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UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI

August 28, 1971

I hereby recommend that the thesis prepared under my supervision by Douglas Dorrance Anman

entitled The Choral Music of Ross Lee Finney

be accepted as fulfilling this part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

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THE CHORAL MUSIC OF ROSS LEE FINNEY (1906--)

Presented by

Douglas Dorrance Amman

To fulfill the thesis requirement for the degree of

Doctor of Musical Arts

College-Conservatory of Music

of the

University of Cincinnati

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PREFACE

Ross Lee Finney has made a significant contribution to twentieth-century American music. His works have been performed by major symphony orchestras and choruses and have been programmed in the leading colleges and universities. His students have gained a considerable reputation as teachers and as composers.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the choral works of Finney and their place in contemporary choral literature. A careful examination of periodical literature and books has revealed that very little material on these choral works is presently available. This thesis presents an analytical study of the choral pieces with the hope that a wider audience of conductors will program them in concert.

The discussion of Finney's choral works is in chronological order, showing the growth and maturation of his compositional style. In addition to the analysis of the pieces, there is some discussion of their performance practice.

I would like to express my gratitude to Professors Elmer Thomas and Paul Cooper of the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati for their invaluable guidance in this thesis. I am greatly indebted to Ross Lee

Finney, who granted me a personal interview at Ann Arbor, Michigan. Finally a special note of thanks is due my wife, Jean, for her assistance and encouragement in preparing this thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Born in Wells, Minnesota, on December 23, 1906, Ross Lee Finney was first exposed to music with piano and cello lessons. His mother, according to Finney, never discouraged his improvising at the piano during those early days. By the age of twelve, he was the cellist of a trio which played "one-night stands" in small communities of the Midwest. In 1912, the family had moved to North Dakota, where Finney's father served as a Methodist minister until 1919. Later, his father became a sociologist, which people confused with a "socialist." They expressed their displeasure by throwing stones through the windows of the Finney home.¹

After studying composition with Donald Ferguson at the University of Minnesota in 1924, Finney spent the next three years at Carleton College where he received his Bachelor of Arts degree (Later Carleton would award him an L. H. D.). By playing in a jazz band, he worked his way to Europe to study with Nadia Boulanger. His expenses were partially paid by a Johanson Fellowship. From 1928-29, Finney was at Harvard University, and from 1931-32, he studied with Alban Berg in Vienna.

For almost twenty years (1929-1948), Finney taught theory and courses in the areas of American and contemporary

¹Ross Lee Finney, Personal Interview, Ann Arbor, Michigan, July 16, 1971.

music at Smith College. During his tenure there, he established the Smith College Music Archives and the Valley Music Press. In 1937, Finney was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship and, in the same year, a Pulitzer Fellowship for his String Quartet No. 1 in F Minor (1935). His work was interrupted from 1943-45 by military service with the Office of Strategic Services. He was awarded the Purple Heart and the Certificate of Merit during his military duty. For short periods of time the composer was associated with the faculties of Mount Holyoke College and Amherst College. He received a second Guggenheim Fellowship in 1947.

Henry Onderdonk summarizes Finney's musical style of the early period in this way:

His [Finney's] early music is diatonic and reflects his concern for melody. His studies in the '20's with Nadia Boulanger and in the '30's with Roger Sessions (who has remained his lifelong friend) strongly influenced his musical thought. To develop a style, an artist must be strongly committed in at least one of three directions: to himself, to his time, or to his tradition. Finney's commitment is to all three. When he (later) adopted twelve-tone practice, he maintained his belief in the tonality that had dominated his early scores.¹

The year 1949 marked a significant change in the faculty status of Finney as well as in his compositional style. Appointed as professor composition and composer-in-residence at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor,

Henry Onderdonk, "Aspects of Tonality in the Music of Ross Lee Finney," Perspectives of New Music, VI (1968), 125.

Finney also changed his musical vocabulary from a traditional tertian-oriented system to some form of serial pitch organization. Even then, however, he chose a single note of the row as tonal center, all other pitches being focused on this center of authority.

Over the past twenty years, Finney's music has been commissioned and performed by major symphony orchestras and college musical groups in America. For his most recent works, he has chosen subjects which reflect his early years in North Dakota. Titles of these works include Summer in Valley City, for concert band, dedicated to William Revelli, (1969); Landscapes Remembered, for 13 instruments, (1971); and Spaces (1. The Valley 2. The Prairie 3. The Sky), (1971). His most often performed choral works are Spherical Madrigals (1947) and Edge of Shadow (1959). It is probable that his most recent choral work, The Remorseless Rush of Time (1969), will be well-received because of its excellent musical setting of the ecological text and its small, readily accessible forces of 13 instruments and SATB chorus.

Virgil Thompson, in a new book on American music, includes the following as Finney's important works: four piano sonatas; three sonatas for violin and piano; two sonatas for viola and piano; two sonatas for cello and piano; six string quartets; three symphonies; two piano trios; Eight Poems by Archibald MacLeish, 1935-57; Fantasy for Piano, 1939; Slow Piece, 1941; Symphony-Communique, 1942; Variation,

Fuguing Tune, and Rondo, 1943; Duo for Violin and Piano, 1943; Pilgrim Psalms, 1945; Poor Richard, 1946; Music to be Danced, 1947; Waltzes, 1947; Spherical Madrigals, 1947; Violin Concerto, 1947; Solemn Music, 1948; Three Love Songs, 1948; Piano Quartet, 1948; Piano Concerto, 1948; 36 Songs, 1952; Variations for Piano, 1952; Hymn, Fuguing Tune, and Holiday, 1966; Concerto for Percussion and Orchestra, 1967. Author of The Game of Harmony, 1947.¹

Finney stated in a personal interview that although he has written in many idioms and for different groups, his early Midwestern roots are prevalent in all of his works.

"Simplicity is something natural to my background. Complexity has no virtue to me."²

¹Virgil Thompson, American Music Since 1910 (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970, 1971), p. 143.

²Ross Lee Finney, Personal Interview, Ann Arbor, Michigan, July 16, 1971.

CHAPTER I

DISCUSSION OF EARLY AND UNPUBLISHED CHORAL WORKS

Ross Lee Finney's first choral work, Pole Star for This Year, has never been published. Written in 1939, it is scored for SATB chorus, tenor and alto soloists, and orchestra. It is a setting of a poem by Archibald MacLeish, who has been Finney's close friend and literary source for textual material. This work contains the embryonic stage of compositional techniques which would be developed in some of the later choral works. These compositional materials include quartal-quintal harmony, bitonal structures, major and minor second clashes, modal-tonal combinations, conflicting modes, ostinato patterns, predominance of the E tonal level, diminished seventh chords, and major seventh sonorities.

When the text demands, there are sections that sound like the Roy Harris-Aaron Copland "western American" sonority with its preponderance of open fifths. The basic harmonic structure is tertian, and the formal structure, held together by the recurring ostinato figures, is tight. Although the piece is in E minor basically, it concludes with the picardy third, a typical cadence in Finney's choral works.

The next three choral pieces, all published, are in the same basic compositional style. Since Oh Bury Me Not (SSAA or TTBB, 1940), When the Curtains of Night (SSAA or TTBB, 1940), and Trail to Mexico (TTBB, 1941) were composed

for high school-college glee clubs, they are based on American subjects and are intended to interest these particular choral forces. They are basically homophonic, written in traditional tertian harmony with much use of major and minor seventh chords. The texture is quite thick with some division of parts as shown in example one from *Trail to Mexico*:

Example 1. Trail to Mexico, Measures 10-12.

The musical score for Example 1, Measures 10-12 of *Trail to Mexico*, is written for SATB chorus and organ. The score is in 4/4 time and features a baritone solo and first & second basses. The lyrics are "mile. ah hm hm" and "Twas in the year of eight- y". The score includes dynamic markings such as *dim.*, *pp*, *p*, and *pp*. The organ part is in the bass clef, and the vocal parts are in the treble clef. The baritone solo is marked "Baritone Solo". The first & second basses are marked "1st & 2nd Basses".

Stylistic devices of the 30's and 40's, such as glissandos, grace notes, tenutos, and subito dynamic changes, are all present in these works.

