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Shulamit Ran: *Birds of Paradise* and the Progression of her Music for Flute

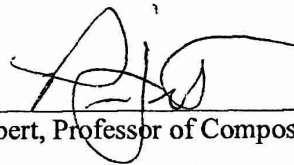
by

Aaron Perdue

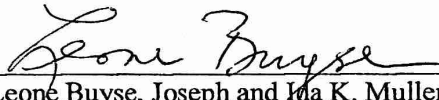
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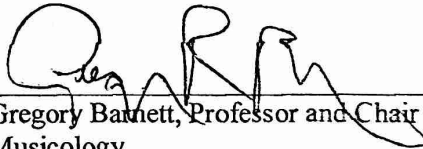
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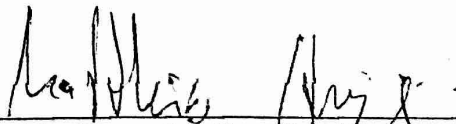
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ABSTRACT

Shulamit Ran: *Birds of Paradise* and the Progression of her Music for Flute

by

Aaron Perdue

This study describes and analyzes *Birds of Paradise* for Flute and Piano (2014) by Shulamit Ran and also examines three other works by Ran that feature the flute: *Sonatina* for Two Flutes (1961), *East Wind* for Solo Flute (1987), and *Moon Songs: A Song Cycle in Four Acts* for Soprano, Flute, Cello, and Piano (2011). The focus of this document is on *Birds of Paradise* because it is Ran's most recent composition for flute and will become a standard work in the flute repertoire. The analyses of the other three works demonstrate the progression of her writing for flute over the course of fifty years of composition. Ran's compositional style has evolved but there are characteristic traits that identify her unique voice as a composer. These traits include her affinity toward dramatic expression, a balance between fantasy and structure, and autobiographical elements such as Middle Eastern stylistic influence. This paper also delves into Ran's creative process and what inspires her as a composer. Lastly, it investigates the relationship between composer and performer and includes interviews with Ran and two of her closest flutist collaborators: Mary Stolper and Mimi Stillman. The analyses and discussion of these works and interviews with the composer and performers provide helpful insight to those interested in studying and performing her music. Shulamit Ran has made several significant contributions to the flute repertory and her music will undoubtedly be performed and celebrated for generations to come.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES	vi
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES	viii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW	4
Biography	4
Musical Education	6
Style and Compositional Voice	10
Creative Process	16
CHAPTER TWO: <i>BIRDS OF PARADISE</i>	19
Background	19
Movement 1	24
Movement 2	34
Movement 3	43
CHAPTER THREE: <i>SONATINA, EAST WIND, AND MOON SONGS</i>	57
<i>Sonatina</i> for Two Flutes	57
<i>East Wind</i> for Solo Flute	65
<i>Moon Songs</i> A Song Cycle in Four Acts for Soprano, Flute, Cello, and Piano	76
CHAPTER FOUR: COMPOSER AND PERFORMER INTERVIEWS	99
Shulamit Ran	100
Mimi Stillman	103
Mary Stolper	106
CONCLUSION	110
BIBLIOGRAPHY	112

LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

Example 2.1	<i>Birds of Paradise</i> , Mvt. 1: m. 1	23
Example 2.2	<i>Birds of Paradise</i> , Mvt. 1: mm. 1-4, theme a	25
Example 2.3	<i>Birds of Paradise</i> , Mvt. 1: mm. 4-9, theme b	27
Example 2.4	<i>Birds of Paradise</i> , Mvt. 1: mm. 21-26, theme c	28
Example 2.5	<i>Birds of Paradise</i> , Mvt. 1: mm. 31-39	30
Example 2.6	<i>Birds of Paradise</i> , Mvt. 1: mm. 54-61	31
Example 2.7	<i>Birds of Paradise</i> , Mvt. 1: mm. 61-66	32
Example 2.8	<i>Birds of Paradise</i> , Mvt. 1: mm. 67-71	33
Example 2.9	<i>Birds of Paradise</i> , Mvt. 2: mm. 1-8	35
Example 2.10	<i>Birds of Paradise</i> , Mvt. 2: mm. 9-17	36
Example 2.11	<i>Birds of Paradise</i> , Mvt. 2: mm. 18-23	37
Example 2.12	<i>Birds of Paradise</i> , Mvt. 2: mm. 28-33	38
Example 2.13	<i>Birds of Paradise</i> , Mvt. 2: mm. 40-41	39
Example 2.14	<i>Birds of Paradise</i> , Mvt. 2: mm. 49-56	40
Example 2.15	<i>Birds of Paradise</i> , Mvt. 2: mm. 57-59	41
Example 2.16	<i>Birds of Paradise</i> , Mvt. 2: mm. 62-67	42
Example 2.17	<i>Birds of Paradise</i> , Mvt. 3: mm. 1-2	44
Example 2.18	<i>Birds of Paradise</i> , Mvt. 3: mm. 9-13	45
Example 2.19	<i>Birds of Paradise</i> , Mvt. 3: mm. 12-15	46
Example 2.20	<i>Birds of Paradise</i> , Mvt. 3: mm. 32-35	47
Example 2.21	<i>Birds of Paradise</i> , Mvt. 3: mm. 38-41	48
Example 2.22	<i>Birds of Paradise</i> , Mvt. 3: mm. 57-59	49
Example 2.23	<i>Birds of Paradise</i> , Mvt. 3: mm. 63-70	50
Example 2.24	<i>Birds of Paradise</i> , Mvt. 3: mm. 71-79	52
Example 3.1	<i>Sonatina</i> , Mvt. 1: mm. 1-26	60
Example 3.2	<i>Sonatina</i> , Mvt. 1: mm. 118-127	61
Example 3.3	<i>Sonatina</i> , Mvt. 2: mm. 1-4; mm. 7-10	62
Example 3.4	<i>Sonatina</i> , Mvt. 2: mm. 13-14	63
Example 3.5	<i>Sonatina</i> , Mvt. 3: mm. 1-20, mm. 83-91	64
Example 3.6	<i>East Wind</i> , P5/L4-L5	66
Example 3.7	<i>East Wind</i> , P3/L5	68
Example 3.8	<i>East Wind</i> , P3/L4	68
Example 3.9	<i>East Wind</i> , P2/L1	69
Example 3.10	<i>East Wind</i> , P2/L5-L7	70
Example 3.11	<i>East Wind</i> , P3/L6	71
Example 3.12	<i>East Wind</i> , P4/L1-L5	72
Example 3.13	<i>East Wind</i> , P5/L3-L5	74
Example 3.14	<i>East Wind</i> , P5/L6-L8	75
Example 3.15	<i>Moon Songs</i> , Act I, mm. 1-2	80
Example 3.16	<i>Moon Songs</i> , Act I, mm. 61-64	81
Example 3.17	<i>Moon Songs</i> , Act I, mm. 72-78	82
Example 3.18	<i>Moon Songs</i> , Act II, mm. 3-7	84

Example 3.19	<i>Moon Songs</i> , Act II, mm. 53-56	85
Example 3.20	<i>Moon Songs</i> , Act II, mm. 69-71	86
Example 3.21	<i>Moon Songs</i> , Act II, mm. 141-145	87
Example 3.22	<i>Moon Songs</i> , Act III, mm. 1-4)	88
Example 3.23	<i>Moon Songs</i> , Act III, mm. 8-11, use of retrograde	90
Example 3.24	<i>Moon Songs</i> , Act III, mm. 3-4, soprano	90
Example 3.25	<i>Moon Songs</i> , Act III, soprano, mm. 53-55)	91
Example 3.26	<i>Moon Songs</i> , Entr'acte II, opening line	92
Example 3.27	<i>Moon Songs</i> , Act IV, mm. 13-20, Section A	93
Example 3.28	<i>Moon Songs</i> , Act IV, mm. 24-28, Section B	94
Example 3.29	<i>Moon Songs</i> , Act IV, mm. 43-47, Section C in partiality	95
Example 3.30	<i>Moon Songs</i> , Act IV, mm. 79-84, Section D in partiality	96

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLE 1	<i>Birds of Paradise</i> , Mvt. 1: structural analysis	54
TABLE 2	<i>Birds of Paradise</i> , Mvt. 2: structural analysis	55
TABLE 3	<i>Birds of Paradise</i> , Mvt. 3: structural analysis	56
TABLE 4	<i>Moon Songs</i> , structural analysis	98
Figure 1	<i>Birds of Paradise</i> , facsimile of manuscript	3
Figure 2	<i>East Wind</i> , variant form of the principal motive	73
Figure 3	<i>Moon Songs</i> , Act III, use of retrograde	89

INTRODUCTION

Shulamit Ran is recognized as one of the most prominent composers of her generation. Throughout the course of her illustrious career, she has composed several important works featuring the flute. This study describes and analyzes *Birds of Paradise* for Flute and Piano (2014) and also examines three other works featuring the flute: *Sonatina* for Two Flutes (1961), *East Wind* for Solo Flute (1987), and *Moon Songs: A Song Cycle in Four Acts* for Soprano, Flute, Cello, and Piano (2011). The focus of this document is on *Birds of Paradise* because it is Ran's most recent composition for flute and also her only work for the combination of flute and piano. It was premiered on August 10, 2014 by Mary Stolper, flute and Kuang-Hao Huang, piano at the National Flute Association's annual convention in Chicago, IL. There are currently no published recordings of this work, although it was professionally recorded by Ms. Stolper and is available to listen to online.¹ The first chapter of this paper is an overview of Shulamit Ran's life including her biography, musical background, and overall style as a composer. The second chapter is a discussion and analysis of *Birds of Paradise*. The third chapter traces the progression of Ran's compositions for flute beginning with the very early *Sonatina* for Two Flutes, her mid-career staple for solo flute – *East Wind*, and a more recent chamber work featuring flute – *Moon Songs*. The last chapter includes interviews with Ran and two important flutist colleagues: Mimi Stillman and Mary Stolper. These interviews provide useful information for those who wish to study and perform Ran's works.

¹ Shulamit Ran. *Birds of Paradise*. Mary Stolper, flute. Recorded on September 23, 2014 at the Logan Center for Fine Arts, Chicago, by Christopher Willis. (Accessed February 10, 2018), <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMbqSWVhZlc>>

Throughout the course of her career, Ran's sense of style has shifted and developed. She believes that her music is a reflection of her life, and just as her life has evolved over the years, so must her music. Although the stylistic differentiation amongst these works is apparent, it is important to notice the commonalities linking all these works back to the fiercely intelligent mind of a brilliant composer. Her unique voice always comes through her compositions and is identified by an affinity toward dramatic expression, a blend of fantasy and structure, and the influence of Middle Eastern stylistic features. Her music will continue to be a standard in the flute repertory and her voice will be heard for years to come.

In its essence, it's ephemeral. It is abstract. It is not made out of words (except when words form the sound material), and it is not about visual imagery, and yet it speaks! It speaks in remarkable ways and can move us to tears, leave us dumbstruck with emotion, and bring us to a sense of being joyous at being alive . . . Music seems to have the capacity to bring time to a standstill. It's an illusion, but at the same time it's a miracle.²

—Shulamit Ran

² New Music USA. "Shulamit Ran: Music has Magical Powers." (Accessed January 19, 2018), <<https://nmbx.newmusicusa.org/shulamit-ran-music-has-magical-powers/>>

I ♪ Spreading, energetic
♩ = ca. 80

Birds of Paradise

Shulamit Ran
2013

with tenderness

5 A tempo

Senza misura

TR - - - - -
(6) (7) (8) (9) (10) (11) (12)

emphatic

inf pursual, yet warm

Sparking Anticipation

Repeat w. 1-3

inf as before

Repeat w. 1-3

10-12

Steady, joyful

5 ♩ = ca. 60

TR - - - - -
(13) (14) (15) (16) (17) (18) (19) (20)

emphatic as before

poco f warm

poco f espr.

* TR = tongue taps, sounding notes in parentheses, a major seventh below the fingered note

Figure 1, *Birds of Paradise*, facsimile of manuscript

CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW

Biography

Shulamit Ran is one of the most celebrated and accomplished composers of her generation. Born October 21, 1949 in Tel Aviv, Israel, Ran began setting Hebrew poetry to music at the age of seven. By nine she was studying composition and piano with some of Israel's most acclaimed musicians, including Paul Ben-Haim and Alexander Boskovich, and within a few years was having her early works performed by professional musicians and orchestras. At the age of 14 she moved to the United States to study piano with Nadia Reisenberg and composition with Norman Dello Joio at the Mannes School of Music in New York. At 16 she performed her own *Capriccio* for piano and orchestra with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra on one of Leonard Bernstein's televised Young People's Concerts. She continued to perform her own compositions with orchestras including the piano solo of her *Symphonic Poem* with the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra in 1967 and *Concert Piece* for piano and orchestra with the Israel Philharmonic conducted by Zubin Mehta in 1971.

A pivotal moment came when her song cycle *O The Chimneys*, a setting of five poems by Nelly Sachs, caught the interest of American experimental composer Ralph Shapey, professor at the University of Chicago and founding director of its Contemporary Chamber Players, presently named Contempo. In 1973, Shapey thought Ran would be the ideal candidate for the composition faculty and she was hired soon afterwards. Ran served as a music professor at the University of Chicago from 1973 until her retirement in 2015 and had an influential teaching career on top of her success as a composer.

In addition to having won the 1991 Pulitzer Prize for Music for her *Symphony*, Ran has attained numerous honors including two fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation; grants and commissions from the Koussevitzky Foundation at the Library of Congress, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Fromm Music Foundation, Chamber Music America, and the American Academy and Institute for Arts and Letters; first prize in the Kennedy Center-Friedheim Awards competition for orchestral music, and many more. Her compositions have been performed by many of the world's leading orchestras including commissions from the Philadelphia Orchestra for *Symphony*, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (*Legends*, 1993), the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra (*Vessels of Courage and Hope*, 1998), and the American Composers Orchestra (*Supplications*, for chorus and orchestra, 2002). Leading chamber music groups with which she has worked include the Da Capo Chamber Players, the New York New Music Ensemble, the Brentano String Quartet, the Peabody Trio, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's MusicNOW, and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.

