, it is also characteristic of him to present it in a varied form. In this piece it is the accompaniment that is changed.

At measure 56, all movement comes to a stop on a dominant thirteenth chord and the last four measures are

codetta-like. Measure 57 contains a chord whose bass note functions as an appoggiatura to B flat. The upper tone, E flat, is an anticipation of the root of the E flat chord; and the inner voices descend chromatically to the tones of the final chord. The last chord is an E flat major in the six-four position. It is the only chord in the entire composition that is not structurally dissonant. The B flat in the bass appears to reemphasize the harmony that dominated the first and last sections.

#### SUMMARY

The Vale of Dreams is a short piece containing impressionistic techniques. The most striking features of this composition are: the long pedal points (tones and chords), chromatically descending bass notes, the employment of whole-tone scales, and the dissonant harmonies which continue unrelenting until the appearance of the E flat major chord, the last chord of the piece. The whole-tone technique is principally employed in the treble, over more conventional chords in the bass; but Griffes also uses augmented chords in the bass which lend a whole-tone effect to the entire texture at these points. The Vale of Dreams is made up of three sections, all based upon the thematic material of the first section. The middle section contrasts

with the first and third mainly in the treatment of the material. It is in this section that Griffes employs the greatest variety of keys and accompaniments.

This work, in contrast to the first number from Opus 5, indicates a further step away from the composer's early period, the period in which he wrote primarily in a nineteenth-century style.

## III

The Night Winds, Opus 5, number 3, was composed in 1912 and published in 1915. To describe the mood of this piece, Griffes chose lines from the poem, The Lake, by Edgar Allen Poe. This poetry appeared in the 1915 edition but has been omitted in the 1943 edition. Griffes orchestrated this work in 1915 and in 1919. The 1915 arrangement was for woodwinds and an optional harp part. The instrumentation included flute, two oboes, two clarinets in B flat, two bassoons, two horns in F, and harp. In 1919 he scored the work for double quintet and piano. Flute, oboe, clarinet in B flat, horn in F, bassoons I and II, violins, viola, cello, bass, and piano comprise the instrumentation. On 5 May, 1917, pianist Candance Meakle played the composition at a concert given in the Eugene Heffley Studio, Carnegie Hall, New York City. This was the first public performance of the work.

The Night Winds is basically in the key of E flat minor. It contains 41 measures in  $\frac{4}{4}$  meter, one measure in  $\frac{2}{4}$  meter, and one measure in  $\frac{3}{4}$  meter. The two measures that are not in  $\frac{4}{4}$  meter occur in transitional passages.

Regarding form in this composition, two different analyses seem equally logical. Both will be discussed below. The work is basically in three sections. One can demonstrate

its similarity in form to the other two numbers in Opus 5, or one can say it is in ternary form with coda. The problem centers around whether measures 32-43 are coda, or whether they represent the third principal section of the piece. If one regards these measures as coda, the following analysis appears logical: The first part (A) begins after two measures of introduction and continues through measure 13. A new theme at measure 14 represents the second part (B), and continues through measure 20 where one measure of transition leads to a return of part one at measure 22. In calling this a return of the first part, one must disregard the fact that the theme enters in a new key. Measures 25-31 are transitional and lead to the coda. The marking, "quasi da lontano" and the E flat minor pedal point enhance the coda effect. The other analysis would indicate measures 14-24 to be a development of material from the first section. Measures 14-17 might be related to melodic material from measures 4-5. Although dissimilar rhythmically, there is a similarity in melodic contour. Transitions would be the same, but measures 32-43 would then be the third principal section.

The distinguishing feature of this composition is the whole-tone sound. Whereas in The Vale of Dreams Griffes used the whole-tone scales primarily in the melody, he employs

the technique here for both melody and accompaniment throughout most of the piece. A striking similarity between the two compositions mentioned above, is that most of the principal theme is written in parallel major thirds which move by whole steps. This increases the whole-tone effect.

The introduction at measures 1-2 consists of arpeggios made up of tones from the E flat minor scale. Griffes achieves a unique sound by selecting tones that form intervals of augmented fourths, diminished fifths, and minor seconds. This pattern accompanies the first two notes of the melody, and is then replaced by arpeggios from the whole-tone scale. Occasionally, as in measure 4, other tones are added which function as passing notes. At measure 6 there is a half-cadence on the dominant of the key. This ends the first four-measure phrase. Measure 7, made up of tones from the E flat minor scale, is transitional leading to a restatement of the theme at measure 8. Measures 12-13 are extensions of the second phrase and function as transition to the next large section. The third beat of measure 11 is interesting. It demonstrates Griffes' characteristic practice of moving tones chromatically. The F sharp is a passing note to G on the fourth beat, and similarly G sharp is a passing note to A. Another half-cadence on the dominant of the key appears at measure 12. The section beginning

at measure 14 was discussed above, as it possibly relates to the first theme. A more interesting aspect of this section lies in its harmony. Although the phrase "whole-tone" has been used to describe the general sound of these sections, harmonic progressions can also be traced. Measure 13 ended on a dominant of A, and resolved to that chord in measure 14. In this section Griffes has employed a series of augmented chords that progress in dominant-tonic relationships. These progressions end with the G flat chord in measure 17. The series of chords in measure 20 are basically whole-tone with F as the root. This heralds the arpeggio at measure 21 which appears to be made up of an F chord with a raised fourth. The melody in the following measures is based upon this F chord which has been changed to include only the tones that conform to a whole-tone scale. Measures 25-31 are transitional. The chords at measure 28 are basically whole-tone with the B flat appoggiatura resolving to A in the next measure. Measures 31 to the end of the composition contain the E flat minor pedal chord which confirms the key. The melody and supporting harmonies emphasize the dominant and tonic harmonies. The dominant chord over the pedal point at measure 37 provides a polychordal effect. The last E flat minor chord contains a raised fourth, which is typical of Griffes' practice of avoiding conventional

triads for final chords.

#### SUMMARY

In writing The Night Winds, Griffes appears to be exploiting the possibilities of whole-tone sound. Of the three numbers that make up Opus 5, this one seems the most adventuresome in a harmonic sense, not because traditional chordal relationships are lacking, but because they are skillfully veiled by the augmented intervals that make up whole-tone sound. The themes are not particularly striking or memorable. They appear secondary to the accompaniment parts. The rapid whole-tone arpeggios convey the mood suggested by the title. This is impressionism.

In this number, as in the other two of Opus 5, Griffes remains in a basic tonality which he unmistakably confirms in the closing measures.

## FANTASY PIECES OPUS 6

I  
Barcarolle

II  
Notturmo

III  
Scherzo

## I

Griffes composed Barcarolle in 1912. G. Schirmer Inc., published the number in 1915 as the first of the Opus 6 Fantasy Pieces. The score bears the dedication, "To Gottfried Galston." Griffes originally included an introductory text by William Sharp, but according to Donna Anderson the existing autograph-manuscript does not include the poem. Neither the 1915 nor the 1943 editions contain the poem. Griffes first performed the piece 3 November, 1914, at Colonial Hall, Lowell, Massachusetts.

Barcarolle is in the key of B flat. It contains 179 measures of which 173 are in  $\frac{6}{8}$  meter. Four measures are in  $\frac{3}{8}$  meter and 2 measures are  $\frac{5}{8}$ . The seven measures that are not in the traditional barcarolle meter occur in transition and coda sections.

The work is cast in an overall three-part form with each major section containing several parts. Daniel Boda has characterized this number and the other two in Opus 6 as rhapsodic in form, comprising a wealth of thematic material. In this discussion an attempt will be made to define the relationship of the various themes.

The first major section contains an introduction, three themes which correspond to A-B-A form, and a coda. Measures 1-8 are introductory, containing a statement of the first

theme and an accompaniment figure from which other thematic material is derived. The accompaniment figure appears in the treble at measures 4, 7, and 8. The last three notes in measure 1 contain a rhythmic motive which Griffes employs as a unifying device throughout the work. Following the introductory measures, the first section begins at measure 9 and extends through measure 58 where coda-like or transitional material enters and leads to the second major section at measure 67. The theme in the bass at measure 9 is accompanied by chords in the treble that emphasize the rhythmic figure mentioned above. Measures 9-28 make up the part referred to as A. It consists of two statements of the theme, which are separated by a half-cadence at measures 17-18. This cadence is basically made up of dominant chords, whose movement appears governed by chromatically descending bass notes. The second statement of the theme is in the treble with an arpeggiated accompaniment in the bass. This accompaniment consists of four measures of tonic harmony with an added sixth. In the tonic to subdominant progression in measure 23 the fifth of the subdominant chord appears in the bass and functions as an extension of the B flat pedal point. Measure 25 contains a mediant to tonic progression. The overall effect of the accompaniment in measure 19-26 is that of a pedal point on B flat. Measure 27 contains mediant harmony that resolves

to a dominant chord, which functions as a half cadence at measure 28. The entire A section is in the tonic key.