An additional unpublished choral work is Immortal Autumn (1952), also a setting of a poem by Archibald MacLeish. This work, scored for SATB chorus, tenor solo, and organ, is similar to Pilgrim Psalms in that it is based on a pre-existing melody entitled "Oh lovely appearance of Death," which Finney had sung in his early years. The song comes from the evangelical period of "the great awakening" in religion, and Finney has cleverly hidden the hymn tune in this piece by writing it backwards. By 1952, Finney was

already writing most of his works with a serial technique. Even in Immortal Autumn, which does not use serial pitch organization, Finney uses a variant of the serial technique, the retrograde device.

Finney again implements seventh and ninth chords, major and minor seconds, contrary motion, predominantly homophonic textures, and divisi of parts in duet-like sections. He uses text painting mainly through combining different sets of voices to create different colors of sonority.

CHAPTER II

ANALYSIS OF PRE-DODECAPHONIC CHORAL WORKS

Ross Lee Finney wrote two major choral works prior to his change of compositional style to the dodecaphonic system in 1950. These works are Pilgrim Psalms (1945) and Spherical Madrigals (1947). He also composed a short canon, Words to Be Spoken, in 1946.

The Pilgrim Psalms are a group of fifteen compositions based on the melodies and texts of the Ainsworth Psalter, which was published in 1612 and brought to America by the Pilgrims in 1620. Some of the Pilgrim Psalms can be performed (and are published) separately, while others are composed in segue with another of the Psalms. Finney originally scored these pieces for chorus, soloists, and organ, but he has since orchestrated them for strings and brass. He has utilized different types of choral groups throughout the work. Some of the Psalms may be sung unaccompanied, while others are sung with the organ as an integral part of the composition. Appendix B shows the type of voicing for each of the fifteen psalms.

The texts in the Ainsworth Psalter are written in the English of the Puritans, who had little concern for verbal effect. Finney retains the old spelling and archaic English for the textual material of his Pilgrim Psalms. The quaintness of the text lends the twentieth-century

music a flavor of the past.

Finney handles the psalm tunes in a technique sometimes similar to Bach's setting of chorale melodies. For example, Psalm XXIV begins with an instrumental introduction, followed by the psalm tune stated in the unison voices accompanied by organ. However, Finney's own techniques are apparent in Psalm C where he fragmentizes the psalm tune and uses it throughout the piece at different tonal levels, in different voice parts, and in various rhythmic patterns.

Finney obscures the psalm tune in Psalm CXXXVII by repeating enough notes of the tune in ostinato fashion to conceal its presence. This repetition is similar to the permutation of a tone row found in Finney's later works. Below is an example of this treatment as seen in the organ part of Psalm CXXXVII:

Example 2. Pilgrim Psalms, Page 19.

Largo espressivo ($\text{♩} = 40$)

Organ (Piano) *pp*

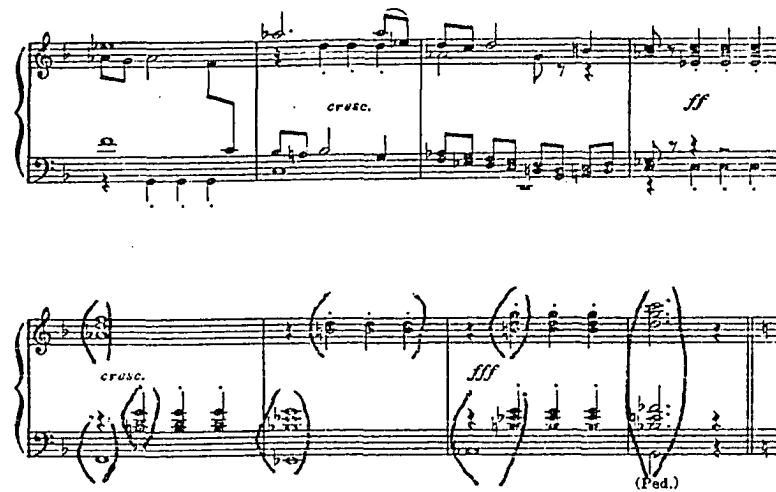
(Ped.)

TENOR SOLO *mp*

Je - ho-vah's song - how sing shal wee -

The Pilgrim Psalms are composed within the tertian harmonic system with some areas using an expansion of this tertian situation. In the last four measures of Psalm C, Finney employs a G ninth chord (G-B-D-F-A^b), an E^b seventh chord (E^b-G-B^b/B-D), and a thirteenth chord built on G (G-B-D-[F]-A^b-C-E^b):

Example 3. Pilgrim Psalms, Page 76.



Even though these sonorities sound somewhat bitonal or quartal-quintal, they all include a strong G-B/B^b-D triadic structure. Other sections of the Pilgrim Psalms contain similar expansions of the tertian sonorities, as in example four, which uses B^b seventh chords and C seventh chords in an antiphonal structure:

Example 4. Pilgrim Psalms, Page 43.

The musical score is arranged in five systems. The first four systems are vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass) with the lyrics "Come, let us showt, Come, let us showt,". The fifth system is for the organ, with a solo part marked "(Solo)" and a full reeds part marked "f (Full reeds)". The organ part includes a guitar-like texture marked "(Gt.)" and a mandolin-like texture marked "(Mand.)".

Another important compositional technique found in the Pilgrim Psalms is a mixing of modes. In the organ prelude of Psalm I, for example, Finney mingles E minor, dorian on E, mixolydian on E, and E major. The result is an interesting combination of consonance and dissonance created by the conflict of modes. Finney seems to use the mixing of modes more often in the polyphonically constructed sections and the quartal-quintal harmony in the homophonic areas. In a unison chorus-organ piece, Psalm CL, the composer uses E dorian, E minor, and G major in a mixed mode situation with elements of bitonality. Later in the piece, one finds D major, D mixolydian, and D minor. Psalm LI is quite slow (half note--40 m.m.) in long, Renaissance-like lines combining dorian on D and D minor. This psalm concludes with a strong dorian cadence on a picardy third D major as the final sonority.

Many of the Pilgrim Psalms begin in a different tonal area than the key signature indicates. Psalm XCV has a key signature of one flat, but it begins mixolydian on G, then moves to a bitonal section, and returns to G mixolydian. After short, repeated sections in D minor, C major, E^b major, and D major, the piece ends with a strong mixolydian cadence on G.

The first piece, Psalm XXIV, is in four sharps, but the first six measures are in D major with the next twelve measures using mixolydian on E within a quartal-quintal situation. Finally, when the psalm tune enters in measure thirteen, a strong E major tonality is established. After the psalm tune has been stated, Finney restates the introductory material in the dominant B major and presents the psalm tune partly in the mediant key (G[#] major) before cadencing in E major again. Then the introductory material is finally stated in the key of the piece, E major. The psalm cadences on the dominant in preparation for the next psalm, which is also in the tonal level of E (minor).

It is helpful to examine the psalms and their key relationships:

Table 1. Tonal Levels of Pilgrim Psalms

<u>Signature</u>	<u>Opening Material</u>	<u>Final Cadence</u>
I. 4 sharps	D major	B major
II. 1 sharp	e minor	E major (picardy)
III. 1 flat	d minor	d minor
IV. none	d minor	D major
V. none	g mixolydian	C major
VI. 1 sharp	e minor	E major (picardy)
VII. 1 sharp	G major-e dorian	D major
VIII. 1 flat	g mixolydian	g mixolydian
IX. 1 flat	d minor	D major (picardy)
X. 1 flat	d minor	d minor
XI. 3 sharps	D major-F major	D major (picardy)
XII. none	d minor-d dorian	D major (picardy)
XIII. 1 flat	F major	F major
XIV. 1 flat	F major-C major	C major
XV. 1 flat	F major	F major

This table shows that ten of the fifteen psalms are written in a tonal area of D, E or F, and that five of the fifteen end with a picardy third. In Spherical Madrigals, Finney uses an even higher concentration of the E tonal level and employs more picardy third cadences. It is also interesting to note that in six of the fifteen psalms, he begins in a different tonal area than the key signature suggests. This technique is effective in that it creates anticipation of the main tonal area. Not listed on the chart are the many key areas that Finney covers within a piece with little emphasis on modulation. Again, mixed modes and quartal-quintal harmonies create interesting changes of tonal level.

The use of ground bass is illustrated in Psalm CXXXVII, for tenor and organ:

Example 5. Pilgrim Psalms, Page 20.

ru - sa - lem, if I doo thee For - get, for - get —

let my right hand. — Cleav

let my tongue to my pa - lat, —

If I doo not in mind thee

The ground bass is stated nine times in the entire piece.

The fifth and seventh statements are in the dominant area of A, and the sixth statement is in the leading tone area.