In 1990, Ran was appointed by Maestro Daniel Barenboim to be Composer-in-Residence with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and held this position for seven seasons. From 1994 to 1997 she served as Composer-in-Residence with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, which premiered her opera *Between Two Worlds (The Dybbuk)* in 1997. She was the Paul Fromm Composer-in-Residence at the American Academy in Rome in 2011. She has also been an important advocate for contemporary music by serving as Music Director of "Tempus Fugit," the International Biennial for Contemporary Music in Israel in 1996, 1998, and 2000, and also serving as Artistic Director of Contempo (formerly the Contemporary Chamber Players of the University of Chicago) from 2002 until 2015.

Besides serving as a longtime faculty member at the University of Chicago, she also was a visiting professor at Princeton University in 1987 and the Eastman School of Music in 2010. She has been the recipient of five honorary doctorates and was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1992 and of the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2003, of which she served a three-year term as vice president for music. Her works are published by the Theodore Presser Company and by the Israeli Music Institute and her recordings can be found on more than a dozen labels.

Musical Education

Ran's life as a composer began at a very early age. Even before she had any music lessons, at the age of seven she was already making up melodies in her head. She would hear words and innately begin associating a melody with those words. At the time, she thought that this was quite normal. When her first piano teacher wrote down these melodies for her, she realized she had a special gift.

My teacher sent some of those melodies in to a local radio station and they ended up being performed on the radio by a children's choir. It is a vivid recollection—I was eight at the time and away at summer camp; there we all were, the kids and myself, all sitting around a large radio listening to my music coming out of it. That was a revelation for me, because it was the first time that I had the sense my music could live outside of me. What I had made up now had its own, separate existence. It gave me such pleasure and it was a very special feeling, and I knew that I wanted to keep doing this. Although all kinds of other things have always interested me, I've never wanted to do anything else but compose ever since.¹

Although Ran believes she is primarily self-taught as a composer, she is grateful for the impact her teachers had on her musical upbringing. By the time she completed her formal

¹ Denis Polkow, "Music Notes: the special gift of Shulamit Ran," *Chicago Reader*, November 16, 1989.

education, her teachers included Alexander Uriah Boscovich and Paul Ben-Haim in Israel, Norman Dello Joio in New York, and Aaron Copland and Lukas Foss at Tanglewood. Looking back at her life and musical heritage, she believes that her teachers can be divided into two groups.

The gift that those of the one group gave me was their burning passion—you could say that they were crusaders, with a mission. They believed strongly in an idea, and cared intensely about making sure that I took the ‘right path,’ as I negotiated my way, young soul that I was, through the high waters of modern music. Those of the second group gave me the gift of allowing me to spread my wings, mostly taking the role of overseeing my progress, allowing me to simply BE. For me, being only in my teens, that kind of freedom was quite valuable, and much appreciated.²

At a young age, Ran studied with two leaders of Israeli music, Alexander Uriah Boskovich (1907-1964) and Paul Ben-Haim (1897-1984). Both composers were part of the first generation of composers who emigrated from Europe to Palestine in the 1930’s in order to flee persecution. At age nine her first teacher, Boskovich, taught her theory, ear training, harmony, counterpoint, and instrumentation. She is especially grateful to him for instilling this fundamental training at such a young age while still encouraging her to explore using her instincts. The balance between structure and imagination has helped her in her own compositional process and in her teaching philosophy as well. After a while, she was attracted to the music of Paul Ben-Haim and sought his tutelage. She credits Ben-Haim for giving her the freedom to develop at her own pace and explore her own interests.

Ran then moved to New York to study at the Mannes School of Music. Although she would be primarily studying piano with Nadia Resienberg, she knew that composition would be an important part of her studies. She studied with Norman Dello Joio and thought that he was the

² Shulamit Ran, “On Teaching Composition,” *Contemporary Music Review* 31, no. 4 (2012): 305.

perfect teacher for that stage of her development. Although she was in the early stages of forming her personal voice as a composer, Dello Joio allowed her to try different things and gently lead her.

After the conclusion of her formal studies at Mannes, Ran began having a very promising career as a concert pianist. She believes that her background as a pianist and having studied theory from an early age were influential in her life as a composer.

I have always felt that the years when, for hours every day, I was, physically, mentally, and emotionally, the vessel through which great music passed and reverberated—I am talking about the years of learning major piano repertoire and intimately engaging with it on a daily basis—made me a particular kind of musician, affecting profoundly the kind of music I write and how I hear music... In a deep sense, Bach and Beethoven, Schubert and Brahms, and so many other great composers whose music has withstood the test of time, were my greatest teachers. (As were Stravinsky, Bartók, Schoenberg, Berg, Varèse, the list only begins.) I believe this is so not because this music forms an important tradition, though of course it does, but because it is GREAT MUSIC. Call me old-fashioned, but I continue to consider this kind of training—engaging with great music in any way possible—invaluable.³

Ultimately, Ran would choose a career in composition over performing. Despite her success as a pianist, she felt that her first intuition was that of a composer and always felt a call to create new music.

While in her mid-twenties, Ran caught the attention of Ralph Shapey, composer and professor at the University of Chicago. He heard a recording of Ran's setting of five poems from *O The Chimneys* by Nelly Sachs, the outstanding German-Jewish Nobel Prize winner in literature, who wrote primarily about the subject of the Holocaust. Shapey approached department chairman Robert Marshal, threw an LP recording of Ran's work on his desk and said, "That's our composer!" Ran then came to Chicago to be interviewed and was hired as a junior professor. After a few years at the University of Chicago, Ran became intrigued by stories of his

³ Ibid, 306.

classes as told by some of their mutual students and asked Shapey if she could study with him. At first he was surprised by his colleague's wish to study from him but he nonetheless taught her formally for nearly a year. Although Shapey was a deeply passionate composer, he was strongly against the idea of being labeled with a particular 'school of composition' and sought to give his students a strong sense of individuality in their compositional voice. At the core of his methodology was his 'basic course,'⁴ a series of compositional exercises that increasingly become more complex. The exercises were about manipulating pitch and rhythm vertically and horizontally, from single lines to more contrapuntal textures. Ran has used this method in her own teaching for decades and believes it gives her students the ability to use compositional resources more creatively.

Although Ran prides herself in being self-taught and making important compositional breakthroughs on her own, she credits Shapey as being one of her greatest teachers. She believes that Shapey's role as a colleague, friend, teacher, and mentor had one of the strongest marks on her voice as a composer and her teaching philosophy. She believes that it is important to teach with a balance of expertise and intuition.

What is my own personal definition of a good teacher? For me, an ideal composition teacher, at any level, is (1) able to help the student listen, critically, and in a deep way, to his/her own music, and (2) considers it a priority to develop and refine the kind of technical tools that will help the student implement his/her personal artistic vision. Having such tools is what allows one to imagine more. What else can I do with these raw materials I have invented? How can I turn the conceptual premises that I have constructed in my mind into music that is beautiful, meaningful, and compelling? That, to me, is the question.⁵

⁴ Ralph Shapey, *A Basic Course in Music Composition* (Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania: Theodore Presser), 2001.

⁵ Ran, "On Teaching Composition," 307.

Style and Compositional Voice

Shulamit Ran's unique musical upbringing has no doubt played a role in her life as a musician, composer, and teacher. Her strong sense of individuality and desire to communicate in terms of her own life and artistic ideas can be heard in her compositional voice. Music critics have pointed out that Ran's music "uses a primarily dissonant musical universe to create impassioned, personal statements."⁶ Her vivacious music is full of extremes, and proves to be technically demanding for performers and requires an active, engaged listener. To Ran, music is supposed to reflect a deep level of humanity.

One of my principal aims is to write music that challenges the mind and heart in equal measure. So much music today is one-dimensional, but I like music that communicates on many levels—cerebral, yet it touches within us a common sense of what it means to be human.⁷

Although her music can initially seem to have a "forbidding texture," listeners come to realize that "it is surprisingly lyrical and expressionist and much less knotty than it seems at first."⁸

Ran is unapologetic for the intensity of her music believing that "music is not about relaxing. It's about life."⁹ The extreme range of expression found in her music parallels the vast scope of the human condition.

Due to the depth of musical expression and high level of virtuosity, only very talented musicians have the capability of successfully performing Ran's music. The number of performers presenting her works might be limited, but Ran believes that this results in very

⁶ Edward Rothstein. "Review/Music; The Melodic Energy and the Textures of Shulamit Ran," *The New York Times*, April 23, 1992.

⁷ Polkow, "Music Notes: the special gift of Shulamit Ran."

⁸ Rothstein, "Review/Music; The Melodic Energy and the Textures of Shulamit Ran."

⁹ John von Rhein. "CSO Composer Wins Musical Pulitzer," *Chicago Tribune*, April 10, 1991.

brilliant people playing her music.¹⁰ Although she seeks to chart new territory and explore extremes of expression and virtuosity, Ran conveys that she “always hopes that there is a humanity and an emotional presence in the music that will transcend the difficulties.”¹¹ As a composer, Ran believes that she is composing for a listening audience, the performers, and herself.

As a composer I take—I command—the listener’s time for the duration of the composition. I’m in charge of their time, and that’s a big responsibility, because what is there that is more precious than one’s time? It’s the one thing that is not replenishable, so I never forget that. So, on the one hand, I write music for myself. I also write music for the performers, knowing they are the intermediary between the creator and the listener. They are also the ones who are going to be most intimately involved with the music, who are giving their time, talent, years of training, their soul. But then there’s also the audience. That sense of capturing the listener’s imagination and thought, perhaps pushing them in ways I did not even imagine, is incredibly meaningful.¹²

Ran has an aversion for stylistic labels, believing that terms like ‘modernist’ or ‘experimental’ conjure up prejudices in audience’s attitudes. She believes that her music has a unique voice and prefers not to be associated with a particular school or style of composition. Even though she avoids generalizations of her style, Ran does describe her music as “freely atonal,” because her musical language lies somewhere between tonal and atonal.¹³ Ran also describes her music as “organic.” This describes the relationship of small elements to the overall structure and progression of a piece. She believes that one idea should naturally grow out of another and that the piece should have a sense of continuity. Ran articulates that “organicism is of crucial importance and is, as far as I’m concerned, the way in which the smallest detail and the

¹⁰ Anne M. Guzzo, “Shulamit Ran: Her Music and Life,” Master’s thesis, University of California-Santa Cruz, 1996, 9.

¹¹ Jennifer Kelly, *In Her Own Words: Conversations with Composers in the United States* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 33.

¹² Ibid, 33-34.

¹³ Guzzo, “Shulamit Ran: Her Music and Life,” 41.

largest aspect of the piece are all one and the same.”¹⁴ The use of organicism allows Ran to take a few crucial motives and manipulate them throughout the larger structure of a work. This leads to another aspect of Ran’s language which she refers to as “gravitational pitch centers.” Ran often uses specific, referential pitches and pitch classes for larger structural purposes. She states that “they function in her music as one manifestation of the interaction between form and motive, wherein the relations among pitch centers are compelled by smaller-scale motivic structures from which they derive.”¹⁵ The interaction between small musical ideas and the larger form of a work create a sense of cohesion.

Shulamit Ran believes that music is a reflection of life and her musical language has evolved over time, similar to her own life. Over the course of her lifetime, she has written music for a variety of genres and a vast array of instrumental combinations, but there are some constants that remain embedded in her musical creations.

I think where it comes to one’s voice, there are certain markers, like fingerprints, that identify one and differentiate one person’s voice from another. I am sure those markers are present in everything I write. But language is something else, and I feel quite comfortable knowing that my language is not static, does not stand in one single place, and can reflect, at different times, different facets of who I am and of the life that I live.¹⁶

Although her musical language and style has transformed over time, the identification markers of her personal voice can be found in many of her works, spanning the many decades of her life. These markers include her dramatic expression, balance between fantasy and rigor, and features of Middle Eastern style.

¹⁴ Robert W. Peck, “The String Quartets of Shulamit Ran.” In *Intimate Voices: The Twentieth-Century String Quartet*, ed. Evan Jones (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2009), 313.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Malcom Miller and Shulamit Ran, “Between Two Cultures: A Conversation with Shulamit Ran,” *Tempo* 58/227 (Jan., 2004): 31.

Throughout her life, Ran has been fascinated by theater and this has no doubt affected her musical imagination. She believes that this has given her an inclination toward incorporating drama and expression in her own compositions. Describing her own style, Ran states, “My works, unless they are based on a text, are rarely concerned with the telling of a specific story. But I do think ALL of my music is propelled by a sense of drama and expression without which, for me, music has little meaning.”¹⁷ Whether it be an early work or a late work, a full-scale symphony or a short solo instrumental piece, all of Ran’s compositions are impressively dramatic. This is perhaps one of the primary reasons her compositions have appealed to many listeners and musicians alike. Mary Stolper, the flutist who premiered *Birds of Paradise*, has been a close friend and collaborator of Shulamit Ran for nearly thirty years. When asked what has drawn her to Ran’s music, without hesitation Stolper replied, “It’s the power—it’s the sheer power of it.”¹⁸ The underlying force in all of Ran’s music is the power stemming from unabated passion and drama.

In addition to the power and passion at the heart of her music, Ran creates a sense of drama by thinking of individual instruments as characters in a play. No matter the size or instrumentation of the work, this use of her imagination adds to the depth of expression.