Two introductory measures lead to the B theme at measure 31. These introductory measures are similar to the material at measures 7-8. A B flat pedal point confirms the tonic key through measures 29-45. Each individual measure, however, contains a tonic to dominant progression, which enhances the rocking motion of the barcarolle rhythm. Other chords in these measures are employed on weak beats. They add color and emphasize the parallel movement of the introductory six-four chords in the treble at measures 7-8. The basic tonality of the B section is B flat minor. At measure 46 a supertonic chord with a raised third presents an abrupt change in the overall sound of the section. It is the beginning of transitional material, which leads to a repeat of the A section at measure 51. Chromatically descending harmonies in the treble over a B flat pedal point produce a polychordal effect. The A section returns in an abbreviated form with full chords over a rapidly moving accompaniment. In this section and the following coda, Griffes adds the sixth to the tonic chord and achieves an interesting effect by alternating between the major and minor form of the sixth. The coda or transitional material consists of scale patterns over a predominantly tonic arpeggio in the bass. The last beat in measures 59 and 61

are dominant harmonies. The coda ends on an A flat eleventh chord, which progresses stepwise to the second major section which is in the key of G flat. The striking feature of the second major section, marked "Tranquillamente," is the G flat pedal point that continues through measures 67-80. The accompaniment is an ostinato-like figure, which is more consistent rhythmically than harmonically. The harmony of the accompaniment is altered at measure 76 to emphasize the D chord in the treble and at measure 78 where Griffes intends the B flat chord to be prominent. Both of these measures retain the G flat pedal point. The melody of this section is in two parts; the first at measures 68-75, and the second from measure 75 to the measure 82. Both parts consist of short motives that are repeated sequentially on different scale degrees and lend a developmental character to this section. Contrast is evidenced by the chromaticism in the treble over basically static harmony in the bass. The rhythmic motive from measure 1 appears literally in the melody at measures 76 and 80 and in a varied form at measures 77-78. Measures 84-87 are transitional and are very similar in style to the material at the end of the first major section. They contain basically tonic harmony with an added sixth.

Following a double bar, new material begins in the key of A minor at measure 88. This material is not related to

any other section of the composition. The first four measures of the melody appear to be based upon a whole-tone scale, but the remaining measures contain numerous half-step motives. The only unifying elements in this section are the pedal points in the bass and the rhythmic motive from measure 1. As in the preceding section the repetition of short motives lend a developmental character to this part.

The third major section is introduced by material similar to measures 1-8. The principal difference lies in the melodic line, which appears two octaves lower than it did in the beginning of the piece. As a result Griffes had to write the accompanying motives completely in the treble, whereas previously they were divided between the treble and the bass.

The melody from the A part of the first section begins at measure 124 and is significant, because it represents the only example of canonic writing in Griffes' published piano work. The interesting aspect of this third major section is the fact that it contains themes from the second section as well as the first. After restatement of the first theme of the piece, the remaining themes beginning with material from measures 68-82 appear in a reverse order. The themes from measures 68-82 are stated at measures 134-148 in the key of B flat. Measures 150-165 are basically the same as measures

31-48, and measures 166-179 are a restatement of the first theme followed by a coda similar to that at the end of the first section. A B flat pedal point underlies practically every measure from 134 to the end of the work. A rhapsodic quality characterizes this last section. Beginning with a cantabile style in simple counterpoint, it ends in an animated style with full chordal harmonies over a pedal bass. Even the coda material is marked forte where previously it appeared with piano and pianissimo markings. The last section appears to be a recapitulation of everything except the A minor section at measure 88.

#### SUMMARY

Barcarolle, the first of the three Fantasy Pieces Opus 6, marks a departure from Opus 5. Whereas the pieces in Opus 5 were short and evidenced relatively little thematic development, Barcarolle is considerably longer and the development of the thematic material appears more significant. Although impressionistic devices are employed, a specific program is less evident here than in the numbers comprising Opus 5. Melodies consist of short motives, which are developed by sequential repetition. Slow harmonic movement prevails throughout the composition with basic harmonies in the long pedal points. Seemingly unrelated chords above the

pedal points contribute a polychordal effect. Slow harmonic movement and relatively static melodic lines are contrasted with a variety of fast moving accompaniment figures in short note values. Unity is maintained by the employment in every section of similar or identical rhythmic patterns, and by restating material from the beginning at the end of the composition.

## III

Scherzo, the third number of Opus 6, was composed in 1913. This is the only piano work for which Griffes wrote his own introductory text. The text, however, does not appear on the score in either the 1915 or the 1943 edition. The first performance was 11 January, 1916, by pianist Clifford Vieh in the Park Church lecture room, Elmira, New York.

In 1919 Griffes scored the work for three flutes, three oboes, two clarinets in B flat, bass clarinet, three bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, two timpani, harp, and strings. He entitled the orchestration Bacchanale.

One of the striking features of Scherzo is the variety of themes and transitions which impart a rhapsodic character to the piece. The overall form contains Griffes' characteristic recapitulation of material from the beginning, but themes in the middle section appear freely inserted with no apparent relation to each other. One theme from the middle section does reappear in the recapitulation lending unity to the entire number. This same technique was employed in Barcarolle.

The first section begins with four measures of introduction consisting of a rhythmic and melodic ostinato figure in the

bass. It is also a pedal point on the tonic chord in the key of E flat minor. Measures 3-4 are a repetition of the first two measures. The antecedent phrase of the first theme enters in the treble at measure 5. This is a four-measure phrase which is repeated literally in measures 11-14. Measures 9-10 separate the two statements of the phrase. They are derived from the first measure of the ostinato figure and function as a rhythmic interlude. At measure 17 begins the consequent phrase of the first theme. A dominant chord at measure 18 resolves to the tonic at measure 20. This phrase is also repeated literally after two measures of rhythmic interlude. The alternation of melodic material with rhythmic interludes imparts a fragmentary character to this section. Measures 29-42 appear to be a development of material from the first theme. The melody in measures 29-31 is essentially similar to the first theme and is supported in the bass by elements of the ostinato figure from measure 1. Interludes separating the melodic motives consist of C flat major scale patterns.

In measures 32 and 36 this C flat scale appears to function as an appoggiatura to the C chord that precedes it. A series of dominant chords in measures 42-45 lead to transitional material at measures 46-60. This transition contains the basic rhythmic elements from measures 1-2, but

the figure is alternated with measures of continuous eighth-note patterns. The transitional section ends with four measures containing a repeated B flat tonality.

The next principal section begins at measure 61. A pedal point implies B flat as the basic key, but the melody and harmony in the treble bear no relationship to that key. The melody appears to be in D flat continuing to measure 69 where it is repeated in E flat. The only unifying element in this section is the sequential repetition of melodic motives. Measures 76-103 consist of material that is basically rhythmic. Chromatic harmonies and polychords add color to the basic E flat minor tonality. At measure 110 a G flat chord in the bass introduces the next section marked "piu tranquillo."

This is the section that is included in the recapitulation. It is bitonal. The melody appears to be in the key of B flat minor throughout measures 112-136 while the bass consists of a pedal chord on G flat. A variation of the theme begins at measure 140. Augmented chords in the treble lend a whole-tone sound to this variation. The G flat pedal point changes to B flat at measure 136 and continues to the end of the section.

New material marked "Poco meno mosso" begins at measure 160. It is written on three staves. A B flat pedal ostinato figure is written on the staff above the melody and a B flat

pedal point sounds in the bass. The middle staff has the principal melody in the key of G flat, which lends a bi-tonal effect to the section. The melody is supported primarily by dominant chords. The tonic chord appears in measure 170 and 188. In measures 188-190 the tonic chord has an augmented fifth. At measure 184 the B flat pedal point in the upper staff is replaced by harmonies from the melodic material. At measure 192 the tonic chord of the composition begins and continues to measure 200 where the melody from measure 5 enters and functions as introduction to the recapitulation of the first section. At measure 204 the B flat pedal in the bass is replaced by a motive in the key of E flat minor. This motive, similar to measures 1-2, also introduces the recapitulation, which begins at measure 208. Griffes generally alters some aspect of the material when he repeats it in the last section, but in Scherzo measures 208-259 are a literal repetition of the opening section. The only change of key signature occurs after the double bar between measures 259 and 260. The new key, E flat major, marks the beginning of the finale. At this point Griffes brings back the theme from measure 112. The melody contains fifths and octaves as it did originally, but in the bass arpeggiated chords replace the alternating ostinato figure. Octaves re-enforce the melodic line in the second half of the theme. After a series of diminished chords

at measures 284-285 a dominant seventh chord heralds the entrance in D flat of material from measure 29. The interludes contain chords built on A that appear chosen for their contrast with D<sup>b</sup> major chords. They also provide a dominant to tonic relationship with the first chord in measure 296. At measure 296 major chords progress stepwise in contrary motion to the E flat minor chord at measure 297. The last three measures bring the piece back to E flat minor, but in the final measure Griffes omits the third of the tonic chord.