Most of this psalm remains in D minor with some shifting to dorian on D and to other tonal levels.

One of the major differences between the Pilgrim Psalms and the Spherical Madrigals is the rhythmic element. The Madrigals are controlled by the neo-Renaissance tactus,

whereas the Psalms are more Baroque-oriented with a particular rhythmic pattern stated at the beginning of each psalm and reiterated throughout. There is far more employment of multimeters in the Psalms. In Psalm CL, for example, Finney changes meter every measure:

Example 6. Pilgrim Psalms, Page 42.



In Psalm XCV, he uses 3/4, 3/8, 4/4, and 5/4 within a span of seven measures.

The Pilgrim Psalms employ a rhythmic element which may be found throughout Finney's works, namely $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} | \text{○} |$ with variants thereof. Finney also uses rests to create energy in the music as seen in the opening and closing sections of Psalm XXIV:

Example 7. Pilgrim Psalms, Page 7.

A musical score for multiple measures of music. The notation is on a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The music features a complex, multi-measure rhythm with various note values and rests. The score is marked with a 'C' time signature and a 'C' key signature. The music is written in a Baroque style, with a focus on rhythmic complexity. The score includes a 'marcato' marking and a 'f (Full with reeds)' marking. The score also includes a '(Ped.)' marking and a '(♩ = ♩ throughout)' marking.

The tempos of the fifteen psalms vary from a quarter note metronome marking of 40 in Psalm CXXXVII, to a quarter note metronome marking of 192 in Psalm V. Finney seems to write mostly fast or slow tempos with few pieces being at moderate tempos. Six of the psalms are under a marking of 60 and four are over a marking of 100.

The Pilgrim Psalms offer much variety of texture simply because of the different combinations of voicings. Of the fifteen pieces within the work, two are unison; two are four-part men's voicing; one is four-part women's voices; one is a six-part mixed voicing; one is a mixed double choir voicing; five are mixed voices (four-part); and one is a tenor solo with organ. The remaining two are for solo organ. Also within some of the pieces, Finney varies the voicings for special effects. For example, Psalm XCV is basically for four-part mixed voices, but in some sections, Finney writes an SSA-TTB voicing with an antiphonal effect. In Psalm XCCVIII he substitutes an SSAA-TTBB voicing in sections of a mixed four-part orchestration, again within an antiphonal structure. In the women's chorus piece, Psalm I, and in one of the men's choruses, Psalm LV, Finney presents another dimension of voicings with a solo voice written either as a part of the four-part structure or as a separate solo line against the four parts.

Although many of the Pilgrim Psalms are in a homophonic texture, there are some examples of polyphonic writing.

In Psalm LI, there is frequent use of duets between the treble sonority of the sopranos and tenors and the darker color of the altos and basses. Approximately three-fourths of this psalm moves in polyphonic lines contrasting the two sonorities. The two organ pieces are also polyphonically constructed with many instances of two voice structures moving in thirds, contrasting with each other through the color changes of the organ registration:

Example 8. Pilgrim Psalms, Page 70.



Finney creates another texture change in the alternation of a cappella and organ sonorities within the work. In the fifteen psalms, eight employ the organ and seven are unaccompanied. An almost symmetrical balance is maintained.

The Psalms contain no extended fugal passages. The imitative sections are not developed, but are contrasted instead with homophonic sections. There are several pieces, such as Psalm C, where one voice states an idea with the other three voices imitating it homophonically:

Example 9. Pilgrim Psalms, Page 73.

The musical score is arranged in three systems, each containing five staves. The lyrics are written below the staves, with some lines appearing on multiple staves to indicate a call-and-response or lining-out style. The lyrics are as follows:

System 1:
 Staff 1: Serv ye Je - ho - vah with glad - nes; Showt to Je -
 Staff 2: Serv ye Je - ho - vah with glad - nes; Showt to Je -
 Staff 3: Serv ye Je - ho - vah with glad - nes; Showt to Je - ho - vah,
 Staff 4: earth; with glad - nes; Showt to Je -
 Staff 5: (Piano accompaniment)

System 2:
 Staff 1: ho - vah, al the earth; Serv ye Je - ho - vah with glad -
 Staff 2: ho - vah, al the earth; Serv ye Je - ho - vah with glad -
 Staff 3: al the earth; Serv ye Je - ho - vah with glad -
 Staff 4: ho - vah, al the earth; Serv ye Je - ho - vah with glad -
 Staff 5: (Piano accompaniment)

System 3:
 Staff 1: nes; Serv ye Je - ho - vah with glad -
 Staff 2: nes; Showt to Je - ho - vah, al the earth,
 Staff 3: nes; Serv ye Je - ho - vah with glad -
 Staff 4: nes; Serv ye Je - ho - vah with glad -
 Staff 5: (Piano accompaniment)

Finney's style of composition in this example is similar to the practice of "lining-out" which was used in seventeenth-century England, Scotland, and New England. "Lining-out" means that the minister or some other educated person of the day read the psalm one line at a time and was then answered by the congregation:

The Rev. John Cotton, in his treatise Singing of Psalms a Gospel Ordinance (Boston, 1647), granted that "where all have books and can reade, or else can say the Psalm by heart, it were needless then to reade each line of the Psalm beforehand in order to singing." But where this is not the case, he adds, "it will be a necessary helpe, that the lines of the Psalm, be openly read beforehand, line after line, or two lines together, that so they who want either books or skill to reade, may know what is to be sung, and joyne with the rest in the dutie of singing."¹

Much of the texture of the Psalms is controlled by the influence of the psalm tunes themselves. Since this work is based on the melodies of the psalm tunes, it is obvious that the melodic material would be quite diatonic with combinations of modal and tonal oriented tunes on D, E, and F levels. All of the original melodic material is in longer note values contrasted many times with smaller note values in the supplementary musical material.

The formal structure of the Psalms is controlled mainly by the psalm tunes themselves. Therefore, most of the Psalms are basically throughcomposed. However, Finney does use repetition of the psalm tune material, usually at differing levels as shown below in a chart based on Psalm XCCCVII:

Musical Material	A	Ai	Aii	B	Bi	Bii	C	D	Di	E	F	G	H
Beginning Pitch Level	d	a	d	d	d	f	d	c	d	d	d	d	d

In Psalm V, the A material is stated four times in the beginning psalm tune pitch levels of G, A, B, and E.

¹Gilbert Chase, America's Music (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1955), p. 31.

The B material is composed at the levels of E, A, and E followed by the C material at the level of G. The piece concludes with the D material stated two times at the E level.

Psalm C offers the most interesting formal structure as shown below:

Musical Material	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Ai</u>	<u>Bi</u>	<u>Aii</u>	<u>Bii</u>	<u>Aiii</u>	<u>Biii</u>	<u>Aiv</u>	<u>Biv</u>
Beginning Pitch Level	f	a	c	g	f	a	c	g	f	a

Musical Material	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>Development section</u>					<u>Ci</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>Coda</u>
Beginning Pitch Level	f	c	bitonal and quartal quintal harmonies					c	g	c

This psalm contains the most dissonant section in the entire work. The chief reason for this dissonance is the developmental section where the composer is free to use his most creative insights.

Another structural element found in these works is the neo-Baroque ritornel principle. This technique occurs in the two unison choruses, Psalms XXIV and CL, when the opening organ material is stated before the entrance of the voices and then is repeated, sometimes at different pitch levels, at intervals throughout the piece.

The composer makes the following statement concerning the origin and performance of the Pilgrim Psalms:

These melodies are among America's greatest folk heritage. They have influenced sacred singing through each century. When one sings the First Psalm with lute or guitar accompaniment, it seems no great leap to such folk spirituals as "Wayfaring Stranger" or "I Wonder as I Wander." Here, indeed, in these psalm melodies, is a rich supply of spiritual song that may perhaps lead the Protestant composer of America to religious music.

"Pilgrim Psalms" grew slowly from my deep love of this material. I would make no pretense that they either improve upon these old tunes or make music that can be labeled American. I only hope that my settings have not spoiled the spirit of the original songs. Great care has been taken to evolve a style that springs both from the old melodies and from my own emotional feelings. The quaint charm of the words which comes from the old spelling and from a certain awkwardness in matching poetic to musical accent, may at first be a problem for the singer; but in time, as with all such primitive qualities in folk music, the singer will not wish them different....