I do think in terms of strongly etched musical characterization given to different instruments. I love pitting instruments, and groups of instruments, in a manner that recalls the theatre stage. Juxtaposing, confronting, coming together, coming apart . . . And I often find myself thinking of musical instruments having souls. The exploration of that soul is of never-ending interest, wonder and excitement for me in my composing.¹⁹

¹⁷ Ibid, 18.

¹⁸ Mary Stolper, interview by Aaron Perdue, June 9, 2017.

¹⁹ Miller and Ran, “Between Two Cultures: A Conversation with Shulamit Ran,” 19.

Creating instrumental ‘souls’ may seem unusual, but Ran also relates this concept to the music of Elliott Carter. She states, “Certainly one of the things in his music I have always been drawn to was the idea he talks about of musical instruments as characters in a play, each with its own individual identity.”²⁰ Dramatic elements are rooted in her music and provoke the imagination of the listeners.

Balance is another distinguishing trait prevalent in Ran’s music. She believes that all music of quality maintains a balance between fantasy and rigor, which is her way of describing the interplay between the intuitive and the deliberately structured.²¹ This element of balance is present in all of her mature works and has enabled her music to sound both creative and sophisticated. She enjoys exploring musical ideas but believes that these ideas must be maturely developed. Sometimes inspiration flows suddenly and a composer is able to write down a great deal of music, but it is necessary to come back the next day and decide if everything is absolutely necessary. “This process has been described as the agony and the ecstasy, and there is no question that so much of the time is spent in agony! But you go through that agony because the ecstasy is so special.”²² Shulamit Ran uses the analogy of a sculptor to describe this process of bringing shape and form to musical ideas.

When I describe my music, I use my hands, because I think there is a sense in me, a desire, to impart concrete, physical weight to it. I’ve never witnessed how a sculptor works—I imagine he or she would constantly go at it from many directions. It’s not an ongoing narrative, A to B, but a constant back-and-forth. What you do at one angle affects what you do at the other. You go around it, and to the side of it, shaping and molding. I feel that’s how I work most of the time, as well.²³

²⁰ Ibid, 19.

²¹ Ran, “On Teaching Composition,” 310.

²² Ann McCutchan, *The Muse that Sings: Composers Speak about the Creative Process*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999, 118.

²³ Ibid, 117.

This balance between fantasy and rigor ultimately leads to a simultaneous impression of spontaneity and completeness; the music sounds free yet everything is in its proper place. Ran suggests that “ultimately, it needs to feel as though nothing is arbitrary. Nothing could be exchanged or replaced by something else. You want the final result to have a sense of inevitability, and for that you need to balance intuition and letting yourself really go with a measure of discipline.”²⁴

Although the prevalence has varied over time, Middle Eastern musical style can be heard in much of Ran’s music. She believes that music is a reflection of life and although she has lived primarily in America for the past five decades, she has made a conscious decision to remain connected to Israel. She has spent significant time in Israel and is very much connected to the new music scene there. She prefers not to be identified just as an American composer or just as an Israeli composer, but rather an Israeli-American composer. Since she is a product of both cultures, this is often reflected in her music. Middle Eastern style can be heard in her use of motivic cells comprised of small intervals, modal melodies, ornamental figures, and choice of Hebrew text and subject material. She maintains that the thread of Middle Eastern style has always been present in her works, sometimes subconsciously, but that “this particular strain really bursts loose in *East Wind*.”²⁵ Even in works where she does not deliberately utilize Middle Eastern elements, she is delighted when people can hear this influence in her music.

I always remember fondly how, when my *Concerto for Orchestra* was performed by the Chicago Symphony, that piece having been composed for the American Orchestra in 1986, John Corigliano, then Composer-in-Residence with the CSO and the person who introduced the work to Daniel Barenboim, asked me in a radio interview prior to the performances about what he detected as subtle middle-eastern influences, something stemming from my own background. I don’t remember his precise words, but I was both

²⁴ Jennifer Kelly, *In Her Own Words: Conversations with Composers in the United States*, 29.

²⁵ Miller and Ran, “Between Two Cultures: A Conversation with Shulamit Ran,” 31.

amazed and delighted that someone who had not talked to me about this issue at all could hear it, unmistakably, in the music.²⁶

Over time, Ran's music has undergone stylistic transformations, but her voice has remained consistent and can be heard through the use of dramatic expression, an intentional balance between fantasy and rigor, and Middle Eastern musical influence.

Creative Process

One of the most daunting challenges facing a composer is how to begin a new musical creation. For decades, Shulamit Ran has been a very prolific composer and has specific notions about finding the inspiration and determination necessary to produce new compositions. When asked if she ever feels intimidated by the process of creating something new, Ran responded, "Absolutely. Every work is a completely new invention. The question 'can I do it?' comes up every time I set out to compose something new. *Tabula rasa*, time and again. It is both intimidating but also incredibly exciting."²⁷ The excitement of the creative process originates from finding and utilizing inspiration. Ran believes that music is a reflection of life and everything from one's life has the possibility of serving the muse of a composer's imagination.

The range of my sources of inspiration is almost limitless. Everything about the life I live has the potential of being a source of inspiration, sometimes indirectly, and often in ways I may not even be aware of. Images, poetry, history, nature, architecture, as well as other music and sound in general, can all be fertile ground. Nearly every work I have written for many decades now has been by commission, and often the terms of the commission – its performance forces and anything else that is associated with the specific circumstances of the work (and those have varied greatly over time) – will eventually lead to that creative spark that is essential in order to get started. My catalogue of works also includes various works that are based on texts that I have found meaningful and inspiring. I choose texts that move me – clear and simple, texts that evoke imagery that, I feel, would translate powerfully into music. At times I choose texts because I want to speak to topics

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Shulamit Ran, interview by Aaron Perdue, May 25, 2017.

that are important for me, and consider it a great privilege to be able to do so through my art. Whenever setting texts, it is important for me that the music, in addition to being a construct of sound and time with its own logic and coherence, bring to life the words, and the ideas behind these words. Texts I have set so far have spanned a wide gamut, and not a small portion of these reflects my desire to draw on the riches of my own heritage. Being a Jew and an Israeli has certainly impacted on my choice of texts and subject matters, sometimes in purely instrumental works as well.²⁸

Shulamit Ran eloquently speaks on the beauty of the creative process, but she also has pragmatic ideas on the practical issues facing composers. Commissions and deadlines are very important factors to think about and the specific requirements for a piece, whether it be length or instrumentation, have a direct effect on a new work. A composer cannot simply sit around waiting for inspiration. It is important to balance creativity with discipline and set time aside for big projects.

Deadlines probably have an enormous impact on the way I work. It's hard to say with absolute certainty, because it's been close to twenty years since I worked without a deadline. I have no idea at this point what it would feel like to say, "I'm going to write this large piece, and just do it." . . . I think there is a muse, actually, but you have to make it come visit you—you have to find a way to invite it, and then find a way to work with it. Again, it comes down to discipline—the huge amount of work required to persevere and follow a vision."²⁹

Throughout her life, Shulamit Ran has persevered and contributed substantial works to the repertoire. Whether it be a solo flute work, a symphony, or an opera, Ran has always aspired to create a work that has value not only to herself, but to the performers and listeners as well. The creative process can be grueling at times, but the end result makes it worth the effort. When describing her ultimate goal in composition, Ran wishes for her music to resonate with the listener on a profound level.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ann McCutchan, *The Muse that Sings: Composers Speak about the Creative Process*, 119-121.

I want to create an object of beauty and meaning, always with the hope – perhaps almost a kind of blind faith - that if I succeed in fulfilling my own expectations, the music will have the capacity to speak to others as well. I desire to create music that will truly engage its listener, and transport him or her beyond the here and now. And I want to create music that will have a life – meaning that there will be performers who will draw satisfaction from investing their own precious time and talent to learn the work, and who will want to share it with audiences. Nothing matters more than our TIME. As a composer, I literally command someone else’s time – whether the performer’s or the listener’s. I care deeply that the music be worthy of that precious gift of time. And yes, I suppose I have an image of perfection that I strive for each and every time. I work very hard in an effort to attain that ideal that’s in my mind, sometimes discarding many drafts. There are certainly times that I will listen to something I have composed in a very fine performance (and I have been fortunate to receive many such) and will feel deep satisfaction, as in “yes, this is what I had in mind.” But such satisfaction is fleeting. And so on to the next piece!³⁰

³⁰ Shulamit Ran, interview by Aaron Perdue, May 25, 2017.

CHAPTER TWO: *BIRDS OF PARADISE*

Background

Birds of Paradise for Flute and Piano (2014) was commissioned by the Chicago Flute Club in honor of their 25th anniversary and was premiered on August 10, 2014 at the National Flute Association convention in Chicago, Illinois. Mary Stolper, flutist and Kuang-Hao Huang, pianist performed the premiere and also recorded the work soon afterwards.¹ As with many of her works, Shulamit Ran chose the title after she had composed most of the music.

Birds of paradise do exist! This fact became known to me thanks to an extraordinary program aired on PBS in September 2013, at the time I had completed all but the last phrase of my work of the same name, and had also settled on its title. My decision to name this 12-minute work *Birds of Paradise* was based purely on the imagined vision of a fantastical bird of many bright and amazing colors and the ability to soar high and in different speeds, conjured up in my mind. And then, for an added bit of support, there was also the flower of that name that we all know. Imagine my surprise at seeing stunning photography of the real birds that carry such a proud title!²

Ran attests that she usually begins a work with a strong musical idea that can be developed throughout the composition. As this idea is developed, she believes the overall essence of the work quickly emerges and the music unfolds intuitively. She knew early on that she wanted this work to be colorful and utilize the flute's virtuosic and expressive capabilities.

A concrete visual image is rarely my point of departure as I begin a new composition. More often I start with a musical idea that I think is distinctive, and that my intuition tells me would lend itself well to extended development. Such an idea does not always come about quickly or easily, but finding it is an essential first step for me. Indeed, I did not

¹ Shulamit Ran. *Birds of Paradise*. Mary Stolper, flute. Recorded on September 23, 2014 at the Logan Center for Fine Arts, Chicago, by Christopher Willis. (Accessed February 10, 2018), <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMbqSWVhZlc>>

² Shulamit Ran, program notes by the composer. *Birds of Paradise*. Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania: Theodore Presser, 2014.

start the process of composing *Birds of Paradise* with any specific image; but as I became immersed in the composing process an image began to crystallize, leading eventually also to the title I chose for this work. What is critical for me, though, as I start the actual process of putting down notes on paper, is to have *some* fairly specific feel for the type of music that I want to compose. You could think of it as an abstract image, that in some way has everything to do with the essence of the work as I envision it. It is hard to explain. In the case of *Birds of Paradise*, I knew quite early on that I wanted this particular work to be boldly colorful, filled with motion, as well as (and this was a function of the commission) to be something of a showcase for the flute. "...many bright and amazing colors and the ability to soar high and in different speeds" is certainly an apt description of that image that I had in my mind almost as soon as I began composing this work.³

Birds of Paradise is an important work in the progression of Ran's flute music. Chicago-based flutist Mary Stolper believes that "*Birds of Paradise* is very different than her older works and I found this work profound. She could never have written this early in her life. It's her life that created this work."⁴ Stolper has been a close personal friend to Ran for nearly thirty years and they have worked on a number of important projects together. Stolper recalls how their relationship began.

I was at the National Flute Association Convention in San Diego in 1988 and Ran's *East Wind* was commissioned as the new work for the Young Artist Competition. I thought to myself, "I'll just listen to three people then I'll go to another event." I listened to the first and my breath was taken away. I listened to the second one, and I knew by then I was not leaving. I wanted to hear what all six performers did to it. After the third person, I spotted Shulamit about twenty rows ahead of me. There was an empty seat next to her and I went up and sat down next to her. She had the manuscript and we followed along during the performances. There were decidedly very different points of view on that piece. She said some of the people had sent her tapes saying, "Is this what you want?" I knew then and there that day I couldn't live another moment if I didn't record that piece. We later went out to dinner and discussed the recording project. I wanted to record *East Wind* but later I also wanted to record *Mirage* since it was new, was a great piece, and began with a big flute solo. On that recording, you will also hear her flute duet. It was difficult to convince her to let me record it since she was about 12 when she wrote that, but I begged and begged and she allowed it.⁵

³ Shulamit Ran, interview by Aaron Perdue, May 25, 2017.

⁴ Mary Stolper, email correspondence with Aaron Perdue, May 31, 2017.

⁵ Mary Stolper, interview by Aaron Perdue, June 9, 2017.

Stolper believes that Ran's music is intentionally personal and reflects her life. While composing *Birds of Paradise*, Ran was fighting for her health after being diagnosed with a life-threatening brain tumor. Stolper was thrilled to be asked to premiere the new work but was unsure if Ran would be able to complete it. She describes the day she found out the piece was completed and that her friend was on the road to recovery.