#### CONCLUSION

Scherzo is a fast-moving composition containing a wide variety of themes and rhythmic motives. Among the numerous harmonic techniques employed by Griffes, the most prominent are pedal points and ostinato figures. They unify each individual section. Other harmonic techniques include bitonal passages, polychords, and whole-tone chords.

For the sake of convenience the term "recapitulation" has been employed to denote the return of material at the end of the composition, which appeared in the beginning. In Scherzo this also included one theme from the middle sections.

This piece has the general outline of a large ternary form; however, the middle section contains a variety of

unrelated themes. Characteristic of most of his piano pieces, Griffes' concern with overall form manifests itself most consistently in the recapitulation, which "rounds out" the work.

## II

Notturmo, the second number of Opus 6 was composed in 1915. Griffes selected poetry by Paul Verlaine to characterize the mood of the piece, but it did not appear on either the 1915 or the 1943 editions. No information is available concerning the first performance of this work. Although Notturmo is listed as the second number of the Fantasy Pieces, it was written two years after Scherzo which is listed as the third number. In this study it is being discussed as the last of the three numbers.

Notturmo has the same basic overall form as the other two pieces in Opus 6. A recapitulation of the opening section is found at the end of the work. The middle section comprises a group of unrelated themes. The principal difference in Notturmo lies in the addition, at the end of the work, of a section that functions as a coda. It is not thematically related to other melodic material in the work, but recurring mediant to tonic progressions anticipate the final cadence which is also mediant to tonic.

The basic key of Notturmo is A flat. Measures 1-32 make up the first major section which is cast in a ternary form. Melodies consist generally of short motives. They are extended by sequential repetition. The antecedent phrase of the first a section begins at measure 3 and extends to measure

8. Measures 9-14 are the consequent phrase. The b section extends from measure 15 to measure 22 where a returns. This third part is not a literal repetition of a. It contains elements of both the a and b sections. An example of this is measure 25 which has the same rhythm and a similar melodic contour of measure 15. Measure 25 however, could also be related to measure 6. (This dual analysis demonstrates Griffes' employment of similar melodic material throughout many of his works. Lack of melodic contrast between sections is usually compensated for by variation of harmony and accompaniment patterns.) Measure 28 contains descending dominant chords which lead to cadential chords at measures 29-32. The first 14 measures are accompanied by an ostinato-like figure over a B flat pedal point in the bass. Measures 1-8 contain dominant harmony. The A natural in these measures lends a whole-tone sound to the accompaniment. This effect is further enhanced by the whole-tone melody at measures 3-4. The ostinato figure in measure 9 moves up one half-step creating a half-diminished seventh chord in the basic harmony. This chord becomes a conventional dominant seventh on the supertonic at measure 14. It resolves to C flat and sounds like a deceptive cadence in the key of E flat. C flat is the key of the b section. Measure 17 is curious. The

accompaniment in measure 16 is related to a, but its harmonic resolution to the B major chord at measure 17 seems to defy logical explanation. This chord is enharmonic with the C flat tonality of the section. Griffes does not repeat this progression elsewhere in the composition. The b part ends on an A major chord at measure 21 and a returns in the tonic key. The cadence in measures 29-32 consists of dominant and tonic chords. The chord at measure 31 results from appoggiatura tones in the treble and passing tones in the bass. Measures 33-35 are transitional leading to the second major section at measure 36. Measure 35 outlines the basic accompaniment figure that continues through measure 51.

The second major section contains a variety of material that tends to confirm Daniel Boda's generalization that the Fantasy Pieces are rhapsodic in style. The first theme in the second section begins at measure 36. A four-measure melody is repeated literally except for the last measure, which is changed to a motive that Griffes repeats several times to extend the melody. These repeated measures are separated by the motive from measure 44. Three factors lend a static quality to measures 36-49. The first is the A flat pedal point in the bass which is the tonic root. A second unifying device is the eighth-note patterns that are

rhythmically and melodically similar throughout these measures. The third factor is the numerous melodic repetitions used as a method of extending the initial four-measure phrase. Chord progressions are primarily tonic to subdominant through measure 47. At measure 50 the A flat pedal is discontinued, and the bass moves down in half steps to F sharp at measure 52. Measures 52-57 contain basically F sharp harmony. The striking characteristic of these measures is the coloristic accompaniment part. A melody begins in the bass at measure 56. This melody is primarily constructed of short motives that are sequentially repeated throughout the section. A disjunct melodic line beginning in the bass at measure 60 brings this section to a climax on an A flat chord at measures 64-65 where the melody is transferred to the treble. The motive in the treble at measure 64 is repeated in the bass at measure 66. It is not a literal repetition.

Transitional material in measures 68-71 leads to a new section marked "Meno mosso" at measure 72. Harmonies in this transition are governed by stepwise progression of the bass notes. A dominant chord on D sharp resolves to the G sharp pedal point which runs through the "Meno mosso" section. A double bar between measures 77 and 78 mark a change to the key of C sharp minor. A dominant chord at measure 78 resolves to a C major chord which functions as an appoggiatura to the

C sharp minor chord at measure 80. This C major chord is analyzed as such by considering the B sharp of the melody in measure 79 as an enharmonic spelling of C. Dominant to tonic relationships provide most of the harmonic movement in measures 78-94. Four measures of transition lead to a recapitulation of the material from the beginning of the piece. The F double sharp in measure 98 is enharmonic to the first note of the accompaniment in the recapitulation.

The melody in measures 99-129 is an exact restatement of that from measures 1-31. The accompaniment is changed to single eighth notes. This change tends to de-emphasize the whole-tone effect which was more obvious in measures 1-31. The harmony in both sections is essentially the same.

The coda begins at measure 130. It contains new melodic material, but its primary function is that of emphasizing the mediant to tonic progression. The piece ends with a mediant to tonic cadence. The final chord is A flat with an added sixth. The scale patterns in measures 140-141 could be considered a polychord, containing a C sharp half diminished seventh chord over an E half diminished seventh chord. They resolve as follows: the C sharp half diminished seventh chord resolves to the F chord in the treble at measure 142, and the E half diminished seventh chord resolves to the A flat chord in the same measure. Thus Griffes might have intended a double V to I resolution. This writer has chosen

to call the scale patterns at measures 140-141 a single dominant chord on C sharp which resolves to the A flat chord with an added sixth.

#### SUMMARY

Of the three Fantasy Pieces, Notturmo is the most impressionistic in style. Impressionistic techniques occur most consistently in the accompaniment parts and transition sections. Long pedal points and ostinato figures provide a harmony that is basically static. They are discontinued near the end of each section as Griffes modulates to a new key. Melodies are, for the most part, short and fragmented into motives which are repeated sequentially on different scale degrees. Griffes employs this technique as a means of extending phrases. The overall form of this piece is essentially similar to that in Barcarolle and Scherzo. Each work has three major sections with subdivisions. In each composition the middle section contains several seemingly unrelated themes which lend a rhapsodic character to the work. In Notturmo the themes in the middle section are contrasted mainly by the variety of accompaniment figures employed by the composer. Each section contains a different style of accompaniment. New sections usually begin on a chord that resolves from a dominant in the preceding

section. This lends a continuous effect to the entire composition. Notturmo ends with a comparatively lengthy coda that emphasizes the mediant to tonic progression found in the final cadence.

## ROMAN SKETCHES OPUS 7

I  
The White Peacock

II  
Nightfall

III  
The Fountain of the Acqua Paola

IIII  
Clouds

## I

The four compositions which make up Opus 7 were published by G. Schirmer Inc., in 1917 under the general title, Roman Sketches. They are the last published piano works by Griffes that are impressionistic in style. They are in fact, the last piano works published during Griffes' lifetime. (The Sonata was published posthumously.) The title Roman Sketches is somewhat inappropriate for The White Peacock, because the music and the accompanying poem are oriental in character. Its inclusion in Opus 7 was probably motivated by commercial reasons, on the part of the publisher. All four numbers contain poetry by William Sharp, which characterizes the mood of the music.

Griffes composed The White Peacock in 1915 and dedicated it to Rudolph Ganz. The poem by William Sharp is entitled The White Peacock. According to Maisel, Griffes had a copy of Sharp's poem on the piano while composing the music. Griffes recorded it for the Aeolian Company's Duo Art Pianola. In the same year he arranged it for orchestra. It was scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets in A, two bassoons, two horns in F, three trumpets in F, two trombones, two harps, percussion, celeste, and strings.