I would not pretend that the Puritan would approve of the treatment that I have given his psalms. He was too concerned with the literal meaning of the Biblical text to permit such freedom as I have taken. But perhaps the modern audience, in realizing the beauty of these melodies, will be less inclined to think of his Puritan ancestors as unmusical and uncontributive to the musical culture of our country.¹

Although the Pilgrim Psalms were published in 1946, most were composed before Finney's military service in World War II. Upon his return from the war, he avoided subjects which were derived from nationalistic feelings. He believed that nationalism had created world-wide chaos.²

¹Ross Lee Finney, Preface to Pilgrim Psalms Score (New York: Carl Fischer, Inc., 1946).

²Ross Lee Finney, Personal Interview, Ann Arbor, Michigan, July 16, 1971.

A very short canon based on a MacLeish text was written by Finney in 1946. This piece entitled Words to Be Spoken appears in a collection of 38 contemporary canons published in 1947. This collection includes canons by Alberto Ginastera, Paul Hindemith, Vincent Persichetti, Quincy Porter, Randall Thompson, and others. Finney's canon is a four-voice piece written in a folk-like style in D minor. It concludes with a four-part homophonic coda. The melodic content is very similar to that of Pilgrim Psalms.

The other major choral work of Finney's pre-dodecapronic period is Spherical Madrigals, a set of six pieces based on seventeenth-century English texts using the poetic conceit of the "sphere" or "globe." Four of these madrigals are scored for SATB chorus; one madrigal is a three-part canon for soprano, alto, and tenor; and one begins antiphonally for SSAA and TTBB.

The first madrigal is in ABA form; the remaining five are throughcomposed. The first, third, and fifth are similar in style whereas the second, fourth, and sixth are each unique in some way. This consistent alternation of similarity and uniqueness creates a symmetry of form, but yet allows diversity of style.

Finney's basic compositional technique in these madrigals is a neo-Renaissance polyphony similar to that of William Byrd, but structured within a twentieth-century

harmonic vocabulary. Finney creates a constant conflict of modes in each madrigal: the fourth madrigal includes melodic minor, natural minor, hypodorian, phrygian, hypophrygian, lydian, and mixolydian. In many cases a major mode is included also. Five out of the six madrigals begin in a minor mode and cadence with a picardy third. The entire work can be analyzed within a tertian harmonic system, but the mixing of modes creates many strong dissonances which are more logically analyzed as modal polyphonic lines. The sixth madrigal is quite different from the others of the set because of the coro spezzato technique, written in a homophonic style. Although basically tertian, this madrigal uses some elements of quartal-quintal harmonic structure. In the fourth madrigal there are definite quartal implications, as shown below:

Example 10. Spherical Madrigals, Page 15.

This example again shows Finney's prime chordal vocabulary as triadic with added sevenths and ninths augmented by

quartal dispositions.

As we have seen in some of the earlier works, Finney seems to favor the tonal center of E. The first and third of the madrigals are composed in the key of E minor. Moreover, the second begins on E and the fourth ends on it.

Some of Finney's recurring compositional techniques, such as third relation, contrary motion, accented passing tones, and suspensions, are apparent in these madrigals. Among his favorite dissonances are two intervals of a second spaced widely, creating a hollow sound. Many times the dissonance is a product of two duets between soprano-alto and tenor-bass or other combinations which clash as a part of the mixed modes. Finney sometimes emphasizes the third of a triad, creating a sonority at once reflective of the Renaissance and of the twentieth century:

Example 11. Spherical Madrigals, Page 11.

8 *animato*

bod - y was an orb, his sub-lime soul, his sub-lime soul -

orb, an orb, his sub-lime soul, his sub-lime soul -

orb, an orb, his sub-lime soul Did move, his sub-lime

bod - y was an orb, his sub-lime soul,

8

Much of the harmonic movement of the Madrigals is a product of the polyphony. In addition to the many imitative sections, Finney employs some strict canon. The second madrigal, which is a three voice canon, begins with E-b-B-F# in a circle of fifths manner, suggesting the programmatic aspects of the text. The title of this madrigal is "All-Circling Point."

Similar to Pilgrim Psalms, the most common rhythmic pattern of these madrigals is ♪ ♪ ♪ | ○ | with innumerable variations. This rhythm creates a thrust forward and gives sense to the sentence structure of the text. There is very little use of syncopation or complex rhythmic patterns in these madrigals.

The tempos of these pieces are varied:



This diagram shows that madrigals one and six have the slowest tactus; two and five have the fastest tactus; and the inside two have the medium tactus. Again the pattern creates a symmetrical balance.

When considering the melodic material of the Madrigals, it is interesting to speculate on its origins. In an article from Musical Quarterly, Paul Cooper states:

Folk music is an interest of the composer that has both depth and breadth. It was initiated, in part, by an early conditioning (the family custom of singing folksongs) and by an innate curiosity about American history Well before the fashion of the 1930's Finney had sung folksongs with guitar and as recently as 1960, he toured communities in Greece as a performer in this medium.¹

Although the melodic material of these madrigals does not sound very folk-like, the indirect influence of the folksong is clear. Most of the melodies are scalar, or built on intervals of thirds, fourths, and fifths. The canon of the second madrigal is perhaps the most disjunct melody in the work with its open fifths beginning. However, it quickly returns to the scale passages and intervals of thirds and fourths. There are very few tritones or major sevenths in these madrigals.

Another probable folksong influence is the use of minor modes. All six of the madrigals are in minor modes (with various conflicts of modes) except for the first half of the last piece which is in A major. The last half is in A minor, cadencing in Finney's favorite tonal level of E. There is overall formal symmetry in the return to the same pitch level as that of the first madrigal. The tonal centers are as follows:

¹Paul Cooper, "The Music of Ross Lee Finney," Musical Quarterly, LIII (1967), 4.

	<u>I</u>	<u>II</u>	<u>III</u>	<u>IV</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>VI</u>
Tonal Center	e	b	e	g	a	A(a)
Final Cadence	E	B	E	g	A	E

This listing shows Finney's seventeenth-century sense of relationship and function with the I-V-I-III-IV-I tonal levels. It is noted that the final cadences reveal his strong feeling for the picardy third with five out of the six madrigals cadencing in a major mode.

The texture of these works is controlled by the polyphony except in the last madrigal. Finney alternates the polyphonic and homophonic sections for variety. The first madrigal can be described as follows:

	<u>Homophonic</u>		<u>Polyphonic</u>
Measures	1-5	Measures	6-13
	14-18		19-25
	26-29		

In many cases the texture consists of note-against-note movement with the exception of one voice, as shown by the opening phrase:

Example 12. Spherical Madrigals, Page 3.

Moderato $\text{♩} = 40$

Soprano *p*
When a - gain all these rare per - fec - tions meet, Com-

Alto *p*
When a - gain all these rare per - fec - tions meet,

Tenor *p*
When a - gain all these _____ rare per - fec - tions meet,

Bass *p*
When a - gain all these rare _____ per-fec-tions meet,

Piano (for rehearsal only) *p*
Moderato $\text{♩} = 40$

Imitative devices occur mostly in duets between the soprano-alto and the tenor-bass parts, thereby creating a contrasting color change. Finney also uses the upper three voices as a moving treble sonority against the bass line. In the four-part imitative sections the composer sometimes uses a cascading technique of entrances from top to bottom or bottom to top:

Example 13. Spherical Madrigals, Page 20.

Example 13 is a musical score for a four-part vocal ensemble (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano. The score is for a section titled "Spherical Madrigals" on page 20. It features a cascading entrance technique where the voices enter in sequence. The lyrics are: "first out of Cha-os sprang", "So smild the", "world first out of Cha-os sprang", "So smild the Dayes, so smild the", "doubt, first out of Cha-os", "So smild the Dayes, so smild the Dayes, so smild the". The tempo/mood is marked "mf marcato".

The sixth madrigal employs the most interesting color changes because of the eight part divisi and the wide range of voicing. The TTBB sonority makes the first statement with the SSAA sonority imitating either one beat later or overlapping the end of the TTBB phrase. All of this section is homophonic, and each phrase is either in an ascending, descending, or arched shape, depending upon the textual implications. On the text "does here Rise" logically the chordal structure moves upward, and on "in a perfect hemisphere" it

is shaped more like an arch. There are extremely wide spacings of two octaves and a minor third in both the men's and women's sections, suggesting the broad expanse of the earth:

Example 14. Spherical Madrigals, Page 29.