Soon after the Chicago Flute Club contacted me about premiering *Birds of Paradise*, Ran became sick again for the third time and this one was not good. Those of us who knew her well were worried that it may not be completed. Her husband is an ear, nose, and throat doctor and knows the medical profession so she ended up with great care. I'll never forget that summer of '13 as I was standing outside at a break during the Grant Park Festival. Somebody came up from behind and put their hands over my eyes—it kind of shocked me. Of course, I knew the voice and turned around and there she was with a scarf on her head and no hair, a little wobbly. It was just a sight to behold. She had just finished it, pretty much while undergoing treatment in Boston. A little later we met and I saw the manuscript for the first time. I looked at her and said, "You could not have written this piece had you not gone through so much physical health issues because there are tender moments in this." This is a piece that has come well after her children had been born, as she was close to retirement, after her mother had passed, and many things in her life had been accomplished. I expected all the notes. The beginning didn't surprise me one bit. The second page is what surprised me.⁶

Ran's music is often very dramatic and demands technical brilliance. *Birds of Paradise* begins with these virtuosic elements but they are soon contrasted by caressing and dream-like melodies. These melodies create moments that are very tender and songful. The music seems to alternate between two different dimensions: one being in physical reality and the other in a spiritual, dream-like state. When discussing this idea of *Birds of Paradise* reflecting two levels of reality, Stolper says, "Shulamit was in and out of life while these treatments were going on. It's interesting that you say 'two levels of reality.' I can imagine that would have been very true. Very true."⁷

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

One of the most striking features of *Birds of Paradise* is Ran's use of contrast; sudden shifts in tempi, extreme dynamics, variety of color through the use of extended techniques, and constantly changing meters and rhythmic figurations. Ran's image of a fantastical bird with an ability to soar high and in different speeds is evident throughout the work. The tempo shifts rapidly from extremely fast figurations to expansive melodies. The extreme range of dynamics require a tremendous amount of control from the performers. Ran infuses her sonic palette with several extended techniques including flutter tonguing, tongue rams, key clicks with added tongue pizzicato, jet whistles, whistle tones, and even a slightly ambiguous effect called 'flute percussion.' The pianist also imitates the flutist's tongue rams by covering the strings with one hand, while playing on the keyboard with the other. This is Ran's first work for this duo of instruments and the interaction between the pair shifts between imitation, coordinated motion, and contrast. Rhythmic synchronization between the pair is one of the most challenging aspects of the piece. The variety of meters and rhythmic complexities contribute to the fantastical essence of the work.

Rather than adhering to a rigid form, *Birds of Paradise* is shaped more like a fantasy. Ran presents several important musical ideas, whether they be a melodic theme or rhythmic figure, and expounds upon them throughout the work.

The work is structured in three movement-like sections that are played without breaks and that together form a fast-slow-fast shape, more a large A-B-C than true arch form, internally shaped in ways that allow for numerous detours into further contrasting terrains. As the piece progresses, several main ideas that emerge early on assert their dominance, helping tie together the various digressions and flights of fancy.⁸

⁸ Shulamit Ran, program notes by the composer. *Birds of Paradise*. Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania: Theodore Presser, 2014.

Ran maintains a balance between fantasy and cohesion by maintaining a larger structure that allows for spontaneity. There are recurring musical ideas that maintain a degree of consistency throughout the work.

Ran's musical language in *Birds of Paradise* is freely atonal and sometimes gravitates toward certain combinations of pitches and intervals. The pitch-class set (0146) is used prominently in both melodic and harmonic formations. Ran tends to utilize this combination of pitches as part of her sonic vocabulary. This tetrachord appears at the onset of the work and can be seen in the third beat of the flute part.

Example 2.1 (*Birds of Paradise*, Mvt. 1: m. 1)

The musical score for the first measure of *Birds of Paradise*, Mvt. 1, is presented in 4/4 time. The tempo is marked 'Sparkling, energetic' with a range of c. 80-84. The score includes a flute part (top staff) and a piano accompaniment (bottom two staves). The flute part begins with a melodic line that includes a tetrachord (F, G-flat, A, B) in the third beat. The piano accompaniment consists of triplet patterns in both the right and left hands.

The first four pitches (F, G-flat, A, and B) and also the subsequent four pitches (C, D-flat, E, and F-sharp) form the pitch-class set (0146).

It is important to note the various intervals that can be formed from this particular pitch-class set. Of the six possible intervals resulting from the tetrachord (0146), the prime form of each interval occurs a single time, resulting in an interval vector of <111111>. This particular intervallic content allows for a maximum degree of flexibility in terms of interval choice

throughout the work. Although many intervals are used for various themes, some intervals are used more frequently as part of Ran's sonic vocabulary. Half steps, tritones, and minor and major thirds often color the harmonic language of the work. In example 2.1, notice that the pianist is playing a tritone stacked with a minor third and major third. This chord creates a very dissonant and jarring harmony against the virtuosic runs of the flute part.

Birds of Paradise is full of drama emanating from the tension between two musical dimensions: one being vivacious and combative at times and the other being enchanted and tranquil. The following analysis will explore the various themes and ideas that are used to create this musical dichotomy. The form is in three movements, fast-slow-fast, and consists of several themes that occur in each of the three movements. Within the three movements, various sections emerge that contrast each other in mood, tempo, theme, complexity, and rhythmic activity. The work is quite fantastical in nature and the subsections are not always clearly defined, but it is convenient for analytical purposes to trace the development of musical ideas as they relate to the larger structure. In addition to mapping the large-scale progression of the work, this analysis also observes musical elements on the micro level, such as ornamentation, dynamics, articulation, pitch content, and rhythm.

Movement 1

The form of the first movement can be described as ternary, with three sections that differ in their intensity and development of important musical themes and ideas (Table 1, p. 54). The first section begins in m. 1 and continues through m. 26. This first section presents three contrasting themes that are used throughout the entire composition. This section is expository in nature and oscillates between the various themes. The second section starts in m. 27 and

primarily develops the most aggressive theme until m. 63. This section is very energetic, articulate, and rhythmically exciting. This final section from m. 64 until the end of the movement is based on the most tender of themes. The music here is richer than the first section due to the added texture of the piano. The final three measures function as a coda where the music diminishes dynamically and transitions *attacca* to the second movement.

Section one begins immediately with the first theme marked *sparkling, energetic*. This theme is labeled as **theme a** and it occurs from m.1 to the downbeat of m. 4.

Example 2.2 (*Birds of Paradise*, Mvt. 1: mm. 1-4, **theme a**)

1. **SHULAMIT RAN**

$\frac{4}{4}$ Sparkling, energetic $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 80-84$

Flute *mf*

Piano *mp*

expansive *mf* purposeful, yet warm

Theme a immediately places the music in a dimension of excitement and vigor. This theme contains important rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic features that Ran draws upon throughout the composition. The sextuplet rhythm of the flute part is used extensively, especially in the second section of this movement. Also, the syncopated staccato chords of the piano create a chirping effect that conjures up the image of a fantastical bird. As discussed before, the third beat of the first measure in the flute part contains an integral series of pitches that is used throughout the entire work. The first four pitches (F, G-flat, A, and B) and also the subsequent four pitches (C, D-flat, E, and F-sharp) form the pitch-class set (0146). Since this tetrachord has an interval vector of $\langle 111111 \rangle$, the prime form of any interval can be extracted from these four pitches. Indeed, many intervals are used in the various themes but Ran's sonic palette often gravitates toward the initial half step ($0 \rightarrow 1$) and the outer span of the tritone ($0 \rightarrow 6$). The chord in the piano part consists of a tritone on the bottom with a minor third and major third arranged on top. Ran often uses the tritone to harmonically color the music.

The downbeat of m. 4 marks the end of **theme a** and also the beginning of the second primary theme labeled **theme b**. This theme has a contrasting character to the first and places the music in a dimension of suspense and wonder. Occurring from m. 4 through m. 9, this theme has a sparse texture with flute alone. Ran uses the adjective *expansive* to describe the open, melodic quality of the music. She also uses the words *purposeful*, *yet warm* as the theme climbs upward in mm. 6 and 7. The tongue rams in m. 8 provide a unique variance of color to this theme. The final measure of the theme is a transposition at the tritone of the beginning of **theme b**, marked *tenderly* and at a softer dynamic level of *mp*. Ran's Middle Eastern tendencies can be observed by her use of ornamentation in this melody. Again, it is important to note the use of the half-step and tritone intervals. The second beat of m. 4 is a descending half step, creating the effect of a

mournful sigh. The last beat of this same measure is a grace note leaping up a tritone from E to B-flat. Again, Ran is prominently using half-step and tritone intervals at a fundamental level. The A, G-flat and F in m. 5 create the pitch-class set (014). This set can also be found in the piano chord on the downbeat of m. 4; F, E, and D-flat also form (014). Beat two of m. 6 through m. 7 is noteworthy due to its surprisingly tonal choice of pitches, its optimistically upward contour, and its distinct, and perhaps triumphant rhythm.

Example 2.3 (*Birds of Paradise*, Mvt. 1: mm. 4-9, **theme b**)

expensive *mf* purposeful, yet warm

3 5 6 7

Senza misura *TR* * *a tempo* *ord.* *Sparkling, energetic* ♩ = c. 80-84

declamatory, strongly accented *mp tenderly* *mf* *mp*

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

8 9 10

* TR = Tongue rams, sounding notes in parentheses, a major seventh below the fingered note.

After **theme b** concludes *tenderly* in m. 9, the music returns back to **theme a**. M. 10 through the downbeat of m. 13 is identical to the initial statement of **theme a**. The second beat of m. 13 in the flute part is a motif taken from **theme b**, a quick grace note leaping by a tritone. The piano responds abruptly with an accented (016) chord. Using material from **theme a**, Ran

increases the tension in mm. 14-16 by allowing the flute to reach a higher tessitura and creating more dissonance in the piano syncopation with two tritones. The escalation is suddenly halted by a haunting tune marked *suspenseful* in mm. 17-19. These measures are in the character of **theme b** and conclude with tongue rams taken directly from that theme. By oscillating between material from **theme a** and **theme b**, Ran creates a dramatic sense of conflict.

The battle between the first two themes subsides as a third theme, **theme c**, is introduced. This lyrical theme is also comprised of the familiar pitch-class set (014). E, C-sharp, C and also A, A-flat, F in both m. 21 and m. 22 create this distinct and recurring set. By using a consistent sonic palette, Ran creates a sense of cohesion across these contrasting themes.

Example 2.4 (*Birds of Paradise*, Mvt. 1: mm. 21-26, **theme c**)

The musical score for Example 2.4, *Birds of Paradise*, Mvt. 1, measures 20-26, **theme c**, is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 20-23, and the second system covers measures 24-26. The score is in 4/4 time and features a flute and piano. Measure 20 is marked "Senza misura" and "TR". Measures 21-22 are marked "5/4 Steady, songful" and "♩ = c. 66". Measure 23 is marked "4/4". The piano part is marked "poco f. espr." and "p caressing, dream-like". The flute part is marked "ord." and "fl.". The score includes various musical notations such as trills, slurs, and pedaling marks.

This theme, marked *steady, songful*, provides a tranquil respite to a rather contentious opening. Middle Eastern influenced ornaments are heard in the flute part on the second beats of mm. 21 and 22 and also in the piano part in the second beat of m. 23 with the 32nd notes between the G-sharp and D, again a tritone. The downward contour of the flute's song in mm. 21 and 22 creates a mournful atmosphere. The piano part, marked *caressing, dream-like*, is built on top of a pedal tritone in the left hand. The descending half step in the right hand of the piano on beat four in mm. 23 and 25 complement the mournful character established by the flute. The ascending half-step/tritone/half-step/tritone sextuplets in m. 25 are perhaps a brief allusion to **theme a**. While exploring the lyrical qualities of the "flute soul," Ran reaches a profound dimension of expression with this particular theme.

The second section beginning in m. 27 and lasting through m. 63 functions like a development and is primarily based upon the musical material of **theme a**. Beginning with the recognizable articulated sextuplets, the music intensifies quickly with sudden crescendi and punctuated articulations. This section reaches its pinnacle in m. 31 and becomes very rhythmically complex, fluctuating between various meters such as 13/16, 12/16 (6+6), 14/16 (7+7), 13/16 (7+6), and 10/16 (5+5) (Example 2.5, p. 30). Marked *extremely articulate, rhythmic*, mm. 31-44 is a tour de force for the flutist and pianist. In addition to rhythmic complexity, Ran creates a turbulent atmosphere through dissonant harmonies, heavy accents and varied articulation, and jagged melodic contour. In mm. 33, 35, and 36, the pianist repeatedly punctuates an important sonority: C, F, and B in the left hand and E-flat, G-sharp, and A in the right hand. Both hands separately form the pitch-class set (016). In m. 39, the pianist strikes an E-flat, F-sharp, and G in the left hand (014) and an A-flat, B-flat, C-sharp, D in the right hand (0146). Ran often uses these dissonant sonorities.

Example 2.5 (*Birds of Paradise*, Mvt. 1: mm. 31-39)

The musical score for Example 2.5, measures 31-39, is presented in three systems. The notation includes a flute part and a piano accompaniment. The tempo and articulation markings are 'Extremely articulate, 13/16 rhythmic'. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The score includes various dynamic markings such as *ff*, *meno f*, *f*, *mp*, *mf*, *poco f*, and *ord.*. The measures are numbered 31 through 39. The time signatures are 13/16, 12/16 (6+6), 14/16 (7+7), 13/16, 13/16 (7+6), 10/16 (5+5), (3+3+4), 15/16, 15/16 (6+7+2), 17/16 (6+6+5), 11/16 (4+3+4), and 6/16. The score includes various articulations such as accents, slurs, and staccato markings. The piano part features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes. The flute part includes a melodic line with various articulations and a final flourish in measure 39.

In addition to specific accented articulations, Ran also has the flutist utilize flutter tonguing in mm. 33 and 37 and also a technique of combining key slaps and tongue pizzicato in m. 38. This extended technique creates a sharp popping sound and is well integrated into the

character of the music. Precise articulation is an essential component of maintaining rhythmic integrity and character throughout this section.

The rough melodic contour in this section also contributes to the tempestuous mood. This can be observed in mm. 31, 34, and 37 of the piano part and in 35 and 39 of the flute part (Example 2.5, p. 30). The melodic line changes direction suddenly and often leaps by large intervals such as perfect fourths and tritones. The entire second section is full of sharp melodic edges, accented dissonances, and rhythmic verve. The trajectory of the intensity climbs yet again toward the end of the section with unison lines in mm. 58 and 59.