Pianist Winifred Christie gave the first performance on 13 February, 1916, at the Punch and Judy Theater, New York

City. Michio Ito, a Japanese dancer, was the first to perform it as a dance number. It was included in a program of oriental music. Adolph Bohm choreographed it for dancer Margrit Leeras. Miss Leeras performed it at the Rivoli Theater in New York City during the week commencing Sunday, June 22, 1919. She wore a peacock costume with a specially designed mechanism which enabled the tail to be manipulated at will by the dancer. This number was performed between the feature picture, Secret Service, a Civil War drama, and a Mack Sennett comedy. Reviews of the performance were generally favorable and afforded Griffes valuable publicity. The White Peacock moved into a permanent place in American music, and remains today one of the most popular compositions by Griffes.

The basic key of the composition is E. Characteristically Griffes emphasizes the dominant of the key and avoids clearly defined tonic chords. The first seven measures set forth the basic melodic material of the piece. Three principal motives are stated in this section. The first is the melody in the treble, measures 1-2. This motive is introductory in character and is employed as a codetta-like figure bringing the composition to a close at measures 61-67. The harmonic structure of measures 1-2 is supertonic to dominant. Measure 3 contains the second principal motive. It consists of a descending chromatic

figure which becomes a prominent motive at measures 36-42. Measure 4 is important rhythmically as well as melodically providing the basic motive for most of the thematic material in the piece. Measures 5-6 consist of an arpeggiation of the Neapolitan chord followed by a half-cadence on the dominant at measure 7.

The first major section begins at measure 8 where a dominant arpeggio leads to the motive from measure 4. The fourth beat of measure 9 represents the only form of a complete tonic chord in the piece. This chord appears in other measures but always in the same context. The chord at measure 10 is a polychord containing a dominant in the treble over the tonic in the bass. Following a deceptive cadence at measures 12-13, the same basic thematic material continues in the key of C. This section is extended by a series of dominant harmonies. Measure 17 is transitional with chords that appear selected for their color rather than for harmonic function. The dissonance in the cadence at measure 18 results from an accented appoggiatura chord in the bass resolving chromatically to the dominant on the fourth beat.

The second major section marked "Con Languore" begins at measure 19. Melodically it is related to measure 4, but a gentle arpeggiated accompaniment provides a contrast to the first section. Beginning on the dominant of the tonic

key, this section contains transient modulations to the keys of B flat at measure 22, and D flat at measure 24. A C sharp ninth chord leads to the key of A at measure 28. This is the beginning of the section that marks the climax of the work. Following eight measures of tonic chord in the accompaniment, the thematic material from measure 3 enters in the treble. This motive is accompanied by a chord on B that contains both major and minor thirds. Measures 39-41 combine the motives from measures 3-4 after which free melodic material climaxes on a C major chord at measure 44. This demonstrates Maisel's contention that Griffes considered C the brightest of keys. The harmonic progression in this section appears governed by half step progressions in the bass. Measures 46-47 are supertonic to dominant progressions bringing the tonality back to E. Measures 48-50 are transitional leading to a restatement of the first major section. This is not a literal repetition of that section, but is very similar in style and key. A series of supertonic to dominant harmonies beginning at measure 57 lead to a restatement of the two introductory measures. The final cadence is a combination of the supertonic and dominant harmonies. The tonic E in the treble combines with the supertonic harmony in the bass producing a polychordal effect in the last two measures of the composition.

This work has been described by Boda as an arch form. Comparison of measures 1-18 with measures 48-67 tend to confirm this analysis, but measures 19-47 bear little evidence to support. It is sufficient to describe the composition as being in an overall ternary form.

#### CONCLUSION

The White Peacock is the most popular of Griffes' piano works. Although it has probably been performed more often as an orchestral piece, it remains an effective piano work because it is very pianistic and presents few technical problems for the pianist. (Similar comments apply to all of Griffes' published piano music.)

Much of the basic harmony lies in the bass part with coloristic passages in the treble, as in measure 26. Dominant chords of various forms are extensively employed. The most frequently used progression is supertonic to dominant. Other harmonic progressions appear to be governed by stepwise progression in the bass. Dissonance is most often the result of accented appoggiatura chords and tones.

Impressionistic in style, it is one of the few pieces for which the composer had a definite extramusical subject in mind while writing it.

## II

Nightfall, subtitled "Al far della notte", is the second number of Opus 7. Griffes wrote the piece in 1916 and dedicated it to Winifred Christe. Miss Christe played the work 12 February, 1919, at Aeolian Hall, New York City. Available evidence indicates this was the first public performance of the piece, but the printed program for that concert does not list it as such. The introductory text is from the poem, Sospiri di Roma by William Sharp. It characterizes the dark, yet tranquil tones that permeate much of the music.

Nightfall is basically in the key of G sharp minor. The first thirteen measures contain a double pedal point. One in the treble emphasizes the fifth of the tonic chord, and one in the bass emphasizes the root of that chord. The pedal point in the treble is broken only at measures 10-11 where Griffes intends the mediant chord to be heard. The pedal point in the bass is also eliminated at measure 10. A mediant to tonic progression exists at measures 10-11. This same progression is employed in the final cadence of the piece. The mediant to tonic relationship is further emphasized by the melody, which appears to be in the key of B minor. The result is a bitonal effect throughout the first section. The pedal points mentioned above create the effect

of a static harmonic background which is characteristic of Griffes' style. The pedal point in the treble is also a rhythmic ostinato figure which provides most of the movement in the section. It contrasts with the slow movement of the melody.

A second section begins at measure 14. The D sharp pedal ostinato figure from the treble in the first section is transferred to the bass where it continues through measure 21. Measures 22-23 contain the D sharp in the bass, but the rhythm is altered. This section has more prominent melodic material. Measures 14-21 consist of two similar four-measure phrases with the G minor chord at measure 15 changed to G major at measure 19. New melodic material at measure 22 consists of a four-measure phrase which functions as the b section in a miniature two-part form. The D naturals in measures 23-24 are appoggiaturas and appear to function as a coloristic device, which modifies the basically static G sharp minor harmony of this section. A dominant chord on the fourth beat of measure 25 leads to a transitional section at measures 26-34. The tonic key of this section is left by means of chromatically descending dominants at measures 30-31. At measure 32 a dominant chord in the bass leads to the tonic of the next section which begins at measure 35. An interesting feature of this transition section is the pedal ostinato figure that

begins in the treble at measure 31 and continues through most of the following section. This figure is basically a G sharp minor chord with the C sharp an appoggiatura to the D sharp.

The melody of the third major section beginning at measure 35 is in the key of E. A bitonal effect is created by the presence of the G sharp pedal figure above the melody. This pedal accompaniment is varied throughout the section and becomes a study in fourths. This technique of varying the style of accompaniment is common in Griffes' music. It lends variety to the static harmony of the accompaniment. Smaller note values which increase the movement in the section bring about a climax at measures 45-47. Measures 45-47 are in the key of D sharp and the section ends on the dominant of that key at measure 48. This A sharp dominant chord does not resolve in a traditional manner, but in a cadenza-like fashion leads directly to the A flat chord which marks the beginning of a new section at measure 49. This new section marked "Tranquillo" is a miniature three-part form. The first part extends from measure 49 to measure 61 and is entirely in the key of A flat. An A flat pedal point runs through every measure. The second section begins at measure 62 and extends to measure 69 where the first section returns in the key of D flat. The triplet figure followed by an eighth note at

measure 63 is interesting. The first chord of the triplet figure is an appoggiatura to the preceding and following chords. The eighth note that follows the triplet appears entirely out of place tonally, but later reveals itself to be an anticipation of the D flat chord at measure 68. The A natural and D natural are appoggiaturas to the A flat and D flat in the D flat chord at measure 68. The harmony in measures 62-68 appears governed by stepwise progression of the bass notes which end on the dominant of D flat at measure 68. Measures 69-77 are essentially a repetition of the first part, but in a different key.

Transitional material at measure 78 is basically the same as that in measure 30. A modulation to the key of G sharp heralds the entrance of the same material as found in measure 14. This is followed, at measure 92, by a repetition of the first section of the composition. These last two parts are not literal repetitions, but are basically similar. Measures 97-109 have the character of a coda. Interesting is the alternation of major and minor in measures 97-99. The composition ends with a mediant to tonic cadence and the final chord is major.

#### SUMMARY

Nightfall is cast in what might be defined as a modified

arch form. Sections at the end, which are similar to those in the beginning, make their appearance in reverse order, but the sequence of the middle sections bears little resemblance to that which is generally regarded as arch form.

The most striking features of this work are the pedal points and ostinato figures which are found in every principal section. *The effect of these techniques is probably more impressive than the melodic lines.* Melodies consist, for the most part, of short motives. Long flowing melodies are not generally employed by Griffes.

Bitonal effects are the result of melodies in a key that is foreign to the pedal points which are in the tonic key.

This composition, containing 109 measures, is the longest of the four numbers of Opus 7. Generally slow tempos make it also the longest of the pieces in this group in terms of performance time.