The musical score is for a piece titled "Spherical Madrigals" on page 29. It features five staves. The first four staves are vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass) and the fifth is a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are: "sphere, does rise a Hem - i - sphere!." and "does rise In a per - fect Hem - i - sphere!". The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff* (fortissimo), *p* (piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *ff* (fortissimo). The piano part features wide intervals, including two octaves and a minor third, as mentioned in the text.

In these works are many examples of neo-Renaissance text painting. The words "so ravished with delight" employ dissonances on the first three words and then resolve to a major chord on "delight:"

Example 15. Spherical Madrigals, Page 5.

20 *mf* Who is not then so rav-ish'd with de-light, *poco rit.*

mf Who is not then so rav-ish'd with de-light, *f*

then so rav-ish'd with de-light, *mp* Ev'n of thy

then, who is not then so rav-ish'd with de-light, *f*

20 *mf* *poco rit.* *mp*

Another example is found on the text "whose regular motions better to our view, then Archimedes' sphere, the heavens did show." Here Finney uses an imitative lydian mode on G^b for the first part of the text and then contrasts with a homophonic C major structure on "heavens did show."

There are many examples of text painting on words concerning circles. These include "On a round ball" (ascending-descending melodic minor scale); "the jolly yeare led round in his great circle" (contrary motion); and "a line more circular" (arch-shaped melodic line).

Appendix C includes a listing of the titles and authors of the poetic texts upon which the Madrigals are based.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF DODECAPHONIC CHORAL WORKS

Ross Lee Finney wrote four large choral-instrumental works, all composed within the dodecaphonic system: Edge of Shadow (1959), Still Are New Worlds (1962), The Martyr's Elegy (1966), and The Remorseless Rush of Time (1969). The duration of each work and the forces used are listed in Appendix D.

Texts for these works come from English sources with the exception of a portion of Still Are New Worlds, which employs a text of Albert Camus. Edge of Shadow is based on The Hamlet of Archibald MacLeish. It is concerned with man's mortality and hence his utter helplessness in finding answers to the ancient questions about life. Man looks to the sun, which merely laughs, and to the constellations, which only stare back emptily, for answers. The text ends with the prayer of man to an unseen Being, "Have pity upon us!"

The most complex text setting of all Finney's choral works is found in Still Are New Worlds. The text is based on quotations used by Marjorie Hope Nicolson, a close friend of Finney's wife, in The Breaking of the Circle (1914), with the exception of a quotation from The Myth of Sisyphus by Albert Camus. Here man attempts to understand the world about him. Even though he finds beauty and majesty in the universe, he questions a belief in God because he is disturbed

by his own rationalism and scientific discoveries. Glenn D. McGeoch, in his notes for the premiere performance of the work, skillfully interprets the miscellaneous series of quotations to show Finney's handling of the diverse texts:

In Part I, man is enchanted by the mystery and beauty of the universe. He observes the sun "of all orbs most excellent...the heart of the world" (Kepler); the earth "warmed by the sun... and moistened by the rain" that produces living things (Harvey); and "the wondrous architecture of the world" (Marlowe). "Man hath weaved a net and made the heavens his own" (Donne); "he is not blamed for searching to find ways of God" (Milton), or for questioning "if we are but part of a vaster universe" (Fontenelle). He comes finally to the realization that "Still are new worlds further than the furthest thought of men can traverse" (More). Part I ends with the disturbing realization of the infinite extension of space.

In Part II, man seeks the aid of science to find the meaning of this new, seemingly imponderable world. "Without mathematical language--triangles, circles and other geometrical figures--one wanders in vain through a dark labyrinth" (Galileo). "Let numbers, figures, motion's laws" reveal "each secret cause" (Akenside); "take heed, and do not aspire to immortal life but exhaust the limits of the possible" (Pindar). But science that was to teach us everything ends in disillusionment and hypothesis. "All the knowledge on earth will give...nothing to assure possession of the world" (Camus). Modern man, in danger of a future "flaming...with hideous ruin, and combustion--leaving regions of sorrow... where peace...can never dwell" asks in his perplexity "how to justify the ways of God to men" (Milton).¹

Finney's text for The Martyr's Elegy comes from Shelley's Adonais. Shelley wrote Adonais to mourn the loss of Keats,

¹Glenn D. McGeoch, Unnumbered Pages in Back of Piano-Vocal Score to Still Are New Worlds (New York: C. F. Peters Corp., 1963).

whom Shelley believed to have been persecuted and indeed killed by the harsh critics of the day. According to Shelley, all of nature, too, mourns at the passing of Keats, even though now "hate...pain/Can touch him not." In the poem, Shelley deals with his concept of eternity as "the pure spirit" flowing "back to the burning fountain whence it came." Keats is now "a portion of the Eternal, which must glow/Through time and change." Again Finney shows his preoccupation with texts which deal with man's attempt to understand the immensities of life.

The idea for The Remorseless Rush of Time is derived mainly from Thomas Wolfe's You Can't Go Home Again. Finney was unable to get permission to use the text after writing the piece. Therefore, he had to write the text himself to fit the music. The text is of particular interest, for it concerns the ecological crisis of today: "The leaf choked for air, the grass, the bud, the buffalo and the eroded hills,/ The dead lake, the dying land. Must man destroy life and ultimately himself?"¹ Then Finney interposes words of Joseph Conrad from the preface to Nigger of the 'Narcissus'. These words suggest both man's duty and his only salvation: "From the remorseless rush of time, the task is to snatch a moment and in tenderness and faith, to hold up unquestioningly without fear, the rescued fragment."²

¹Ross Lee Finney, Inside Front Cover of Piano-Vocal Score to The Remorseless Rush of Time (New York: C. F. Peters Corp., 1970).

²Ibid.

The formal design of these works is determined by the texts themselves. Still Are New Worlds is a particularly appropriate example. In this piece, Finney says that the progression of moods evinced by the text is reflected in the way in which the score is conceived:

Part I, concerned largely with the finite world, is primarily for chorus and orchestra. Only toward the very end, when in the excerpt from Fontenelle, the question is asked, "Is that vast space which comprehends our sun and planets but a part of the universe?," the speaking voice enters with the chorus, opening as it does the world of the infinite. In Part II it becomes more important and prominent as the meaning of the quotations must be made increasingly clear. With the excerpt from the twentieth-century poet Albert Camus, the tape recorder is added to the chorus and speaking voice for the first time, providing the new and strange effect, at first reflective and nostalgic, but bursting forth with terrifying effect at the beginning of the Milton quotation. "He . . . with ambitious aim" and again at the words "with hideous ruin and combustion, down to bottomless perdition."¹

The two large parts of the work contain ten sub-sections corresponding to the ten excerpts from the diverse poets.

The other three large works are throughcomposed since the poetry contains little repetition. For instance, Edge of Shadow is in eight sections with little repetition of musical material. The Martyr's Elegy is divided into five sections of chorus, solo, chorus, solo, and chorus again with little repetition. Finally, The Remorseless Rush of Time is sectioned into four parts with musical transitions and transitions with the amplified voice.

¹Glenn D. McGeoch, Unnumbered Pages in Back of Piano-Vocal Score to Still Are New Worlds (New York: C. F. Peters Corp., 1963).

The primary factor which ties together all of these throughcomposed works is the tone row and its permutations. The following table lists the rows used for the four large choral-instrumental works:

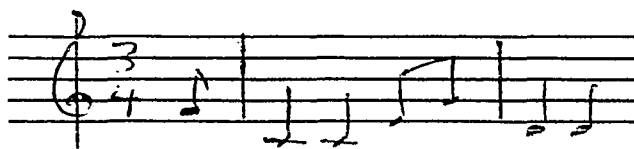
Table 2. Rows of the Four Large Choral-Instrumental Works.

Edge of Shadow												
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Still Are New Worlds												
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
The Martyr's Elegy												
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
The Remorseless Rush of Time												
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	

The symmetries of all four rows are readily apparent: the rows are structured in a hexachordal set with the second hexachord (7-12) being an exact retrograde mirror form of the first hexachord. The Edge of Shadow row is also parallel between pitches 1-6 and 7-12. The pitch series show strong triadic and chromatic elements in all four rows. For example, the latter three rows have a chromatic scale passage in the middle of the row which ranges from eight successive pitches

in The Martyr's Elegy, to six in Still Are New Worlds, and to four in The Remorseless Rush of Time. Also two of the rows begin (and end because of the hexachordal retrograde mirror form) with a major or minor third; one starts with a perfect fourth and then a major third; and the other begins with a semi-tone and then a minor third.