Example 2.6 (*Birds of Paradise*, Mvt. 1: mm. 54-61)

The musical score for Example 2.6 consists of two systems of staves. The first system (measures 54-57) features a piano part with a complex rhythmic pattern in the right hand and a more active left hand. The flute part enters in measure 55 with a melodic line. The second system (measures 58-61) continues the piano part with a similar rhythmic pattern and the flute part with a melodic line. The score includes measure numbers 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, and 61. Dynamic markings include *f*, *ff marcatissimo*, and *ff sempre, secco*. The tempo is marked *3/4* and *4/4*.

The flutist rests for a few bars as the pianist begins a transitory section with militaristic rhythm in m. 61 (Example 2.6, p. 31). A rhapsodic phrase from the pianist in mm. 62 and 63 marked *lush* and *emphatic* moves the music to the third and final section of the movement beginning in m. 64. This final section begins with a slightly altered reprise of **theme c**. The flute part begins the same as before but changes in mm. 65 and 66. The second half of this version is more ornamented and exotic in nature. Also, the additional piano part adds more lushness to the texture and inspires the flutist to create a warmer timbre. Ran again uses familiar sonorities in m. 64 of the piano part. The left-hand notes of C, E, and F-sharp and the right-hand notes of A-flat, B-flat, and D separately create pitch-class set (046).

Example 2.7 (*Birds of Paradise*, Mvt. 1: mm. 61-66)

The musical score for Example 2.7 consists of two systems of staves. The first system covers measures 61 to 64, and the second system covers measures 65 to 66.

System 1 (Measures 61-64):

- Measure 61:** Flute part is marked *Rubato*. Piano part begins with a militaristic rhythm. A *Ped.* (pedal) marking is present.
- Measure 62:** Piano part is marked *lush*. Flute part is marked *ten.* (tension).
- Measure 63:** Piano part is marked *emphatic*. Flute part is marked *5* (fingerings). A *Ped.* marking is present.
- Measure 64:** Flute part is marked *Songful* and *mf espr., warm*. Piano part is marked *mf* and *p*. A *Ped.* marking is present. The tempo changes to *poco rall.* and the time signature changes to 5/4.

System 2 (Measures 65-66):

- Measure 65:** Flute part is marked *Steady*. Piano part is marked *mf*. A *Ped.* marking is present.
- Measure 66:** Flute part is marked *8va* (octave). Piano part is marked *mf*. A *Ped.* marking is present.

Additional markings include *(clear pedal gradually)* between measures 63 and 64, and *mf* and *p* dynamics throughout the piano part.

The last five measures of the movement are exquisite (Example 2.8). Ran transposes **theme c** to a *soaring* tessitura in m. 67 of the flute part while the piano adds a *dream-like, caressing* atmosphere with running sixteenths replete with ascending tritone intervals. The flutist's melody quickly descends an octave and a half to the F-sharp in m. 68, before falling even further with *sorrowful* sighs. In the last three measures, the piano part comes to a standstill while the flutist sings a yearning melody, with folk-like ornaments and expressive pitch-bends. This extremely expressive coda leaves the audience suspended in a dream-like dimension.

Example 2.8 (*Birds of Paradise*, Mvt. 1: mm. 67-71)

The musical score for Example 2.8 consists of two systems of staves. The first system covers measures 67 to 68, and the second system covers measures 69 to 71. The score is for a flute and piano.

System 1 (Measures 67-68):

- Flute (Top Staff):** Measure 67 is marked "Soaring" and "poco f". The melody is a series of ascending eighth notes. Measure 68 is marked "Sorrowful" and "meno f molto espr.". The melody descends, starting with a half note F-sharp, followed by a series of descending eighth notes. The tempo marking "allargando" is present, with a metronome mark of "♩ = c. 52".
- Piano (Bottom Staff):** Measure 67 is marked "dream-like, caressing" and "p". The piano part consists of a continuous stream of sixteenth notes, mostly ascending. Measure 68 continues this pattern. Pedal markings "Ped." are present under measures 67 and 68.

System 2 (Measures 69-71):

- Flute (Top Staff):** Measure 69 is marked "lean on" and "mp". The melody is a series of eighth notes, mostly ascending. Measure 70 is marked "p". The melody continues with a series of eighth notes. Measure 71 is marked "p". The melody ends with a half note F-sharp. The tempo marking "Not as slow" is present, with a metronome mark of "♩ = c. 60".
- Piano (Bottom Staff):** Measure 69 is marked "pp". The piano part consists of a continuous stream of sixteenth notes, mostly ascending. Measure 70 continues this pattern. Measure 71 is marked "pp". The piano part comes to a standstill. Pedal markings "Ped." are present under measures 69 and 70. The word "attacca" is written at the end of measure 71.

Movement 2

In the second movement, Ran delves further into the inner persona of the “flute soul.” Although this movement does not adhere to a strict form, it can be divided into three sections (Table 2, p. 55). The performers begin this first section *with mystery and awe, slow and flexible*. This section lasts from m. 1 through m. 17 and contains new musical material that evokes a folkloric quality. The second section marked *faster, more energetic, whimsical* in m. 18 begins with motifs of **theme a** of the first movement and has a boisterous and perhaps braggadocious sensation. In this section, Ran increases the tension by using material from the beginning of this movement in a more grandiose and dissonant manner. The final section beginning in m. 50 alludes to **theme b** and **theme c** from the first movement. This section is quite fantastical, alternating freely between the *spacious* and *noble* **theme b** and the tender and exotic **theme c**.

This movement begins with an organic melody in the flute part juxtaposed with distant bell-like octaves in the piano part (Example 2.9, p. 35). This new theme begins with the notes C, E-flat, F, and B, again forming the prominent pitch-class set (0146). This mysterious sounding theme is a blend of a lyrical, almost pentatonic melody with modern dissonance. The agogic accent placed on the F in m.1 and the tonic accent on the B in m. 2 emphasize the dissonance of the tritone, one of the most critical intervals throughout the entire work. The call and response dialogue between the flutist’s melody and the “*enchanted*” secondary theme of the piano contribute to the dramatic effects of Ran’s style. The momentum begins to increase in m. 8 with the sixteenth notes in beat two of the flute part and the descending sixteenths in beats three through six of the piano part. Elements of the mysterious melody, enchanted bells, and cascading sixteenths are employed later in the movement. As the movement progresses, Ran adds complexity both to the melodic line and the harmonic underpinning.

Example 2.9 (*Birds of Paradise*, Mvt. 2: mm. 1-8)

II.

With mystery and awe,
 6/4 slow and flexible 4/4
 ♩ = 56-60

p with presence

p

8va...

8va...

“enchanted”

mp

mp gently

pp *mp* *pp* *poco f*

legatiss.

Ped. *Ped.*

The rest of the first section (Example 2.10, p. 36) contains much material from the beginning of the movement but in a more contrapuntal manner. In mm. 9-11, rather than using a call and response format, Ran places the flutist’s melody directly above the bell-like figures of the piano. Also, in m. 9 Ran uses pitch-class set (016) in both the left hand and right hand of the piano. This sonority is extended by use of the pedal as well. As the pianist recalls the “enchanted” bells from before, Ran adds ornaments and describes them to be played *like a bolt of light*. She also adds further ornamental elements to the flute part with a disjunct septuplet in m. 11. Ran again explores the extended techniques of the flute with a jet whistle in mm. 12 and 14. This effect is well integrated into the sound world Ran creates. The jet whistle sounds like a

gust of wind blowing through the trees as Ran takes the listener on a journey deeper and deeper into an enchanted forest.

Example 2.10 (*Birds of Paradise*, Mvt. 2: mm. 9-17)

The musical score for Example 2.10, measures 9-17, is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 9-11) is in 3/4 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The piano part features dynamics *pp*, *mf*, *p*, and *pp*. The vocal part includes lyrics: "like a distant bell", "like a bolt of light", "bell", and "tenderly". The second system (measures 12-14) is in 6/4 time, with dynamics *mf* and *p*. The vocal part includes lyrics: "light", "echo", "light", and "enchanted". The third system (measures 15-17) is in 4/4 time, with dynamics *mp*, *pp*, *molto*, *f*, *p*, and *mf*. The piano part includes the instruction *legatiss.* and the vocal part includes the lyric "enchanted". Pedal points are indicated by "Ped." and "Sba." markings throughout the score.

The second section of this movement beginning in m. 18 is marked *faster, more energetic, whimsical*. Beginning with sextuplets in the flute part, the music recalls the vigorous character of **theme a** of the first movement. The atmosphere quickly changes from enchantment to a frenzied skirmish. Amidst the flutist's squawks, the pianist interjects with biting chords, often comprised of perfect fourths, tritones, and major sevenths. This mixture of intervals becomes one of the primary sonorities throughout this section. Beginning in m. 20, Ran instructs the flutist to make 'FP' noises. In the performance notes Ran explains, "FP = Flute percussion. Exact realization up to the performer, but the three 'pitch/noise' levels noted on, above, and below the line must be well differentiated. Make pitch levels not chromatically adjacent, and not too closely spaced."

Example 2.11 (*Birds of Paradise*, Mvt. 2: mm. 18-23)

The musical score for Example 2.11, measures 18-23, is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 18, 19, and 20, and the second system covers measures 21, 22, and 23. The tempo and mood are indicated as "Faster, more energetic, whimsical" with a metronome marking of $\text{♩} = 76-80$. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The flute part begins in measure 18 with a sextuplet of eighth notes, marked *mp*. In measure 19, the piano part has a *secco* chord. In measure 20, the flute part has a *sub.* (subito) marking and the piano part has a *with bite* marking. The second system shows the flute part continuing with a *sempre f* (fortissimo) marking in measure 21. The piano part remains mostly silent in measures 21, 22, and 23. The score is marked with measure numbers 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23 at the bottom of the staves.

This percussive effect complements the aggressive character of the music. Using a rather innovative way to notate this extended technique, Ran uses a visual means to depict dynamic relationships. Mm. 20 through 23 (Example 2.11, p. 37) exemplify a typical approach Ran uses toward ornamentation in which she begins with a small degree of ornamentation and progressively increases it with each phrase. This section has a Middle Eastern quality due to the pervasive use of ornamentation. The piano part gets more involved as the music continues, often reacting to the flute line. In mm. 28-33, Ran consistently uses perfect fourths, tritones, and major sevenths to construct her harmonies in the piano part. Although the music becomes increasingly aggressive, Ran takes a brief moment in mm. 30 and 31 for the flute to allude to the opening mysterious theme of this second movement.

Example 2.12 (*Birds of Paradise*, Mvt. 2: mm. 28-33)

The musical score for Example 2.12, *Birds of Paradise*, Mvt. 2, measures 28-33, is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 28, 29, and 30, and the second system covers measures 31, 32, and 33. The music is in 3/4 time. The flute part (fl.) is the primary melodic line, featuring trills (TR), ornaments (ord.), and a trill (tr.) in measure 30. The piano part (p) provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines. Dynamics include *mf*, *legato, mysterious*, *mp*, *f*, and *ff*. The score includes various musical notations such as trills, ornaments, and trills (tr.).

This entire second section remains quite aggressive until a turning point occurs with a restatement of the movement's opening theme by the piano in mm. 40 and 41. The theme is presented in diminution but in a similar character to the beginning, with richness and less agitation. In m. 41 the flutist plays cascading sixteenths that were initially found in m. 8 of the piano part (Example 2.9, p. 35). The piano also recalls the “*enchanted*” music from the beginning as well.

Example 2.13 (*Birds of Paradise*, Mvt. 2: mm. 40-41)

After this moment, the music remains rich and warm in timbre and eventually subsides to a standstill in m. 49. The third and final section begins in m. 50 and seems to be a dream-like flashback to the first movement. Ravel creates an evocative atmosphere by using material from **theme b** and **theme c** from the first movement (Example 2.14, p. 40). Marked *spacious, noble*, mm. 50-53 allude to **theme b** of the previous movement. These measures contain the optimistically upward contour, triumphant rhythms, and distinctive tongue rams of **theme b**. Mm. 54 and 55 are an ornamented version of the tender and songful **theme c** and in m. 56, the

pianist mimics the tongue rams of the flute in **theme b**. Ran instructs the pianist to perform this technique by “shifting position as needed, cover piano strings with one hand, while playing notes with the other. Aim for good resonance.”

Example 2.14 (*Birds of Paradise*, Mvt. 2: mm. 49-56)

The musical score for Example 2.14 is presented in two systems. The first system, measures 49-53, is in 5/4 time. The piano part begins with a 'non trem.' marking in measure 49 and a 'Ped.' marking in measure 50. The flute part is marked 'Spacious, noble' and 'poco f espr.' in measure 50, and 'Senza misura' in measure 52. The second system, measures 54-56, is also in 5/4 time. The piano part has a 'Ped.' marking in measure 56. The flute part is marked 'Faster' with a tempo of 'c. 72' in measure 54, and 'Senza misura' in measure 55. Measure 56 has a 'Ped.' marking and a 'Ped.' line extending to the end of the system.

In the next measure, Ran uses a cadenza-like measure in the flute to escalate the music to the most climatic moment of the movement (Example 2.15, p. 41). Mary Stolper recalls very specific directions Ran gave her for this cadenza.

As she was working on *Birds of Paradise*, she would ask me to play two or three versions of a section, one of them being this cadenza. I remember I was on vacation and she called me asking to play it over the phone for her. She wasn't happy with everything in it yet and was still changing a few of the notes. She was also deciding on what she wanted to do with it dynamically. Notice the tenuto marks at the beginning. She said, "I want that to be spoken

and then you take off!” I remember I always pulled back on the A and G-sharp under the *mf* since they are the only two notes slurred together, but she didn’t want that. She wanted me to fly like the wind through there. It made it more difficult but I had fun working on that section.⁹

Example 2.15 (*Birds of Paradise*, Mvt. 2: mm. 57-59)

The image displays a musical score for two measures of a piece. The first measure, labeled 'Quasi cadenza', is for the right hand and spans measures 57 to 59. It begins at a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and builds to fortissimo (*ff*) by the end of the measure. The time signature is 5/4. The second measure, labeled 'Passionate' with a tempo marking of quarter note = 63, covers measures 58 and 59. It features ascending tritone sextuplets in both the right and left hands. The dynamics alternate between forte (*f*) and mezzo-piano (*mp*). Pedal markings ('Ped.' and '8ba.') are present at the bottom of the piano part.