## III

Griffes composed The Fountain of the Acqua Paola in 1916. Like The White Peacock, it was built around a poem by William Sharp rather than independently composed and later prefaced by verse. The piece was first performed on 1 June, 1918, by Emily Greenough at the Eugene Heffley Studio, Carnegie Hall, New York City. Impressionistic in style, this composition features accompaniment techniques designed to simulate the water as it rises from the fountain, glistens in the sunlight, and cascades into the foaming pool from whence it came. The continuous motion in the accompaniment part is the unifying factor in the work.

The Fountain of the Acqua Paola is in the key of D flat. There is no introduction. The first theme begins in the bass at measure 1 and continues through measure 12. The first four measures make up an antecedent phrase and are followed by a four-measure consequent phrase. Four additional measures function as extension of the theme. Measure 12 ends on an E flat dominant chord that leads to the next section which is in B flat minor. This progression provides a quasi-plagal cadence. The accompaniment of the first theme consists of an ostinato figure made up of figured tones from the D flat scale. This figure is varied at measures 8-12 where the melody requires a change in harmony. Various

forms of dominant harmony lead to the next section at measure 13.

The material at measure 13 marked "Meno Mosso" functions primarily as an interlude or transition. The melodic motive at measure 14 is repeated sequentially and compressed in each succeeding measure until it breaks into figured chromatic sixths and thirds in measures 17-20. The general effect of this section seems more based on mood and atmosphere than on specific melodic material contained in it. The harmonies move chromatically either by movement of the bass notes or the roots. A dominant to tonic relationship introduces the next section which is in the key of B flat minor. This new section begins at measure 21.

Measure 21 marked "Più animato" contains more prominent melodic material. The theme consists of two measures in  $\frac{7}{4}$  meter. The second measure is a variation of the first. This is followed by four measures marked "Calmato" which contain a repeated three-note motive in the bass. Dominant to tonic harmonies are implied in these measures. The thematic material is not related to any other part of the composition.

Measures 29-38 consist of three-note melodic figures, but the striking features of this section are the chromatic scale patterns in the treble and an ostinato accompaniment

figure in the bass. Short pedal points in the ostinato accompaniment are a unifying factor in this section. The harmonies reveal no traditional progressions. Measures 38-41 in the tonic key are rhapsodic in character. A dominant chord on the fourth beat of measure 41 leads to a repetition at measure 42 of the theme from measure 21. It enters in the key of D flat minor.

The section marked "Agitato", measures 44-52, functions similarly to measures 23-41. Both are rhapsodic in style and contain elements of climax. While the thematic material differs, the overall effect is similar. In measures 44-52 the basic key is D flat. The section begins on an A chord and progresses chromatically down to G major. The chord in the bass at measure 48 is a polychord consisting of a D major and a C minor chord. The key of D flat is established at measure 49 and continues through measure 52 where a dominant chord leads to a repetition of the first theme at measure 53. Griffes' characteristic employment of half-step progressions is apparent in the treble at measures 63-64. Measures 65-70 are closing material derived from measure 21. The harmonies are basically tonic and dominant. The final cadence consists of a tonic chord containing a B double flat which moves downward to A double flat, and finally resolves to the chord tone A flat. The B double flat in the treble does not resolve. This results in a final

tonic chord with a perfect fifth and a lowered sixth.

### CONCLUSION

The Fountain of the Acqua Paola is one of Griffes' most impressionistic piano pieces. Although identifiable melodies are contained in it, they seem of less importance than the overall effect produced by the accompaniment parts. Figured accompaniments provide continuous movement and brilliance throughout the work. Chords often appear to be selected solely for their color. They generally progress stepwise. Dominant to tonic relationships are employed most often to establish the key of a new section. Polychordal effects result from a change of chords over static harmony in the accompaniment. Polychords, suspensions and appoggiaturas account for the bulk of the dissonance in the work. The overall form of this piece, as in numbers 1 and 2 of Opus 7, defies classification in stereotyped patterns. The work ends with a repetition of themes from the beginning, but material in the middle appears to consist of thematically unrelated sections. The variety of thematic material Griffes employs in this relatively short composition lends it a rhapsodic quality which probably best characterizes the introductory poetry.

## IIII

Griffes composed Clouds in 1916 and subtitled it "Argo Romano". The score bears the dedication, "To Mr. Paul Rosenfeld". This piece, like The White Peacock and The Fountain of the Acqua Paola, was written with a programmatic subject in mind. The poetry which inspired the piece is by William Sharp. In 1919 Griffes arranged the work for orchestra. The arrangement is scored for three flutes, three oboes, two clarinets in B flat, bass clarinet, three bassoons, four horns, two harps, celeste, and strings. No information is available regarding the first public performance of the piece.

Clouds is only 42 measures long. It is basically in the key of D flat. The composition is cast in three principal sections, each of which is divided into two smaller parts. Measure 1 introduces the ostinato figure, which consists of chords that progress stepwise on degrees of the D flat scale. This figure results in a variety of chords, which may all be felt as basically tonic. At measure 2 a melody, based on another chord series, enters in the treble. The most significant aspect of this melody lies in Griffes' use of the interval of a second. This interval and the chords in measure 3, that contain an octave and a fourth, create a mild dissonance that enhances the

mood of the piece. The melody in measures 2-4 is in the key of D flat, but at measure 5 a chord series in the treble is foreign to the tonic key. The seemingly arbitrary harmony of these chords adds color and creates, with the bass, a polytonal effect in that measure. Measure 6 is a literal repetition of measure 2. This continues into the first half of measure 7, but the last three beats of the measure are stated a third higher than they were in measure 3. Measures 8-9 are extension and transition to the second part of the first section at measure 10. This second part is a study in repeated notes. The note on the weak part of the beat is repeated on the strong part of the following beat. In measure 10 the repeated notes are separated by pairs of notes that move chromatically, but in measure 11, beginning with the second half of the first beat, each note is repeated and followed by another pair on a different degree of the scale. This technique continues through measure 14. The harmony underlying these measures is basically A flat and D flat. The chord on the last two beats of measure 10 is B major, and in measure 14 a G major chord results from the half step progression from A flat. In this section Griffes employs what can be described as a "wrong note" technique. This refers to the cross relation created by

raising the root of the chord in one part while the normal root is still sounding. This occurs in the bass in measures 11-14. In measure 14 Griffes also lowers the fifth of the G major chord, creating another cross relation. The interval of a second provides a dissonant pedal point in measures 11 and 13.

The second principal section, marked "Piu mosso", begins at measure 15 and continues through measure 20 where three measures of transitional material lead to the second part, "Più Tranquillo". This section contrasts with the preceding material. Measures 15-20 contain basically dominant and tonic harmonies. The melody consists of a series of repeated motives that reach a climax on the first beat of measure 21. The following three transitional measures are basically dominant harmonies with little melodic import. Measures 24-30 feature a rhythmic motive that breaks into a series of chords which, accompanied by an increasingly moving bass line, bring about a climax at measure 30. The last three notes of the melody at measure 24 are the source of the melodic material in measures 28-30.

The bass in measure 30 is the same as the introductory measure at the beginning of the composition. It introduces the return of the first section, "Tempo I<sup>o</sup>" at measure 31. Only four measures of the first theme are presented, after

which the material from measure 11 begins. The basic difference here is the presence of D flat pedal chords that continue from measure 35 to the end of the piece. Measure 36 is polytonal. The pedal chords are in D flat, the figured accompaniment is in G flat, and the treble is made up of a variety of harmonies, best described as color chords. This section continues either bitonal or polytonal to the end of the piece. The final chord is a D flat major chord with an added seventh and a raised root in the treble.

#### SUMMARY

Clouds is an impressionistic piece containing harmonic techniques employed to convey the mood of the introductory verse. A melody, consisting of mildly dissonant, slow-moving chords, combines with an equally slow-moving ostinato figure in the accompaniment to provide majestic character to the first section. A tranquil mood results from the employment of conjunct melodic lines and slow harmonic movement. The middle section, measures 15-29, contains disjunct melodic lines that contrast with the rest of the number. Chords containing intervals of seconds and fourths, bitonal passages, and accented non-harmonic tones provide the bulk of the dissonance in the number.

Clouds is one of the three piano works that were directly inspired by the poetry of William Sharp. The other two are The White Peacock, and The Fountain of the Acqua Paola. All three are part of Roman Sketches, Opus 7. This suggests that the Roman Sketches represent the height of Griffes' impressionistic period. The only other published piano piece that followed was the Sonata, which represents a departure from impressionism. All four numbers of Opus 7 are similar in form, the most outstanding similarity being the return of the first themes at the end of the composition. Climactic sections always occur before the return of the first themes, and it is in these sections that most modulations are apparent. In this sense they could be considered developmental. Of the four numbers comprising Roman Sketches, The White Peacock, with its stylized melodies, remains the most popular.