In addition to the tertian and chromatic elements, the folk-song influence is also present in these works. Paul Cooper points out that by "omitting a single note from the first hexachord of Edge of Shadow, one could derive a kind of revival hymn from it, among other possibilities:"¹



All four pieces contain varied styles of row technique. The most important aspect of Finney's set, however, is the use of repeated tones. The Finney row technique is comparable to that of Alban Berg with much repetition as opposed to that of Anton Webern with his strict use of the set. The Finney technique can be used to produce a triadic sonority when desired. Finney has stated that Luigi Dallapiccola, a personal friend, once said: "The row was made for man, not man for the row."² Finney's use of the row certainly shows the Dallapiccola philosophy.

¹Paul Cooper, "The Music of Ross Lee Finney," Musical Quarterly, LIII (1967), 5.

²Ross Lee Finney, Personal Interview, Ann Arbor, Michigan, July 16, 1971.

A characteristic cadential formula is the vertical realization of the series of pitches which has previously appeared horizontally:

Example 16. Still Are New Worlds, Page 69.

This formula is also shown in example 24.

The alternation of original and retrograde sets in the rows, with the exception of Edge of Shadow, is employed in large, sweeping gestures in ascending and descending patterns. These gestures occur more frequently in the instrumental writing than in the choral writing. The instrumental parts contain a stricter presentation of the row material, creating the gesture of the piece; the choral writing is more homophonic in contrast to the more active movement of the instrumental parts, creating a feeling of stability. The expert craftsman knows that the more dissonant strict row material is easier to play than to sing, especially when the sonority becomes

complex. However, in a section from the third movement of Still Are New Worlds, Finney overlaps rows in the choral parts:

Example 17. Still Are New Worlds, Pages 24-25.

The image displays a musical score for a choral and instrumental piece. It is divided into two systems, each containing four staves. The first system is marked with a box containing the number 25. The top four staves are vocal parts, each with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: "And al - wales mov - ing, al - wales mov - ing, al - wales mov - ing, al - wales mov - ing, al - wales mov - ing, al - wales mov - ing, al - wales mov - ing, al - wales mov - ing." The bottom two staves are piano accompaniment. The second system is marked with a box containing the number 29. It also consists of four staves, with the top two being vocal parts and the bottom two being piano accompaniment. The lyrics continue: "al - wales mov - ing, al - wales mov - ing, al - wales mov - ing, al - wales mov - ing, al - wales mov - ing, al - wales mov - ing, al - wales mov - ing, al - wales mov - ing." The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *pp legato*, *poco*, *cresc.*, and *mf legato*.

There is strong contrary motion between the voices and instruments, produced by simultaneous retrograde mirror forms of the row. This section shows Finney's programmatic writing since the text is "And alwaies moving."

Finney achieves variety in the pieces by means of row permutation. In Still Are New Worlds he reverses the order

of pitches 4-5 and 8-9 in the set. Such a small change can alter the sound considerably because it breaks up the chromatic scale passage in the center of the row. Later in Part II of the same work, Finney changes the set to an order of 1-2-11-12-5-6-3-4-7-8-9-10, creating a row with three sets of minor thirds in the middle.

A more complex example of permutation occurs in movement IV of The Remorseless Rush of Time. Finney uses four permutations of the set in four measures of music. Finney also uses repetition of pitches:

Example 18. The Remorseless Rush of Time, Full Score, Page 10.

The musical score for Example 18, The Remorseless Rush of Time, Full Score, Page 10, is a complex orchestral piece. It features a variety of instruments including Piccolo, Clarinet, Trumpet, Trombone, Violoncello, Double Bass, and Timpani. The score is written in 4/4 time and contains a dense arrangement of notes, including many triplets and sixteenth notes. Dynamics such as *p*, *f*, *cresc.*, and *sf* are used throughout. The score begins with a 5-measure rest, indicated by a box containing the number 5. The bottom staff includes a note for *f (sounds 3/4 lower)*.

This section of music is one of Finney's most complex and dissonant passages in all of his choral works. Programmatically, it would seem to highlight the text: "Listen to the earth."

Other serial permutations include the use of only the first six pitches of the set and the omission of certain tones of the row. Often in Edge of Shadow, one note is left out. In The Martyr's Elegy the permutation of the row consists of an eight note row using pitches 1-2-3-4-5-6-1-2, the reversal of pitches 5 and 6 within the original row, and the free employment of a ten note row.

With a study of Finney's permutations of the row, it is interesting to analyze his characteristic uses of the row. Edge of Shadow offers some pertinent examples. In this work, an interesting sonority is created when five pitch levels of the row are stated homophonically, producing a series of major-minor seventh chords:

Example 19. Edge of Shadow, Page 11.

Imitative sections using the row are also present, but the choral parts, in particular, tend to be written in a chordal style. One of the most beautiful examples of Finney's serial technique in homophonic section occurs in Edge of Shadow:

Example 20. Edge of Shadow, Page 22.

The extensive use of repetition of pitches creates certain aspects relating to functional harmony. Example 20 perhaps shows Finney's intention of making compatible the dodecaphonic system and functional harmony.

In Edge of Shadow, Finney's row appears in the treble in irregular diminution of the bass with both rows beginning on 0-12:

Example 21. Edge of Shadow, Page 26.

Still Are New Worlds uses a more chromatic implementation of the row. There is considerable use of ascending and descending sweeps brought about by the original and retrograde forms of the set. Finney often leaves out one note of the row, or overlaps the rows, or uses octave displacements of the row. In one of the more dissonant sections, Finney runs two rows simultaneously an interval of a second apart in a canon-like style:

Example 22. Still Are New Worlds, Page 65.

108 *calando poco a poco*
 where
 Re-gions of sor-row where
 Re-gions of sor-row where
 Re-gions of sor-row where
 109 *calando poco a poco*
 05 *pp legato*
 Re-gions of sor-row where
 Re-gions of sor-row where
 Re-gions of sor-row where
 Re-gions of sor-row where

There are other examples where two rows move together in thirds:

Example 23. Still Are New Worlds, Page 60.

45 *calando poco a poco*
 the-re-al sky. With hid-e-ous ru-in
 the-re-al sky. With hid-e-ous ru-in
 the-re-al sky. With hid-e-ous ru-in
 the-re-al sky. With hid-e-ous ru-in
 46 *pp legato*
 the-re-al sky. With hid-e-ous ru-in
 the-re-al sky. With hid-e-ous ru-in
 the-re-al sky. With hid-e-ous ru-in
 the-re-al sky. With hid-e-ous ru-in

In The Martyr's Elegy, there is more use of stretto and contrary motion with the set. This work introduces Klangfarbenmelodie, with the distribution of the tones of the set between the choral and orchestral parts, in a manner similar to that of Webern.

In The Remorseless Rush of Time, Finney uses contrary motion, produced by combinations of original and retrograde forms of the row, in the following ways: between chorus and instruments; between different combinations of instruments; and between differing parts of voices, particularly the male-female sonorities. Another row technique in The Remorseless Rush of Time is the use of six tones in canon. These same six tones in a vertical sonority then complete the section:

Example 24. The Remorseless Rush of Time, Page 11.

to the earth.

earth.

Bend to the earth.

Bend to the earth.

There is a voice of night, of
mountain streams, of laughter
hidden, of children's voices.

There is a voice of spring in
young boughs budding, in
apple fragrance, in the call
of mating birds.

There is a voice of sorrow,
the long and tongueless wall.

6 5 4 3 2 1

pp

Although the use of the serialized pitch is the primary device which unifies the four works, there is another unifying factor. At the beginning of each Finney piece, there is one specific intervallic sonority which is stated and then is reiterated at many points throughout the work. This same sonority is used for the last three of the four large works under discussion. It is a combination of a minor third and a perfect fifth (and closely related equivalents, such as a perfect fourth and augmented third) as shown below:

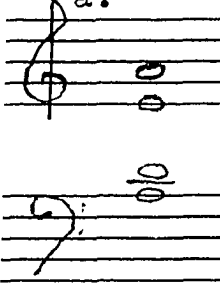
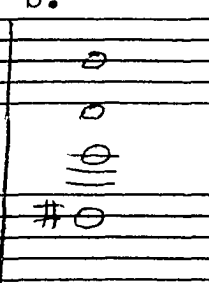
Still Are New Worlds	The Martyr's Elegy	The Remorseless Rush of Time

This intervallic structure is written in many different inversions, in octave displacement, and in horizontal and vertical positions. The choral forces, with their usual homophonic structure, more often present this unifying sonority than do the instrumental forces.