Beginning in m. 58, Ran transforms **theme c** from a tender melody into a passionate cry. This climactic moment of expression is supported by ascending tritone sextuplets in the piano. The tension releases for a moment in m. 62 as the music slows down and the pianist plays softly and *with delicacy* (Example 2.16, p. 42). In m. 63, the pianist keeps the pedal down, creating a shadowy

⁹ Mary Stolper, interview by Aaron Perdue, June 9, 2017.

sensation as the flutist erupts one last time with repeated high notes, piercing any sense of calm the pianist just prepared. This ending exemplifies the struggle between the two musical dimensions: a harsh physical reality and a tranquil dream. Symbolically, the last outburst of the flutist dies away into an echoing abyss of calm. Mm. 65-67 utilize material from the noble **theme b** of the first movement. In these final measures, the pianist keeps the pedal down, creating a dream-like canvas against the soulful melody of the flute. Ran again utilizes the (014) sonority in the right hand of the piano in the last beat of m. 66 (B-flat, C-flat, and D). The flutist concludes with a long B-flat which the pianist matches in octaves, creating a blend of color between the pair of instruments. The second movement ends suspended in an atmosphere of mystery and poignancy.

Example 2.16 (*Birds of Paradise*, Mvt. 2: mm. 62-67)

The musical score for Example 2.16 consists of two systems of staves for flute and piano.

System 1 (Measures 62-64):

- Flute:** Measure 62 starts with a *p* dynamic. Measure 63 has *meno f* and *f* markings. Measure 64 has *meno f* and *opt. loco* markings. The tempo is marked *Slower* and *rall.* in 3/4 time. A *Senza misura* section begins at measure 64.
- Piano:** Measure 62 is marked *p* and *with delicacy*. Measures 63 and 64 have rests. A *(Ped.)* marking spans measures 62-64.

System 2 (Measures 65-67):

- Flute:** Measure 65 starts with *mp*. Measure 66 has *pp* and *sempre, echo-like* markings. Measure 67 has *mp* and *15ma.* markings. The tempo is marked *Slow* in 5/4 time, with a tempo of *c. 52*.
- Piano:** Measures 65-67 have a sustained *Ped.* marking. Measure 66 has *pp* and *sempre, echo-like* markings. Measure 67 has *mp* markings.

The score concludes with an *attacca* marking at the bottom right.

Movement 3

The third movement of *Birds of Paradise* is exhilarating and technically challenging for both the flutist and pianist. Coordination between the pair is difficult due to the rapid tempo and rhythmic complexity. Similar to the previous movements, the form of this final movement can be divided into three main sections (Table 3, p. 56). In the first section, the pianist plays a steady stream of thirty-second notes until the very end of the section in m. 33, where Ran indicates *rubato* and has the pianist *emphatically* denote the slower rhythmic figures with tenutos and a *ff* dynamic marking, the loudest dynamic marking of the movement thus far. Throughout this first section, the flutist chirps and twitters, subtly developing a new theme. The second section begins with a strong thematic statement in the flute part. Both members of the duo play material from this theme back and forth throughout the section. The theme is short but distinct due to its syncopated rhythmic features. Ran increases the turbulence throughout this section with virtuosic runs in the flute part, rhythmic verve stemming from thematic material, and sharply articulated punctuations. Eventually, the storm abates and Ran recalls the tender **theme c** from the first movement, marking the beginning of the final section in m. 63. In this last section, Ran employs thematic material from both the first and second movements, making the music come back full circle. The piece almost feels that it will end with a dream-like whistle tone in m. 70, but the music shifts to a sudden and brilliant coda, bolting away until the very end.

The first section of this final movement is marked *brilliant, articulate, propulsive*. According to Mary Stolper, the original score from which she performed is marked *restless*.¹⁰ Throughout this section, the pianist constantly plays thirty-second notes. This sinuous line is comprised primarily of half steps, whole steps, and augmented seconds, creating scalar fragments

¹⁰ Mary Stolper, interview by Aaron Perdue, June 9, 2017.

with a Middle Eastern quality. The repeated half step alteration is a recurring feature throughout the movement. Ran foregoes a sense of meter and seems to use metric indications as a practical aid for coordinating the two instrumental parts.

Example 2.17 (*Birds of Paradise*, Mvt. 3: mm. 1-2)

1/4 + 5/16 Brilliant, articulate, propulsive 3/16 + 3/16 + 1/4 2/4 + 3/16
 ♩ = c. 69* (♩ = ♩ sempre)
 mp/mf
 2

Throughout this first section, the flutist begins with chirp-like interjections that increasingly become more ornate and complex (Example 2.18, p. 45). In the performance notes, Ran makes an important statement regarding artistic interpretation and coordination between the pair of instrumentalists.

In the forthcoming section through m. 30, although notated with very precise time signatures, the coordination between flute and piano should be approached with a degree of freedom. The flutist should always aim to coordinate the beginning of each of its small gestures with the piano as shown, but beyond that it is more important to maintain the “groove” implied by the individual gesture than to line up precisely with the piano.¹¹

It is clear that one of Ran’s aspirations for this difficult section is to maintain the “groove” with a feeling of freedom and spontaneity. Mary Stolper has shared some great insight into the

¹¹ Shulamit Ran. *Birds of Paradise*. Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania: Theodore Presser, 2014.

background of this section. The performance note was added to the score due to a conversation between the composer and Stolper shortly before the premiere.

In the last movement, I was a counting nut case. Shulamit told me, “Mary, this is not working. It’s just not working.” After trying to figure out why it wasn’t working Shulamit said, “React. Don’t count.” She does not care whether or not you are with the piano at all. She wants it to seem like the pianist is the one that’s grounding this whole passage. As she was explaining how she wanted this section to be, her right hand would be jutting out and flinging notes out into the air. I told her, “But you’re so meticulous in writing the metronomic markings down.” She said, “Yes, I know, but you have to do that.” I said, “But you realize the day I record this, people are going to sit with their score and think this woman is so bad at counting.” She just looked at me and smiled and said, “Not my problem.” I’m glad she later added the performance note so I am not known as a bad counter!¹²

Example 2.18 (*Birds of Paradise*, Mvt. 3: mm. 9-13)

The musical score for Example 2.18, measures 9-13 of the third movement of *Birds of Paradise*, is presented in two systems. The first system contains measures 9, 10, and 11. The second system contains measures 12 and 13. The notation features a single melodic line in the right hand and a complex, rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. Above the staff, there are complex time signature markings: $\frac{1}{4} + \frac{3}{16}$, $\frac{2}{4}$, $\frac{10}{32}$, $\frac{1}{4} + \frac{14}{32}$, $\frac{1}{4} + \frac{14}{32}$, $\frac{2}{4} + \frac{7}{32}$, and $\frac{7}{32} + \frac{3}{16}$. The measures are numbered 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 at the bottom of the staff.

¹² Mary Stolper, interview by Aaron Perdue, June 9, 2017.

From the onset of the movement, a few salient features emerge. In the first measure, the pianist begins with a rising four-note scalar fragment, followed by a descending four-note scalar fragment, and followed by an alternating half-step figure (Example 2.17, p. 44). The ascending notes (C, C-sharp, D-sharp, and E) form pitch-class set (0134) and the descending notes (B, B-flat, A-flat, and G) also form pitch-class set (0134) creating a type of intervallic symmetry. These four-note scalar fragments and trill-like alternations are used throughout the movement. For the most part, the pianist dashes along with intervals consisting of half steps, whole steps, and augmented seconds. Atop the steady stream of thirty-second notes, the flutist spontaneously chirps with accented descending half-notes. In the midst of these chirps, Ran imperceptibly develops an important motif which can be seen in the flute part in m. 13.

Example 2.19 (*Birds of Paradise*, Mvt. 3: mm. 12-15)

The musical score for Example 2.19, measures 12-15 of Mvt. 3 of *Birds of Paradise*, is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 12 and 13, and the second system covers measures 14 and 15. The piano part is written in the lower staves, and the flute part is in the upper staves. The time signature is 12/32. The score includes various time signatures and rests.

Measure 12: Piano part starts with a rising four-note scalar fragment (C, C-sharp, D-sharp, E) and a descending four-note scalar fragment (B, B-flat, A-flat, G). The flute part has a rising four-note scalar fragment (C, C-sharp, D-sharp, E) and a descending four-note scalar fragment (B, B-flat, A-flat, G). The time signature is 12/32.

Measure 13: Piano part continues with the same scalar fragments. The flute part has a rising four-note scalar fragment (C, C-sharp, D-sharp, E) and a descending four-note scalar fragment (B, B-flat, A-flat, G). The time signature is 12/32.

Measure 14: Piano part continues with the same scalar fragments. The flute part has a rising four-note scalar fragment (C, C-sharp, D-sharp, E) and a descending four-note scalar fragment (B, B-flat, A-flat, G). The time signature is 12/32.

Measure 15: Piano part continues with the same scalar fragments. The flute part has a rising four-note scalar fragment (C, C-sharp, D-sharp, E) and a descending four-note scalar fragment (B, B-flat, A-flat, G). The time signature is 12/32.

This motif is used prominently throughout the movement and is striking due to its distinct rhythmic features, sharp articulation, and compact intervallic content.

In m. 33, the pianist departs from the constant thirty-second note groove and transitions the music into the second section of the movement. Beginning in m. 34, the flutist is instructed to “count normally from here to the end.” Throughout this section, Ran uses musical ideas from the first section but in a more dramatic and rhapsodic manner. For instance, the pianist begins with a simple half-note alternation in m. 34 but transitions to both hands alternating tritones in m. 35. Also, the simple motif from the first section is expounded upon by the flutist in mm. 34-35. Throughout this section, both flutist and pianist expand upon and develop this musical material.

Example 2.20 (*Birds of Paradise*, Mvt. 3: mm. 32-35)

The musical score for Example 2.20 consists of two systems of staves. The first system covers measures 32 and 33. Measure 32 is in 3/4 time. Measure 33 is marked *ff emphatic* and *Rubato*, with a tempo change to 3/4 + 3/16. The second system covers measures 34 and 35. Measure 34 is marked *a tempo* and *poco f*, with a tempo change to 2/4. Measure 35 is marked *p sub.* and *ff*, with a tempo change to 3/4. The piano part features a half-note alternation in m. 34 and tritone alternation in m. 35. The flute part features a simple motif in m. 34 and an expanded version in m. 35. Pedal markings are present in m. 35.

As this section unfolds, the music becomes increasingly intense and dramatic. As the musical material is developed, its richness and texture reflect the dramatic narrative of the work at that point. In the following example, the flutist begins with the same material as in mm. 33-34 but continues further with a few extra punctuations higher in tessitura. The pianist also elaborates on this material in m. 40 with added texture from the flutist's FP (flute percussion) and thirty-second note flourishes. In this section Ran also uses many features from the first section: short scalar fragments, quick alternations, and bird-like articulations. Even though the music is more metrically coordinated, Ran still maintains a sense of freedom and improvisation through constantly shifting mixed meters.

Example 2.21 (*Birds of Paradise*, Mvt. 3: mm. 38-41)

The musical score for Example 2.21, measures 38-41, is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 38 and 39. Measure 38 is in 2/4 time, marked 'a tempo' and 'poco f'. Measure 39 is in 3/4 time, marked 'f', and includes a 'Ped.' (pedal) section. The second system covers measures 40 and 41. Measure 40 is in 4/4 time, marked 'poco f', and includes 'FP' (flute percussion) and 'sub.' (sub-octave) markings. Measure 41 is in 4/4 time, marked 'ff', and includes 'FP' and 'sub.' markings. The score features complex rhythmic patterns, including 32nd notes and various time signatures (2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 2/4+3/8, 1/4+5/16+5/16). Dynamics range from poco f to ff. The piano part includes a 'Ped.' (pedal) section.

This second section is the dramatic climax of the entire work. Ran's various flights of fancy reach a turbulent point in the musical narrative. The tension created between the two musical dimensions creates a cataclysmic storm. Toward the end of the section in m. 57, Ran uses the words "like a roaring thunder" to describe the nature of the music at this point. While the pianist plays *like a roaring thunder*, the flutist exhales gusts of wind running up to high D, three times in a row.

Example 2.22 (*Birds of Paradise*, Mvt. 3: mm. 57-59)

The musical score for Example 2.22, measures 57-59 of *Birds of Paradise*, Mvt. 3, is presented in 5/4 time. The score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 57-58) features a piano part with a 'like a roaring thunder' annotation and a flute part with a 'Sua' annotation. The piano part begins with a *meno f* dynamic, followed by a *fff* (fortississimo) section, and ends with a *mf* (mezzo-forte) section. The flute part features a series of rapid, ascending notes, with a *fff* dynamic marking. The second system (measures 58-59) continues the piano part with a *fff* dynamic and the flute part with a *f* (forte) dynamic. The piano part includes a 'Ped.' (pedal) marking. The flute part includes a 'Sua' annotation and a 'Ped.' marking. The score concludes with a final measure (59) marked with a '7' and a '8'.

Shortly after, this riveting musical tempest reaches a breaking point and a calm emerges in the final section of this movement. Beginning in m. 63, Ran recalls **theme c** and **theme b** from the first movement. **Theme c** is presented very briefly in the flute part, followed by a response from

the pianist with material from **theme b** in m. 65. In mm. 66 through 70, the pianist alludes to the “enchanted” music from the second movement. The flutist softly plays a high B until it diminuendos into a whistle tone, shimmering up and down through the harmonic series.