SONATA

Griffes began work on the Sonata in December, 1917, and except for minor changes, completed it in January, 1918. It was published in 1921, the year after his death. Griffes played the Sonata at the MacDowell Club of New York City, 26 February, 1918. This was the first time it was performed in public. The occasion of its première was an evening of compositions by Griffes. Critics reviewing the program admittedly failed to understand the Sonata's unique harmony and form. The music did represent a departure from the composer's earlier styles, but despite critical commentary, it was praised and accepted by musicians. "Rudolph Ganz on first hearing the Sonata adjudged it the finest abstract work in American piano literature."<sup>1</sup> According to Maisel, "The Sonata remains today a solid and formidable landmark in American music -- though more generally respected than understood, and with greater reputation than audience."<sup>2</sup>

Griffes referred to this work as a Sonata in one movement. Examination of the score however, reveals three separate sections which bear remarkable similarity to overall classical sonata form. Griffes' claim that the Sonata is a one-movement work possibly stems from the absence

<sup>1</sup>Maisel, p. 272.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

of strong final cadences at the end of the first and second sections. This lends a continuous quality to the entire work. Also, the single key signature gives an outward appearance of unity, while the presence of identical thematic material in different sections provides inward unity. The Sonata ends with a strong cadence in D, the same tonality in which it begins. Writers generally refer to the three sections as movements; therefore, for the sake of convenience the same procedure will be followed in this study.

Maisel devotes an entire chapter of his book to a detailed analysis of the Sonata, emphasizing the relation of the thematic material to the basic scale, or tonality. Other studies do not agree with all of Maisel's conclusions; however, it will not be the purpose of this discussion to refute statements by other writers. Rather, the following will be a summary of this writer's conclusions after study of the score. Other studies will be cited only to point out where opinions differ.

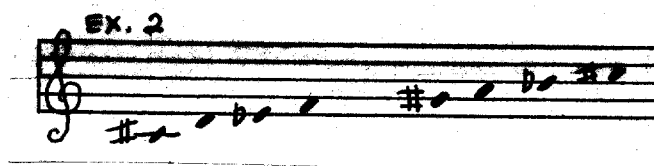
Various writers have characterized the Sonata as representing the beginning of Griffes' "experimental period". In this work the composer abandons the conventional major and minor scales, the pentatonic scale, and the whole-tone scale, in favor of what might best be described as an arbitrary scale. Practically all thematic material and supporting

harmonies are derived from this scale. This is not to say that tones foreign to the scale are not used, but they are employed in the same manner as non-harmonic tones in compositions written in conventional scales. In his study, Maisel provides a table of what he considers the principal variations of the basic scale.<sup>3</sup> It is important to be aware of Griffes' use of enharmonic spellings which seem to be employed mostly for the sake of having a theme appear in a conventional major or minor scale. If one accepts as a definition of tonality the gravitation of other tones to a central tone, this composition can be considered tonal. Donna Anderson refers to the Sonata as being in the key of D minor. This conclusion is borne out by the key signature (one flat), the tonality of the first subject of the first movement, and the bulk of the third movement including the last chord in the final cadence. Due to the absence of thirds in final chords it is not easily determined whether a cadence is major or minor. To designate the work as being in the key of D, disregarding reference to mode, might be more appropriate. It is also important to note that even when Griffes obviously implies a different key (as in the opening theme of the second movement), he maintains the one-flat signature. This signature is kept

<sup>3</sup>Maisel, p. 274.

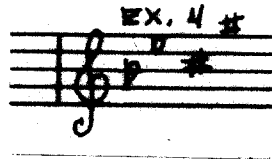
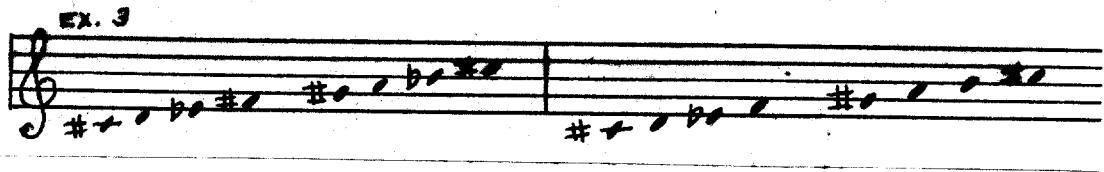
throughout the entire composition. The arbitrary scale is composed of the following tones:

(example 2)



The first note is not necessarily the tonic because Griffes uses the same scale to imply different tonal centers. The notes in this example have been separated into two groups to indicate tetrachords. Throughout the score F sharp is employed almost as often as F natural. Similarly B natural is substituted for B flat; but the alteration of the F sharp is more significant because it tends to obscure the mode. The result is an implied major-minor tonality. This technique is illustrated in measures 8-10, where the theme in the treble at measure 10 appears to be in D minor, while the accompaniment employs F sharps on the strong part of the beats. The theme ending in measure 11 confirms minor as the intended mode because the single F sharp functions as an unaccented appoggiatura. It is this writer's opinion that Griffes implies a definite mode, but employs both major and minor thirds for coloristic effects. It should be observed that when F sharp is employed in place of F natural, the tetrachords contain identical intervals. This is also true when the B flat is raised to B natural.

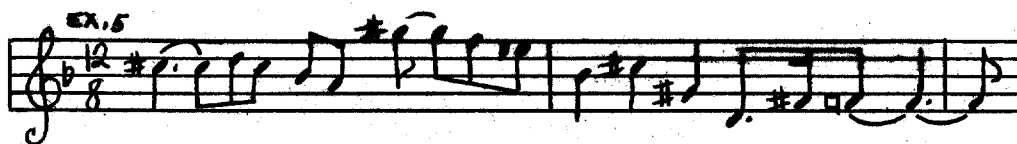
The basic scale (example 2) can be said to have two important variations (example 3). The notation of the basic scale gives support to Maisel's suggestion that the signature, two flats and two sharps (example 4), though unconventional, might be more practical.



This signature could be justified in view of the acceptance of other more radical innovations in twentieth century music. As a result, the number of accidentals in the score would be surprisingly small.

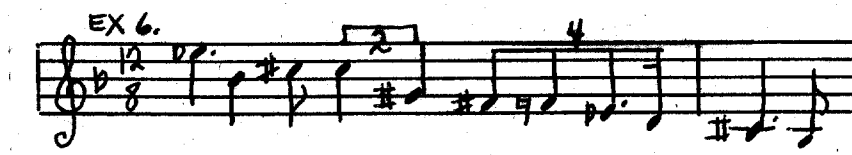
The first movement is in traditional sonata form containing an introduction, exposition, development, recapitulation, and coda, without the usual repetitions. The eight-measure introduction marked "Feroce" sets forth the basic scale from which most of the themes and harmonies are derived. The initial motive of the first subject appears twice in the last three measures of the introduction, followed by scale-like patterns which lead to the exposition, marked "Allegretto con moto". The first subject begins in

the treble at measure 10 (example 5). This theme contains all the tones of the basic scale, including the F sharp commented on above. The distinguishing character of this theme lies in the abundance of half-steps (and their inversions), and the augmented seconds contained in it.



Griffes develops this theme by fragmenting it and by repeating it in different registers with varying accompaniments. The second measure of the theme is developed, or varied melodically as in measures 14, 16, and 17. These motives lend themselves well to variation. Of interest here is the fact that Griffes keeps the theme in the tonic throughout this section. Generally, the most striking variety is found in the accompaniment parts. These consist of arpeggios as in measure 15, vertical chord progressions at measure 20, and scale patterns as in measure 16. Accompaniments are, for the most part, contrapuntal in style. This contrasts with the more homophonic texture employed in earlier compositions. A new theme enters at measure 26 (example 6). Although contrasting rhythmically with the first theme, its first five notes are the same as the eighth to eleventh notes of the first theme, and both end in similar

melodic patterns. Therefore, it can be said to be derived directly from the first theme. The term "theme group" might be employed synonymously for that which is generally referred to as the first subject. Reference can then be made to the first or second theme of the first theme group. This method will be used as a matter of convenience.

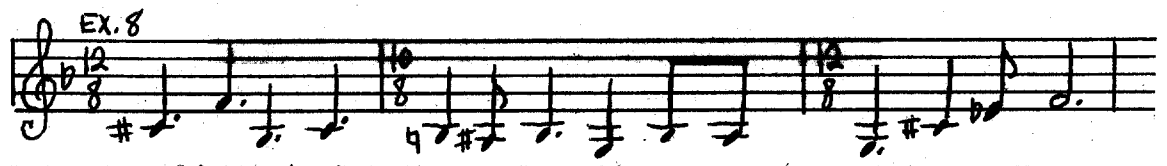


The interval of a fourth in the second theme of the first theme group is the most developed motive in the measures that follow. It is prominent in the bass part as in measures 29-30. While the theme contains perfect fourths, augmented fourths are employed in developmental fashion at measure 29. The harmonic fourths in the treble on the last two beats of measure 27 also emphasize the importance of the interval. Throughout this section there are no chords containing thirds. New material at measure 31 (example 7) is important as a transitional theme. It is also employed in the coda.