Because Edge of Shadow is Finney's earliest dodecaphonic choral piece, its unifying sonority is quartal, a characteristic of his earlier choral works. Another recurring sonority in this piece is a major seventh chord in various inversions and octave displacements. This chord is also typical of

Finney's earlier works. Examples of the two sonorities are shown below:

Edge of Shadow

a.	b.
	
quartal	major 7

Although these sonorities serve as unifying devices, the prime harmonic vocabulary in all of the pieces is tertian, created by repetition of pitches of the row. An excellent example is found in The Martyr's Elegy:

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Many of the choral parts, in particular, are composed in pairs of thirds, especially in the soprano-alto and tenor-bass sonorities. The pairing of the sonorities creates a dualistic effect. There is another dualistic feeling to these works, produced by the tertian sounds of the chorus creating a stability against the stricter serial passages of the instrumental parts causing a thrust forward. Even though the chorus is consonant harmonically, there are many examples of dissonant writing in these pieces. The octave displacement keeps these sonorities from sounding as dissonant as they would be in closer juxtaposition.

The melodic material of these pieces is controlled mainly by the row technique, which is both chromatic and diatonic in orientation. In the sections of homophonic texture where many repetitions of pitch occur, the melodic intent is conjunct. Only in extremely dramatic situations is there much disjunct melodic writing.

The rhythmic characteristic of these works is a rapid-moving, active instrumental part contrasted with a slower-moving, sustained choral part. For the sake of variety, there are, of course, numerous exceptions. In both the instrumental and choral writing, Finney's favorite rhythmic pattern would seem to employ an anacrusis figure. A similar trait was also observed in the earlier choral works.

All of these four large works are composed with traditional metric signs and with some use of meter changes

within movements. The only exception occurs in the solo voice section of The Martyr's Elegy where the meter is 5/2. Here Finney has written in the pulse beats (quarter value at 60 m.m.) and has indicated that the harp may "ad lib freely." After 280 seconds, the composer writes a 3/2 signature in a normal time situation.

Finney utilizes silence most skillfully, especially at the beginning of three of the four large works. Moreover, often a section of music begins with a rhythmic pattern which pervades that section throughout. The ability to work creatively and imaginatively with certain patterns is a noteworthy factor of Finney's craft.

The text setting of these works reveals many of the same programmatic devices that were prevalent in Spherical Madrigals. In Still Are New Worlds, the following types of text painting are employed: very high tessitura on "Most High God" with the original row ascending underneath; imitative fanning technique on "The wondrous architecture of the world;" a cappella (church-like) composition on the Milton text "To ask or search I blame thee not for Heaven is as the Book of God before thee set;" the permutation of the row when the text speaks about numbers; and syncopated rhythms in voices when the text dwells on "hurled." Other types of text painting can be found in The Remorseless Rush of Time, including: a descending, retrograde form of the row on

"Listen to the earth/Bend to the earth;" and wide tessitura and contrary motion on "Bursting into song."

Texture in these works is controlled by the number of rows presented at any given time, by the divisi or thickness of the choral writing, and by the orchestration. These pieces are composed primarily on inspiration from the texts, this inspiration therefore influencing the type of texture to be used.

As a unifying device, Finney uses many ostinato-like forms of the row or fragments of it within the various textures of the works. Giving different colors and sonorities to the pieces, these forms occur in the various parts of the instrumental writing. Generally, the texture of the works is not thick unless the text calls for it.

Thickness of texture emanates, primarily, from the orchestration. Finney has stated: "My orchestration has doubling--but only when some function related to climax or tutti or arrival is being performed. Otherwise I prefer rather clear tonal colors."¹ The climaxes which occur in these four large works are controlled by the expression of the text.

¹Paul Cooper, "The Music of Ross Lee Finney," Musical Quarterly, LIII (1967), 11.

Finney's orchestration for the works (Appendix D) ranges from two pianos and percussion (similar to Stravinsky's Les Noces) in Edge of Shadow to full orchestra in Still Are New Worlds and The Martyr's Elegy. Since his latest work, The Remorseless Rush of Time, was written for a small music department, it is orchestrated for forces which would be available at most small colleges. All of the thirteen instruments, with the exception of the viola and double bass, would be available in a college which did not have an orchestral program. Finney uses much percussion in all of these works, a common practice of many twentieth-century composers.

His orchestration, particularly in the full orchestral forces, consists of sonorities of brass, woodwinds, or strings which come together, as stated before, only in the climactic or dramatically heightened sections. The textures of the orchestra exist within an environment of flux in opposition to the chordal vocal forces as shown below:

10

8vc.

Fl. I
Fl. II
Ob.
E. Cl.
Cl.
B. Cl.
Bsn.
C. Bsn.
Hr.
Tpt. I
Tpt. II
Tbn. I
Tbn. II
Tbn. III
Tuba
Tim.
G.P.
Xylo-Vib.
Cyl.
Harp
S.
A.
T.
B.
Vl.
Vla.
Vcl.
D.B.

most ex-cel-lent, whose whole es-sence is pure - est
most ex-cel-lent, whose whole es-sence is pure - est
most ex-cel-lent, whose whole es-sence is pure - est
most ex-cel-lent, whose whole es-sence is pure - est

Back to C. "till" in New York's Fall Store, Page 3.

Finney uses the medium of electronic tape in Still Are New Worlds mainly to heighten moments of dramatic impulse. Also in The Remorseless Rush of Time he employs an amplified voice throughout the piece which adds not only another dimension of drama but also a unifying element. Still Are New Worlds uses a speaking voice, but only in certain sections.

Other prevalent orchestral techniques of Finney include: much muting of brass and strings; extensive use of viola and harp; employment of the varying tessituras of the many sonorities, particularly in ascending and descending lines of the rows; good balance of orchestral weight from section to section; divisi in strings, sometimes up to ten parts in some sections; and the use of flutter tonguing and glissandos in brass parts.

The vocal orchestration for these pieces consists of four kinds of expression. These include singing, speech, intoned speech, and whispering. All four are present in Edge of Shadow and in Still Are New Worlds. In The Martyr's Elegy, Finney calls for a sustained hissing sound on the "c" sound of the word "peace" in one section.

Each of these works has some sections of a cappella writing which contain some of the most beautiful choral sonorities of his compositions. The contrast of these sections with the more heavily orchestrated sections adds further variety to the numerous "colors" of the combined

orchestrations of these works. The only one of these four large works to call for a solo voice is The Martyr's Elegy. Finney does not state the type of voice desired. He asks only for a "high voice" for the solo section, which contains some very disjunct intervals and dissonant writing.

Another important facet to consider along with the orchestration of each piece is the dynamic levels which Finney requires of the forces. These levels range from ppp to fff with much use of sforzando accents and fast-moving crescendos and decrescendos. Dynamics also are an important part of the sweeping gestures of sound which are found in many sections of these works.

In considering performance of these four works, one would need a large chorus for The Martyr's Elegy and Still Are New Worlds because of the full orchestration. Edge of Shadow and The Remorseless Rush of Time could be performed with a smaller choral group, ranging between 25 and 80 voices (depending on their quality) because of the smaller instrumental forces. In the full score of The Remorseless Rush of Time, Finney states that the work should be performed with "not less than 24 voices, nor so large as to jeopardize accuracy of pitch."¹

In a personal interview, Finney stated the following concerning the performance of his choral works:

¹Ross Lee Finney, Full Score to The Remorseless Rush of Time (New York: C. F. Peters Corporation, 1970), 13.

The rhythm, meaning, and arrival points of the text are of primary importance in my choral works. The sound of the words themselves are of utmost importance. Rhythmic quality is determined by the rhythm of the words, not just the meter. Conductors should be concerned with gesture, arrival points, functions of tonality, and divisions of time, but above all they should read the text with the same pace as the composer."¹

Finney went on to say: "If there is one thing that I want in music, it is to make it sing."²

¹Ross Lee Finney, Personal Interview, Ann Arbor, Michigan, July 16, 1971.

²Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This survey of the choral works of Ross Lee Finney reveals the evolution of style from his earliest pieces of the early forties through the most recent work, The Remorseless Rush of Time (1969). The early works are based mostly on folk material and basic tertian harmony with some use of quartal-quintal sonorities, bi-tonal structures, conflicting modes, major and minor second clashes, ostinato patterns, seventh chords, and a predominance of E tonal levels. Finney's "middle period" of choral works shows the maturation of some of these earlier techniques into a more skillful compositional style in Pilgrim Psalms (1945) and Spherical Madrigals (1947). Finney's interest in American history is exemplified in the use of the psalm tunes of the Ainsworth Psalter (1620) as the basis for Pilgrim Psalms. Another area of interest for Finney is revealed in his setting of seventeenth-century English texts in Spherical Madrigals, which are written in a neo-Renaissance style.

With the exception of one unpublished choral piece, Immortal Autumn (1952), all of Finney's "late period" choral works after 1950 show a major change in compositional style. That change is his chromatic use of the dodecaphonic system to which he had been exposed in his study with Alban Berg.

These four large serial pieces, Edge of Shadow (1959), Still Are New Worlds (1962), The Martyr's Elegy (1966), and The Remorseless Rush of Time (1969), combine the tertian-oriented, folk-like, quartal-quintal elements of the earlier works with the mathematical complexities of the row technique. The texts, again of English origin with the exception of Albert Camus, are intellectually provocative. In many instances, they are stated in what Finney calls a "language of concern" about man and his existence on earth. Musically, these works encompass a totality of sound including speech sounds and electronic devices within a much larger choral-orchestral scope than in earlier works.

Finney's choral works include almost every choral idiom available, since they contain unaccompanied pieces, choral-organ works, madrigals, glee club songs, smaller choral-instrumental works, and compositions for the larger choral-orchestral repertoire. There are pieces for amateur groups and for the most advanced choral organization.

In a review of the premiere performance of one of Finney's recent choral works, Still Are New Worlds, Edith Boroff presents an excellent summation of the Finney compositional expression:

It is stylish to elect either pure design--abstract pattern, deliberate or otherwise--or the wholly subjective in music; it is a privilege to meet a work that seeks neither to justify itself in technique nor to surrender itself to emotion, yet which embodies a consummate skill and uses it to speak to the heart as well as to the mind....

It is an idiomatic work, not in the old sense of producing sounds comfortable for the instruments and voices, but by drawing from them new sounds which are so right that they do not so much surprise as educate us to an increased sense of what they are meant to do. It is a temporally informed work, carrying through time with an impelling direction which is rare and satisfying.¹

The place of Ross Lee Finney in the study of contemporary choral music could be described as "middle-of-the-road." Perhaps the reason for this via media approach lies in Finney's own remarks in an address at Scripps College, California, in 1959:

The artist lives today in a vastly different world than he did a hundred years ago, and almost certainly a different world than he will live in a hundred years hence. He lives in a world of transition, a world in which change is the most certain quality of culture. Each artist must adapt himself in his own way to this changing culture"²

Although Finney has used the dodecaphonic system and elements of the electronic idiom, not yet has he dealt with some of the more avant garde methods such as the aleatoric style of some of the recent choral works, and the "bands of sound" technique of Penderecki and others.

¹Edith Boroff, Inside Front Cover of Piano-Vocal Score to Still Are New Worlds (New York: C. F. Peters Corp., 1963).

²Ross Lee Finney, "Analysis and the Creative Process," Scripps College Bulletin, XXXIII, No. 2 (1959), 3. Taken from: Henry Onderdonk, "Aspects of Tonality in the Music of Ross Lee Finney," Perspectives of New Music, VI (1968), 145.

At this time, Finney's choral works have not been performed so often as his instrumental compositions, such as the string quartets and the piano music. Finney himself labels his choral pieces as the most conservative idiom of his works because of his "old-fashioned" adherence to text as inspiration for music.¹ However, to his credit Finney has amalgamated the styles of the last three decades of choral music into a product of undisputed craftsmanship. This craftsmanship, combined with his intuitive sense in music, has produced a significant and exciting repertoire of contemporary choral literature.

¹Ross Lee Finney, Personal Interview, Ann Arbor, Michigan, July 16, 1971.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF CHORAL WORKS

<u>Year</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Publisher</u>	<u>First Performance</u>
1939	Pole Star for This Year (SATB, tenor and alto soli, orchestra)	MS.	Mutual Broadcasting Corp., New York 1943
1940	Oh, Bury Me Not (TTBB, SSAA)	Volkwein	Univ. of Pittsburgh 1941
1940	When the Curtains of Night (TTBB, SSAA)	Volkwein	Univ. of Pittsburgh 1941
1941	Trail to Mexico (TTBB)	Volkwein	Univ. of Pittsburgh 1942
1945	Pilgrim Psalms (varying choral forces, soloists, and organ)	Carl Fischer	Cornell Univ., Kuypers, 1946
1946	Words to Be Spoken (canon <u>a</u> 4)	Music Press Inc.	
1947	Spherical Madrigals (SATB)	Peters	Madrigal Group, Lee Pattison, Claremont, Calif., 1948
1952	Immortal Autumn (SATB, tenor solo, organ)	MS.	Pittsburgh Int. Festival, 1952
1959	Edge of Shadow (SATB, two pianos, percussion)	Peters	Grinnell College Grinnell, Iowa, 1960
1962	Still Are New Worlds (SATB, narrator, orchestra)	Peters	Philadelphia Orch., Choral Union, Thor Johnson, Ann Arbor, 1963
1966	The Martyr's Elegy (SATB, high voice solo, orchestra)	Peters	Philadelphia Orch., Choral Union, Thor Johnson, Ann Arbor, 1967
1969	The Remorseless Rush of Time (SATB, Speaker, 13 instruments)	Peters	Wisconsin State Univ. River Falls, Wis., 1970

APPENDIX B

VOICINGS FOR PILGRIM PSALMS

1. Psalm XXIV
(Unison Chorus and Organ)
2. Psalm LXIV
(a cappella)
3. Psalm CXXXVII
(1st Version: Tenor Solo and Organ)
4. Psalm CXXXVII
(2nd Version: a cappella, Double Chorus ad lib.)
5. Psalm V
(Men's Voices, a cappella)
6. Prelude on Psalm I
(Organ)
7. Psalm CL
(Unison Chorus and Organ)
8. Psalm XCV
(Mixed Voices and Organ)
9. Psalm LI
(Mixed Voices, a cappella)
10. Psalm LV
(Men's Voices, a cappella)
11. Psalm I
(Women's Voices, a cappella)
12. Psalm CXXXVIII
(Mixed Voices, a cappella)
13. Interlude on Psalm CVIII
(Organ)
14. Psalm C
(Mixed Voices and Organ)
15. Psalm CXXXIX
(Mixed Voices, Audience, and Organ)

APPENDIX C

TITLES AND AUTHORS OF POETIC TEXTS FOR SPHERICAL MADRIGALS

- I. When Again All These Rare Perfections Meet
(Lord Herbert of Cherbury "To A Lady Who Did Sing
Excellently")
- II. All-Circling Point
(Crashaw "In the Glorious Epiphany of Our Lord God")
- III. His Body Was An Orb
(Dryden "Upon the Death of Lord Hastings")
- IV. On A Round Ball
(Donne "A Valediction: of Weeping")
- V. Nor Doe I Doubt
(Crashaw "Out of Virgil: In the Praise of Spring")
- VI. See How The Earth
(Marvell "Upon the Hill and Grove at Bill-borow")

APPENDIX D

DURATION OF THE FOUR LARGE DODECAPHONIC
CHORAL WORKS AND THE FORCES USEDEdge of Shadow (1959)
19 minutes

SATB chorus, two pianos, celesta, xylophone, vibraphone, timpani, cymbals, snare drum, bass drum, tam tam, triangle

Still Are New Worlds (1962)
28 minutes

SATB chorus (divisi), speaking voice, three flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets in b flat, bass clarinet in b flat, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns in f, three trumpets in c, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, tape recorder, xylophone, celesta, harp, strings

The Martyr's Elegy (1966)
17½ minutes

SATB chorus (divisi), high solo voice, three flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets in b flat, bass clarinet in b flat, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four horns in f, three trumpets in c, three trombones, tuba, timpani, harp, glockenspiel, vibraphone, temple blocks, tom toms, gong, bongos, general percussion, strings

The Remorseless Rush of Time (1969)
10 minutes

SATB chorus (divisi), amplified speaking voice, two flutes, two clarinets, two trumpets, two trombones, timpani, percussion: mounted tambourine, bongos, tom toms, four suspended cymbals, snare drum, tam tam, bass drum, pianoforte, viola, double bass

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