Example 2.22 (*Birds of Paradise*, Mvt. 3: mm. 63-70)

3/4 Tenderly, slow $\text{♩} = 52$ Senza misura rall. 5/4

mp legato p Ped. optional

5/4 Slow, leisurely, luminous $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 72$ poco rall. a tempo

p

63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70

WT $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 10''$ Senza misura ad libitum

In this third section, the work comes full circle. Ran uses themes from the previous two movements to highlight the contrast between the two opposing musical dimensions. The long whistle tone creates an atmosphere of mystery and suspense. At this point, it is difficult to determine which dimension will prevail over the other. This sense of ambiguity is perhaps a reflection of the many uncertainties that life presents and that Ran was facing as she constructed this work. The composer has admitted that her music is inherently autobiographical and this moment captures the obscure space that exists between this life and what happens afterward.

Rather than leaving the music perpetually frozen in a state of suspense, Ran immediately has the music cut to a *suddenly brilliant, jubilant* coda. From m. 71 until the finish in m. 79, the flutist plays a stream of thirty-second notes against *driving* tremolos in the piano. With permission from the composer, Mary Stolper shared some insight into how the coda came to exist in its current published form.

When I worked on it with a pianist [Kuang-Hao Huang], we went through it a couple of times before we met with her [Shulamit Ran]. The first time we met we just played through chunks of it, tore it apart, talked about this, talked about that. We got to the end of the third movement and it ended at bar 76. I didn't say anything. I had not said anything to her. Kuang-Hao and I both said in our rehearsals, "This is terrible. It doesn't work." We played it for her and Shulamit was dead silent. She was sitting right next to us. I looked at Kuang-Hao and I looked at her and she said, "It's not finished." We both laughed and said, "Neither one of us wanted to tell you that it is a bad ending." Anyways, about three days later she said, "Okay, this is what I'm going with." She added those last three bars because before it didn't make sense. It was too short.¹³

Ending in m. 76 does not have a sense of finality, especially for such a large-scale and powerfully dramatic work. By extending the coda a few more bars and adding one last *molto crescendo* from a *subito pp* to an accented *fff*, the music ends furiously and most importantly, decisively (Example 2.23, p. 52).

¹³ Mary Stolper, interview by Aaron Perdue, June 9, 2017.

Example 2.23 (*Birds of Paradise*, Mvt. 3: mm. 71-79)

3/4 Suddenly brilliant, jubilant ♩ = c. 144

mp driving

mf

poco f

f

pp sub.

molto

molto

ff

ff

L.v.

Ped.

114-41630

Summary

Birds of Paradise certainly portrays Ran's "imagined vision of a fantastical bird of many bright and amazing colors and the ability to soar high and in different speeds."¹⁴ In a profound way, it also abstractly reflects the life of the composer: her heritage, her experiences, her passions, and her own battle for life itself. Just like much of her music, *Birds of Paradise* is very dramatic and explores an extreme range of expression. The work begins with technical brilliance that is typical of her compositions but is soon contrasted by wonderfully tender and haunting melodies. The work then begins to oscillate between two different dimensions: one being grounded in physical reality and the other in a spiritual, dream-like state. The form is not rigid but the recurring use and development of several main musical ideas tie the work together and advance an overarching narrative. *Birds of Paradise* is the only composition by Shulamit Ran for flute and piano and will undoubtedly remain a staple in the repertoire for years to come.

¹⁴ Shulamit Ran, program notes by the composer.

TABLE 1

Birds of Paradise, Mvt. 1: structural analysis

SECTION 1: mm. 1-26	SECTION 2: mm. 27-63	SECTION 3: mm. 64-71
Sparkling, energetic $J = c. 80-84$	Tempo 1; sparkling, energetic $J = 80$	Songful $J = 66$
-Presentation of thematic material	-Escalation of musical tension	-Relaxing of musical tension
- theme a , mm. 1-4 pitch-class set (0146) virtuosic runs in the flute part syncopated chirps in the piano part	-use of theme a material start of section marked in m. 27 by recurrence of theme a , this time transposed up a tritone	-use of theme c material start of section marked in m. 64 by recurrence of theme c , in the original key, but with ornamentation and more piano accompaniment
- theme b , mm. 4-9 pitch-class set (014) <i>expansive & purposeful, yet warm</i> flute alone, improvisatory Middle Eastern stylistic ornamentation use of tongue rams	pitch-class set (0146) and (016) -increase in intensity throughout section by: 1) accented articulations 2) rhythmic complexity 3) metric fluctuation 4) dissonant sonorities 5) jagged melodic contour 6) rapid changes of dynamics	pitch-class set (014), (046), and (016)
- theme c , mm. 21-26	-use of flutter tonguing and a combination of key clicks and pizzicato by the flutist	-transposition of theme c up a minor sixth in mm. 67-68 to a high C in the flute part, marked Soaring and Sorrowful -coda in mm. 69-71
Songful $J = 66$ pitch-class set (014) mournful, descending flute melody <i>caressing, dream-like</i> piano part		Not as slow $J = c. 60$ (016) and somber pitch-bends in the flute

TABLE 2

Birds of Paradise, Mvt. 2: structural analysis


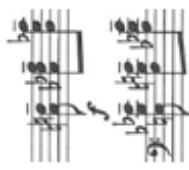
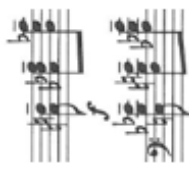

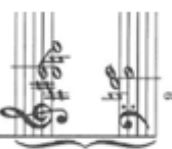


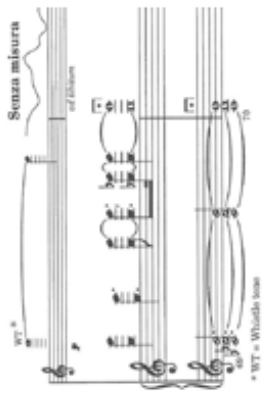
SECTION 1: mm. 1-17	SECTION 2: mm. 18-49	SECTION 3: mm. 50-67
<p>With mystery and awe, slow and flexible $\text{♩} = 56-60$</p>	<p>Faster, more energetic, whimsical $\text{♩} = 80$</p>	<p>Spacious, noble</p>
<p>-Placid opening</p> <p>-2nd mvt. theme presented, traits include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) pitch-class set (0146) 2) folkloric quality 3) Bell-like chimes from the piano 4) <i>enchanted</i> secondary theme by piano (026) pitch-class set 5) cascading sixteenth motif 	<p>-Frenzied atmosphere</p> <p>-start of section marked in m. 18 by tempo change and theme a fragments:</p>  <p>-(016) in piano chords, made by stacking perfect fourths and tritones:</p> 	<p>-Lyrical and passionate</p> <p>-start of section marked by the recurrence of theme b (mvt. 1) in the flute part</p> <p>-theme c appears again in mm 54-55, and pianist imitates flutist's tongue ram technique of theme b in m. 56 by covering piano strings with one hand</p>
<p>-Expansion of 2nd mvt. theme, mm. 9-17</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Transposed up an augmented fifth 2) More active piano accompaniment-ornamented <i>like a bolt of light</i> effect 3) Jet whistle flute sound 4) (016) piano chords 	<p>m. 36</p>  <p>-use of theme c (mvt. 1) fragments in m. 35</p> 	<p>-mm. 58-64, Passionate, rhapsodic quote of theme C building to a sudden pause before a final coda</p> <p>-coda in mm. 65-67, Slow $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 52$ marked by a sudden drop in dynamic level from <i>f</i> to <i>mp</i></p> <p>theme b in flute and echoed in piano. (014) in piano sonority</p>
<p>m. 9</p> 		<p>m. 66</p> 

TABLE 3

Birds of Paradise, Mvt. 3: structural analysis

SECTION 1: mm. 1-32 Brilliant, articulate, propulsive $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 69$	SECTION 2: mm. 33-62 Dramatic climax	SECTION 3: mm. 63-79 Tenderly, slow $\text{♩} = 52$
<p>-incessant stream of 32nd notes in the piano, characteristic traits include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Sinuous line, with complex metric changes 2) (0134) ascending and descending scalar fragments 3) half step, trill-like alterations <p>-coordination between flutist and pianist approached with a degree of freedom. The effect of a steady "groove" is of chief importance.</p> <p>-chirp-like interjections in the flute part</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) descending, snapping half note figures 2) angular major seventh jumps 3) figures start off simple but are gradually expanded into more thematic material by increased ornamentation <p>-m. 33, pianist breaks away from rapid 32nd notes and <i>emphatically</i> denotes slower rhythmic values, marking a transition into the next section.</p>	<p>-Increase in musical tension created by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) expanded musical ideas; flute part has short bird-like bursts developed into longer thematic ideas and virtuosic flourishes 2) greater dynamics including <i>ff</i> and <i>fff</i> 3) rhapsodic gestures 4) increased tessitura in both instruments up to D7 in flute, down to E1 in piano 5) intensification of rhythmic verve <p>-(016) created by stacking perfect fourths and tritones in the piano part:</p>  <p>m. 49</p>	<p>-Sensation of tranquility</p> <p>-piece is brought full circle by use of mvt. 1 theme b and theme c and also the "enchanted" piano music of mvt. 2</p> <p>-m 70 10" fermata on piano chord, with a (016) sonority and whistle tone in flute part creates a striking break before the final coda.</p> <p>mm. 69-70</p>  <p>* WT = Whistle tone</p> <p>-mm. 71-79, final coda</p> <p>32nd note flourishes in flute against tremolos in piano. Last 3 measures create a sense of finality by dynamically dropping to <i>pp</i> and loudening to a <i>fff</i>.</p>

CHAPTER THREE: *SONATINA*, *EAST WIND*, AND *MOON SONGS*

Introduction

This chapter examines three other compositions by Shulamit Ran: *Sonatina* for Two Flutes (1961), *East Wind* for Solo Flute (1987), and *Moon Songs: A Song Cycle in Four Acts* for Soprano, Flute, Cello, and Piano (2011). These works cover fifty years of Ran's compositional career and vary in terms of style, musical language, and choice of instrumentation. Although the stylistic differentiation amongst these works is apparent, it is important to notice the common threads linking all these works back to the creative mind of a brilliant composer. The identification of her personal voice is always apparent and is marked by an affinity to dramatic expression, balance between fantasy and rigor, and autobiographical elements such as Middle Eastern stylistic influence.

***Sonatina* for Two Flutes**

Shulamit Ran composed the *Sonatina* for Two Flutes in 1961 at twelve years of age. At the time, she was actively studying piano and composition. This work marks an important development in the precocious musician's life because it was the first composition that she could not realize herself. Up until this point, Ran had composed only pieces that she could perform herself. She especially enjoyed composing works based on biblical stories in which she would sing, play piano, and recite narration. Even at a young age, Ran was drawn toward the flute and has always written very naturally for the instrument. Flutist Mimi Stillman asked Ran what compelled her to begin composing for the flute.

It was at that point that I decided that I needed to “branch out” and compose music that I could not perform myself—either on the piano, or using my (limited) vocal capabilities singing and reciting. The flute felt like “home” to me—something that I felt intuitively. Maybe it was hearing recorders all around me, growing up in Israel, that gave it this sense of intimacy and familiarity.¹

The principal flutist of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra lived close to Ran’s home and in passing, she would often hear him practicing and teaching lessons. She nervously decided to approach him and ask if he would have two of his students play her new composition. He eventually had two students learn and perform the work for the first time. Shortly after, the principal and second flutists of Israel’s Radio Orchestra performed the work on the radio and went on tour with it as well. This was Ran’s first encounter with professional musicians performing her music and it was an incentive for her to continue her compositional explorations.

Ran eventually decided to remove all works composed before 1968 from her catalogue because she felt her earlier compositions varied too greatly from her mature style. Eventually, flutist Mary Stolper was able to persuade Ran to include the entire *Sonatina* in her recording project for the Erato label.

It took Shulamit a lot of time to let me get all the music from her—and that duet. She called one day and said, “I do have a work but I’m not sure I even want to give it to you. I’m not sure I want anyone to hear this anymore.” It was that fabulous duet. She sent along the third movement and I said, “There has to be more!” She really didn’t want the first and second movements to be included. She was only twelve when she composed it and she felt that it was so far in her past. She wasn’t sure she wanted something of this nature on a recording that had so many mature works on it. But it’s a gem. It’s an absolute gem.²

¹ Mimi Stillman, “The Dynamic Voice of Shulamit Ran.” *Flutist Quarterly* 37, no.1 (Fall 2011): 24-26.

² Mary Stolper, as quoted by Elizabeth Brightbill, “The Flute Music of Shulamit Ran.” Document, Indiana University, 2006, 76.

The work is now published by Theodore Presser Company and is the earliest composition in Ran's catalogue of works.

Drawing upon the influence of her composition teachers, this work employs the Middle Eastern style used by many Israeli composers of the time. Common characteristics of this style include forms based on motivic repetition and ornamented variation; mixed meters and energetic dance rhythms; modal, sinuous, and folk-like melodies; and a neutral type of harmony where perfect fourths, perfect fifths, and major seconds are both melodically and harmonically prominent intervals.³ Shaped in three movements, this *Sonatina* exhibits many of these characteristics including folk-like melodies with modal tendencies and periodic phrasing; driving dance rhythms in the final movement; and a pastoral quality enhanced by the instrumentation of two flutes.

The first flute begins each movement of the duet with the primary thematic material. Once this music is clearly presented, the second flute enters with an independent line creating a contrapuntal texture. In the few places where the parts move together, they often move in parallel thirds and sixths. The thematic melodies and rhythms oscillate between the two parts, creating a sense of constant motion and flow. Even at such a young age, Ran inherently draws upon the lyrical qualities of the flute. In terms of intervallic choice for melody, Ran often uses traditional modes with a sprinkling of Middle Eastern sounding augmented seconds (Example 3.1, p. 60).