Throughout the Sonata Griffes uses this theme, or themes similar to it, as transitional material between major parts of movements. While the notes and rhythms may differ, a

similarity in the overall effect relates these themes. The theme at measure 31 leads to the second subject at measure 36 (example 8). While the implied key of the first subject is D, the second subject appears tonally centered around B flat. This conclusion is valid if one considers C sharp as enharmonic to D flat, allowing the first three tones to outline a B flat minor triad.



Most important is the fact that this is the contrasting theme to the first subject. The contrast in mood is probably more striking than difference in key. Griffes does not indicate a change in tempo, but the melody beginning with dotted quarter notes and accompanied by triplets in eighth notes creates a mood that is tranquil in comparison with the more robust first subject. This same theme is marked "tranquillamente" in the recapitulation. A generally more conjunct melodic line also contrasts it with the first subject. It is a more flowing melody. The second subject is developed generally in the same manner as was the first subject, except that Griffes modulates to a new key at measure 42. Here the theme enters a diminished fourth higher. The coda, beginning at measure 51, is introduced by the transitional theme



Although not clearly related to any material in the exposition, it is characteristic of, and functions in the same manner as the transitional theme (example 6). Maisel calls it a "progression theme enduring unlimited repetition and therefore suited to bring about the climax leading to the recapitulation."<sup>4</sup> It has a basically constant harmonic background that varies only in rhythmic design. At measures 84-88 the climactic effect is achieved by presenting the melody in octaves (filled in with chord tones), and by increasing the movement of the accompaniment through the use of sixteenth instead of eighth notes. The recapitulation at measure 89 begins with the first theme of the first subject entering in the tonic key. Measures 89-90 maintain the momentum of the preceding transitional material and one is scarcely aware of the recapitulation beginning at this point. Measure 94 contains a more characteristic statement of the first theme. The second subject enters one half-step higher than it did in the exposition. The recapitulation is relatively short and is followed by the transitional theme which functions here as coda. The movement ends with a series of repeated chords derived from tones of the basic scale. These chords contain intervals of fifths, fourths, and seconds.

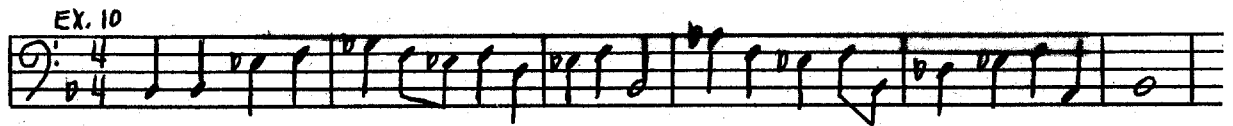
<sup>4</sup>Maisel, p. 277.

A cadence on the chord E flat - B flat - F brings the movement to a close.

In the entire Sonata there are no cadences arrived at through conventional formulae. Daniel Boda, commenting on cadences in the Sonata says, momentary conclusions are achieved by deceleration of movement and decrease in volume or loudness. The chords on F, measure 123, resolving to B flat provide a quasi V-I progression. Similarly the B flat chord resolves to the E flat chord in measure 124. This is a good example of Griffes' disregard for the spelling of chords. The bass note in the chords mentioned above give the only clue to the harmonic progression intended by the composer.

The second movement, "Molto tranquillo", is characterized by Maisel as free in form, but related to the two-part lied form with coda. Boda considers the movement to be in three-part form. There are two distinct sections in the movement, followed by a return of the first theme and an added coda (or transition-like passage). Considering the brief return of the opening theme after the second section, "rounded binary" form might be a more appropriate label. The movement begins with a six-measure theme derived from the basic scale of the work (example 10). This theme is in E flat minor, a key derived by enharmonically spelling notes from the basic scale. A flowing chant-like quality

characterizes this melody. Its conjunct line seems more vocally oriented than other principal themes throughout the Sonata. A repetition of essentially the same melody follows, but it is in  $\frac{5}{4}$  meter and accompanied by arpeggiated chords. Characteristically, the third is omitted from these chords. Maisel refers to them as "harmonic fifths".



At measure 10 begins what is best described as a melodic variation of the first theme. It is also followed by a repetition in  $\frac{5}{4}$  meter and accompanied by arpeggiated chords. The following pattern can be observed: measure 135 is to measure 125 as measure 141 is to measure 131. Consequently, the whole movement to this point is a series of variations which relate not only to the initial theme, but to each other. At measure 146 the second major section of the movement begins. This section is based upon motives derived from the theme at measure 146 (example 11). Explaining this section, Maisel has divided it into four variations whose unifying factor is the motive F sharp -- F natural, followed by a descending scale pattern.<sup>5</sup> Note that this motive initially appears at measure 147 as G flat -- F.

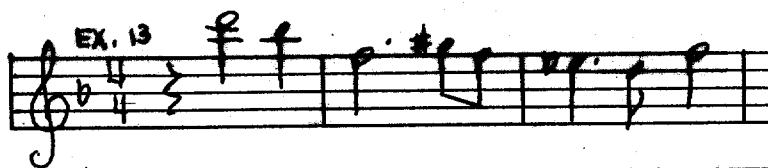
<sup>5</sup>Maisel, p. 277.



Maisel is obviously relating it to the basic scale. It is possible that the unifying element in this section is a rhythmic one (example 12), because it dominates every recurring statement of the initial theme. There is a distinct contrast between the two sections of this movement.



The second section is more rhythmic and a good deal more development is evidenced, as can be observed in measures 156-160. Movement is generated through the use of shorter notes in the accompaniment parts, measures 152-155. At measure 162 a melody marked "tranquillo" enters (example 13).



It bears only slight resemblance to the rest of the section, and appears to be a transitional passage leading to a re-statement of the initial theme of the movement. At measure 161 a lengthy B flat ostinato-like accompaniment acts as a dominant preparation for the return of the initial theme.

This theme returns in E flat minor, at measure 174. Measures 180 to the end of the movement appear more transitional than coda-like. This passage is curious in that it cadences on E flat, the key of the second movement; yet aurally one gets the impression of transition to the third movement which begins in the key of D. The cadence implies a coda while the acceleration of tempo suggests transition. This increase of tempo heralds the beginning of the third movement, "Allegro vivace".

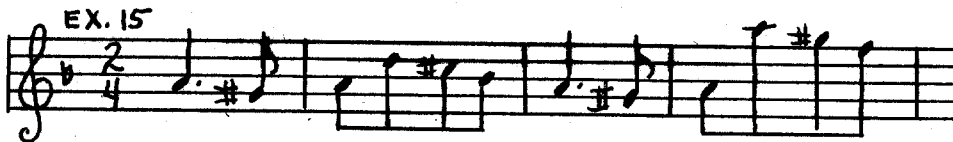
The studies of Maisel and Boda have been referred to several times in this chapter, to point out their conclusions regarding form in the movements. Still other writers have different opinions but their studies are not as definitive, and are therefore less useful for an understanding of this work. Both Maisel and Boda refer to the third movement as cast in modified sonata form. Their point of disagreement centers about what modifications were employed by Griffes. Maisel considers the movement as sonata form without recapitulation, while Boda definitely refers to a recapitulation. The following analysis presents this writer's conclusions with traditional terms employed solely as a matter of convenience.

Measures 197-201 contain the first subject, the primary thematic material from which other themes are

derived (example 14). The first five notes provide a rhythmic motive which is used in developmental fashion throughout the movement. In measures 201-203, melodic fragments appear in the treble while the accompaniment parts emphasize the rhythm from the first five notes of the theme.



The second through the tenth notes comprise an important melodic motive (example 15). This melody enters at measure 220 and functions as did the second theme of the first subject in the first movement. This theme is introduced by an ostinato figure, measures 216-219. The melody of this figure is the same as the first three notes of the second theme.



A series of B flat chords, measures 234-237, introduce the second subject which enters at measure 238 (example 16).



Its first three notes appear to be derived from the first subject. This theme appears to be in B flat, a conclusion that is confirmed by the cadence at measure 262. The

melody is developed in various keys through measure 261 where a restatement of the first subject appears. Maisel considers this the beginning of a second exposition. The absence of a double bar at the end of measure 263 suggests the following material is still part of the exposition. It could however, be considered the beginning of a development section. At measure 287 a melody in the bass is similar in character to the transitional passages in the first movement, and leads to a rhythmic variation of the second subject at measure 304. If Maisel's conclusions are accurate, measure 321 would have to be considered the beginning of the development section. In this writer's opinion, it marks the beginning of a recapitulation section. Of greater interest however, is the appearance at measure 338 of the transitional theme from the second movement, followed by a "lento" section which bears some of the characteristics of the transitional theme from the first movement. These transitional passages enhance the unity of the entire work. They lead, here in the third movement, to the second subject marked "tempo primo", at measure 363. The section marked "presto" at measure 379 begins a finale, or coda. It is made up basically of melodic material from the second subject, and its most striking feature is the syncopation that provides rhythmic drive through measure 410.

The Sonata ends in the key of D, the tonality emphasized by the continual reiteration of D throughout the last eleven measures. Measures 411 to the end are basically D major. The continual repetition of F sharp indicates the mode Griffes intended, even though he omitted the third in the last three measures. In measures 413-415, the chords that are not D major appear to be constructed of notes that represent appoggiatura tones to the tonic chord.

This movement has been characterized by some studies as rhapsodic, a term which may be applicable considering the reservations that must be made when trying to analyze it in classical sonata form.

#### SUMMARY

The Sonata marked Griffes' departure from his earlier impressionistic style. Its thematic material and harmonies are derived from an arbitrary scale. The work demonstrates Griffes' increasing use of linear writing. In contrast to earlier piano pieces, programmatic in character, the Sonata is an abstract work labeled by some writers, "neo-classic". Although the composer called it a sonata in one movement, the work does contain three separate sections which are usually referred to as movements. In 1919 Griffes orchestrated the second movement, to which he gave the title, Nocturne.

Compared with current innovations in American music, the Sonata may not seem radical in style (as it did to critics in 1918), but high quality of craftsmanship has won it a secure place in American music.

CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF GRIFFES' STYLE

## MELODY

In his piano compositions Griffes consistently employed original melodies derived from major and minor scales. Several works, however, contain melody based upon whole-tone scales. The Sonata is the only piano work that consists of melody based entirely upon an arbitrary scale. Chromaticism is prominent throughout all the piano music. Descending chromatic scales make up a principal motive in the The White Peacock, and are also frequently employed as countermelodies in other numbers. Chromatic notes often function as appoggiaturas and passing tones within the basic major and minor scales.

Griffes' melodies are generally made up of short phrases, which contain sharply defined motives that lend themselves well to development. The most notable exception is the opening theme in The Fountain of the Acqua Paola, which is a flowing song-like melody. Periods consisting of antecedent and consequent phrases appear most often in the opening sections. The middle sections generally contain a single phrase, which is developed by repetition and variation of motives from that phrase. Griffes writes primarily conjunct melodies consisting of short motives, which are used as developmental material.

## ACCOMPANIMENT FIGURES

Griffes employs a wide variety of accompaniment figures within each number, which lends contrast to the basically static harmony of each section. Extended arpeggios and ostinato figures constitute the techniques most consistently used. They provide animation where the melody is generally slow-moving. When the melody of a new section is similar to that of the preceding one, a change in the style of accompaniment furnishes the element of contrast in the new section.

Griffes usually writes melodies in the treble over an accompaniment in the bass. However, in The Fountain of the Acqua Paola nearly all of the accompaniment is in the treble. This technique contributes to the general mood suggested by the title. Other accompaniment devices include repeated chord patterns and chords that move with the melody in a chorale-like fashion. The simplest accompaniments occur in the Sonata, where Griffes employs a more linear texture in his work.

## HARMONY AND TONALITY

Throughout the published piano works Griffes indicates the basic tonality by the key signature. Each number begins and ends in the tonic key. Occasionally a final chord with

the third omitted leaves doubt as to the intended mode. In one instance Griffes employs a "Picardy third" in the final cadence. Final chords often contain one or more non-harmonic tones. The most common tone added is the sixth. Others include the fourth and seventh degrees of the tonic key. The last measure of The White Peacock contains two notes, which represent the roots of the tonic and supertonic chords.

In works which are impressionistic in style, Griffes most frequently employs the following techniques; parallel movement of color chords, polychords, unconventional chord progressions, numerous cross relations, and bitonal passages. Color chords are employed in short passages that function as transition to new material or to repetition of preceding phrases. They are usually sequential dominant chords containing a variety of altered tones. Polychords appear to function primarily as color. They are often the result of appoggiatura chords sounding simultaneously with the chord to which they are related. Accented appoggiatura chords and tones provide much of the dissonance found in Griffes' music. Chord progressions are frequently governed by the stepwise movement of bass notes. Dominant to tonic progressions are used within the music, but rarely occur at cadence points. Griffes occasionally uses deceptive cadences to modulate to a new key. This

usually occurs between sections of the work. A common progression throughout the piano pieces is to chords whose roots are a third (or enharmonically equivalent to a third) apart from the preceding chord. Chords in parallel motion are often related to an established tonality through the use of a pedal point.

Pedal points represent the most consistent harmonic device employed by Griffes. They nearly always indicate the root of the tonic chord. Repeated chords in the bass and ostinato figures are frequently employed to sustain the basic harmony in polychordal passages. Griffes generally keeps the basic harmony in the accompaniment. Non-harmonic material is presented in the other parts. If the accompaniment consists of an arpeggiated polychord, the non-harmonic chord lies above the basic harmony.

Final cadences, as indicated above, rarely progress from dominant to tonic. The final cadence of Nightfall is mediant to tonic. In The Lake at Evening it is subdominant to tonic, and in The White Peacock the cadence consists primarily of an arpeggiation of the supertonic ninth chord with no apparent cadential formula. Characteristically, Griffes avoids leading tones in cadences.

The dominant chord literally dominates every number. If one disregards the tonic pedal points discussed above,

one finds the bulk of the harmony throughout every section to be dominant. These chords do not always function as dominants, but in sound and spelling they are either seventh, ninth, eleventh, or thirteenth chords. The most common forms employed by Griffes are the dominant with raised fifth, and the half-diminished seventh chords. The addition of the seventh, ninth, and eleventh to the augmented triad results in "whole-tone" sound. This chord was used most effectively in Night Winds, where nearly all of the piece can be characterized as "whole-tone." When the tonic chord appears, it is usually modified by an added sixth, seventh, or raised fourth. In Clouds the tonic chord has a raised root that sounds simultaneously with the normal root. With the exception of the added sixth, all other non-harmonic tones in tonic chords have a tendency to resolve chromatically. The tonic chord frequently appears with the third omitted. Griffes often implies the tonic triad by employing the root of that chord as a pedal point. Polychordal effects result from the occurrence of a chord over a pedal point that is not a member of that chord. In The White Peacock a type of polychord results from an arpeggiated chord containing both major and minor thirds. In Sonata the chords are derived entirely from the arbitrary scale, but they often resemble chords from conventional scales. Probably the most striking feature of Griffes'

harmonic vocabulary is the almost total absence of simple triadic harmony. Nearly every chord is modified by the addition of tones which color the harmony. In chords where tones are not added the third is usually omitted. Parallelism and chromaticism account for much of the impressionistic sound in Griffes' music. While dominant chords represent the most frequently employed harmony, subdominant chords occur least often.

Traditional contrapuntal techniques are seldom prominent features in Griffes' music. Except for several measures of canonic writing in Barcarolle, counterpoint consists primarily of countermelodies in the accompaniment parts.

#### FORM

The most consistent element in Griffes' piano music lies in the overall form of each piece. With the exception of the Sonata every number ends with a recapitulation of one or more of the principal themes from the first section. This recapitulation rounds out the work and gives it the character of a large ternary form. The re-statement of the opening material is not always literal. Often it is shortened and sometimes presented with a different style of accompaniment. The large middle sections are not easily explained in terms of traditional form. In the Three Tone

Pictures the middle section appears to be a development of the first section. In the Fantasy Pieces and the Roman Sketches the middle sections consist of a variety of short themes, that bear little relation to each other. These themes tend to impart a rhapsodic character to the pieces. Daniel Boda considers the Roman Sketches to be cast in arch form. While there is some basis for this conclusion, it cannot be reached without taking into account sections that do not fit that pattern. This writer has considered it sufficient to describe each component of the middle sections without attempting to define in traditional terminology its relationship to the composition as a whole. If an obvious relationship exists it has been noted in the discussion of the individual numbers.

#### PIANISTIC QUALITY OF THE MUSIC

Griffes was an outstanding pianist. He understood the capabilities and limitations of both the instrument and the performer. This accounts for the fact that his compositions "sound" well on the piano. Because he had small hands, he was not inclined to write passages that required extremely large reaches for the hand. There are some chords that encompass a tenth, but the average player can execute them with little difficulty. The White Peacock contains the only

instance of numerous chords requiring long reaches. Griffes provided all the fingerings, pedal markings, and tempo indications that appear in the printed scores. By observing these markings, any competent pianist can master the music knowing his performance is essentially as Griffes intended it to be.

Although the composer arranged several of the pieces for orchestra and chamber ensemble, they remain generally more effective as piano solos. The orchestral arrangement of The White Peacock has been frequently performed on concert programs. It has been recorded on Columbia records by the Columbia Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra with Howard Barlow conducting, and on R.C.A. Victor records by the Eastman-Rochester Symphony Orchestra with Howard Hanson conducting.

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