Ran begins the duet with an idyllic *allegretto*. The first flute solo introduction has a smooth melodic contour with subtle ornamentation. The melody sways up and down A Dorian

³ Zvi Keren, *Contemporary Israeli Music: Its Sources and Stylistic Development*. Israel: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1980, 71.

with regular periodic phrasing. Eventually, Ran departs from a strict Dorian mode and introduces slight Middle Eastern flavor with augmented seconds in mm. 21 and 22.

Example 3.1 (*Sonatina*, Mvt. 1: mm. 1-26)



Since the music is heavily modal, there is not a strong sense of harmonic direction. The music has an atmosphere of tranquility and fluidity. Without harmony as a device for forward motion, Ran varies the rhythms between the two parts to create a sense of musical direction. While one part carries the theme in slower rhythmic durations, the other part often plays a steady stream of sixteenth notes in counterpoint (Example 3.2, p. 61). The two parts maintain an egalitarian role throughout the movement, both having the opportunity to sing the melody against the accompaniment of the other. This type of compositional style evokes a conversational quality, both parts speaking and listening to one another in a polite manner.

Example 3.2 (*Sonatina*, Mvt. 1: mm. 118-127)



The second movement, marked *adagio*, is the most expressive and soulful movement of the work. Beginning with a first flute solo, the music centers around C Mixolydian and has less regular phrasing than the previous movement. The mixed meters and varied phrase lengths create an improvisatory atmosphere. After most of the thematic material has been heard, the second flutist enters in the seventh measure as the primary voice. In a similar fashion to the first movement, both parts exchange melody and counter melody, but in this movement, the oscillation between parts occurs much more frequently. This creates a more blended sonic experience between the two parts. It is often difficult to comprehend which flutist is playing which part since the sonic tapestry is so tightly interwoven. The two parts seem to naturally grow in and out of each other (Example 3.3, p. 62).

Example 3.3 (*Sonatina*, Mvt. 2: mm. 1-4; mm. 7-10)

Adagio (♩ = c. 52)

pp

p

pp

(*pp* sempre)

p

mf

legato

mf

114-40806

//

After reviving all three movements of the *Sonatina*, flutists Mary Stolper and Mary Hickey performed the work in concert. Ran was in attendance and was especially touched by the depth of expression the duo drew from this second movement. Stolper believes that their

performance of the second movement was the catalyst Ran needed for her to allow them to eventually record and publish this early work in its entirety.

One of the most harmonically adventurous moments occurs in mm. 13 and 14. The chromaticism in this section reveals Ran's early propensity to stretch boundaries in order to elicit a more expressive quality. Again, the presence of the augmented second with the E-flat and F-sharp in m. 14 suggests a Middle Eastern quality. The arabesque-like lines transcend the bar lines and interweave amongst the two parts to create beautiful, naturally-shaped melodies.

Example 3.4 (*Sonatina*, Mvt. 2: mm. 13-14)



Example 3.5 (*Sonatina*, Mvt. 3: mm. 1-20, mm. 83-91)

Vivo (♩ = 160)

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 14, and the second system contains measures 83 through 91. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 2/4. The tempo is marked 'Vivo' with a quarter note equal to 160 beats per minute. The score includes various dynamic markings: piano (p), forte (f), piano subito (p sub.), sforzando (sfz), mezzo-piano subito (mp sub.), mezzo-forte (mf), and trills (tr). The notation includes treble and bass staves with various musical symbols such as notes, rests, beams, and slurs.

Measures 1-14: The first system shows measures 1 through 14. Measure 1 is marked *p*. Measure 7 is marked *f*. Measure 14 is marked *sfz*. The second system shows measures 83 through 91. Measure 83 is marked *mf*. Measure 88 is marked *tr*.

//

East Wind for Solo Flute

The National Flute Association commissioned Shulamit Ran to compose a work for its annual Young Artists Competition to be performed by the six semifinalists at the 1988 San Diego Convention. The work was completed in 1987 and was dedicated to the memory of Karen Monson, a writer, critic, and friend, who died in February 1988 at the age of 42. This solo flute work has become a staple in the flute repertoire and is an important work in the progression of Ran's stylistic development. Throughout her many decades as a composer, Middle Eastern elements have had subtle influences in her music, but this piece stands out to Ran as a pivotal moment where this influence comes heavily to the foreground.

I am not the kind of composer who writes the same piece over and over, and so the ways in which I express myself keep evolving and transforming themselves over time. I ask myself different musical questions. I become intrigued by other musical materials, other ways of creating meaning. And so the same composer who wrote *O The Chimneys* (1969) could also write *East Wind* (1987), *Mirage* (1991), and *Legends* (1993). And in those later works, as in others written around the same time period, the language associated with the Middle East is very much in evidence . . . this particular strain really bursts loose in *East Wind*.⁴

As with many of her works, *East Wind* is intentionally autobiographical. In addition to utilizing stylistic language of her Israeli heritage, the work also reflects the loss of her friend to cancer and her own personal struggle with health issues around the same time. She composed the work during a period of recovery following a craniotomy to remove a benign tumor at the base of the skull. Ran states, "The only time, in fact, that I was totally unaware of my illness was while I was composing."⁵ Flutist Mary Stolper is one of the greatest authorities on this work. She recorded it with Ran as producer and also helped the composer present several lectures on the

⁴ Miller and Ran, "Between Two Cultures: A Conversation with Shulamit Ran," 31.

⁵ John von Rhein, "Composer's Art Rises above Sexist Barriers," *Chicago Tribune*, October 20, 1988.

work. Stolper believes this work to be incredibly personal for the composer. Stolper recalls that a particular section toward the end of the work (Example 3.6) seemed to represent a final plea before the music dies away. She remembers saying to Ran, “That must have been the day they told you everything was going to be okay. It is so declamatory!” Ran just looked back and replied, “Nailed it!”⁶

Example 3.6 (*East Wind*, P5/L4-L5)*



East Wind played an important role in establishing the connection, lifelong friendship, and professional collaborations between the composer and Mary Stolper. They had met casually at a few contemporary music concerts at the University of Chicago beginning in 1985, but in 1988 at the National Flute Association’s annual convention in Chicago, their true camaraderie began. Stolper was at the convention and decided to go hear just a few of the six semi-finalists play the newly commissioned work, *East Wind*.

I listened to the first and my breath was taken away. I listened to the second one and I knew by then I wasn’t leaving. I wanted to hear all six people play that piece and see

⁶ Mary Stolper, interview with Aaron Perdue, June 9, 2017.

* In the absence of bar lines and measure numbers, specific passages will be indicated by page and line number, such as P3/L5, meaning page 3, line 5.

what they did to it. After the third person, I spotted her [Shulamit Ran] about 20-25 rows ahead of me. Sure enough, she was seated one chair in, aisle seat was empty. I went up and sat down next to her. She had the manuscript and I was able to follow along with her. There were decidedly different interpretations on that piece. She said some of the people sent her tapes before asking, “Is this what you wanted?” I knew then and there that day I couldn’t live another moment if I didn’t record that piece. That’s how hard it struck me. We went out to dinner there in San Diego and talked about the piece and then discussed the whole project about recording her music. That’s how the project started and it took several years to complete because other people had the rights to *Mirage*. I also wanted to record it [*Mirage*] since it was a great new piece and has a big opening flute solo. The hardest piece to get on that CD was her little duet. I begged and begged and begged for months because she wasn’t sure. She was only 12 when she wrote that.⁷

In terms of style, *East Wind* has a strong Middle Eastern influence that is evident in Ran’s use of modality, ornamentation, and motivic patterns based upon small intervals. Ran believes that many of her works prior to *East Wind* contained a small undercurrent of Middle Eastern style but that this current comes more to the forefront in this work and others composed around the same time. When comparing earlier works to *East Wind*, Ran speaks of a greater influence of the twelve-tone system.

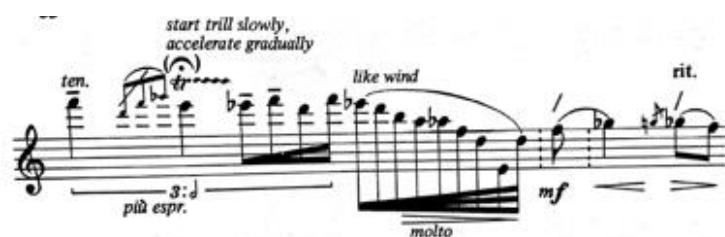
I think I can articulate what it is that gives *East Wind* a quality of being more closely associated with music of the Middle East if I compare it to my earlier works. *Apprehensions*, *Excursions*, *Hyperbole*, *Verticals*—those works are much more closely allied with expressionism and ideas often associated with twelve-tone music. Yet when I say “twelve tone,” I absolutely do not mean to say serially constructed. I’ve never written a twelve-tone, serial piece. Being a very intuitive composer, such a systematic approach somehow goes against my nature. But certainly my music for a good while employed the full spectrum of the twelve-tone scale, in ways that somebody coming to it from the outside could at times think that it was twelve-tone music, structured in a systematic way. There was an emphasis on employing the full spectrum of the twelve-tone scale without making a hierarchical distinction *a priori* between more and less important groups of notes. While a piece such as *East Wind*, there’s much more of a feeling of a certain mode that is being established, a collection of, say, seven notes of some configuration, with the remaining notes having a quality of alternating or accidental notes. There’s no major or minor here, but there are nonetheless modes of various kinds, sometimes alternating with highly chromatic passages, but still retaining their centrality as modes, even as they shift, or “modulate,” sometimes rapidly. There are clear centers of gravity in *East Wind*, and there’s much more the sense of scalar thinking. The opening motivic idea of the half step above and whole step below on which the entire piece is built is not something that would

⁷ Ibid.

have happened in my earlier music, where these kinds of close-interval configurations were not particularly part of the language.⁸

Another essential component to the style of this work is the overall sense of freedom and improvisation. Several compositional factors contribute toward this stylistic trait: an absence of meter, complex rhythmic figures, frequent tempo changes, and graduated beams that are used to notate free deceleration or acceleration in tempo.

Example 3.7 (*East Wind*, P3/L5)



Although there is no meter, Ran gives precise instructions regarding tempo to the performer, beginning with a quarter note equal to precisely 69 beats per minute. Even though there is an absence of meter and no overall sense of strong and weak beats, Ran indicates points that should feel like a down beat with a slash and points that should feel like an upbeat with a check mark.

Example 3.8 (*East Wind*, P3/L4)



⁸ Shulamit Ran, as quoted by Elizabeth Brightbill, "The Flute Music of Shulamit Ran." Document, Indiana University, 2006, 17-18.

Rather than specifically compose a piece for a particular performer, Ran upholds that she always prioritizes writing for the character and timbre of the instrument. In *East Wind*, she found a distinct “soul” for the flute. In this six-minute work, she exploits the full range of expression of the instrument in order to create a very dramatic composition. Sudden changes in dynamics, extremes in register, variety of articulation, and disjunct flourishes require the highest level of finesse and technical agility from the performer. In addition to pushing the extremes of the instrument, Ran elicits the subtle nuances of color that are inherent in the flute’s timbre. She incorporates several extended techniques including lip and finger glissandi and a popping sound produced by spitting with tongue while playing. Ran’s attention to the slightest detail and shades of color enable her to capture the intricate qualities of the flute voice.

The work begins with the principal motive from which the entire piece gradually emerges (Example 3.9). It is an ornamentation based upon three notes: A, B-flat, and G. These compact intervals and the ornamented octave and turns can be found throughout the work.

There came this idea—this idea with the octaves between the B-flats. The octave interval, as a *melodic* interval, doesn’t often appear in many of my earlier works. The octave in *East Wind* functions almost as a kind of turn, almost a little frill, a fanciful little gesture. It is not so much about the octave as an interval, but a kind of rise to an overtone, almost a yodeling quality. It was an idea that just “happened” and was there from the piece’s initial moment of inception. Once I had that, I knew I could develop the full piece from that idea. With *East Wind* the initial idea came very quickly. Once it’s there then I start doing various things to take it further.⁹

Example 3.9 (*East Wind*, P2/L1)



⁹ Ibid, 19.

The uninterrupted six-minute work does not adhere to a strict form, but it does retain a sense of structure by returning to and expanding upon the principal motive found at the beginning of the piece. The following section of music serves as a great example of Ran's use of dramatic contrast, suddenly shifting from the extremely energetic music of the P2/L5 to the soulful melody marked *Più lento* of P2/L6-L7. In the soulful melody of the flute's lowest register, Ran utilizes the intervallic structure of her principal motive with the notes D, E-flat, and C. At the end of P2/L7, Ran directly quotes the opening of the work, marking an important transition into an even more dramatic and quickly escalating section of music.

Example 3.10 (*East Wind*, P2/L5-L7)

The musical score for Example 3.10 consists of three staves of music. The first staff is marked *Molto energico ed un poco più mosso* (♩ = c. 69) and begins with a *ff* dynamic. It features a triplet of eighth notes and a section marked *13: c. ♩.* The second staff is divided into two sections: *Tempo II* (♩ = 60-63) and *Più lento* (♩ = 50). The *Tempo II* section includes dynamics like *mp sub.*, *mf*, *sfz f*, and *sfz p*, with a *molto* marking. The *Più lento* section is marked *legatissimo* and *mp molto espr., soulful*. The third staff is marked *Tempo I* (♩ = 69) and includes dynamics like *mf*, *sfz p*, *pp*, *sfz pp*, and *ff*. It also features a triplet of eighth notes.

Throughout the next section, Ran uses angular runs, strongly articulated passages marked *deliberate* and *aggressive*, and eventually reaches the highest point in tessitura found thus far in the work. In this climactic moment, Ran uses an inverted form of the principal motive. In its

primary form, there is a central pitch with two auxiliary notes: an upper auxiliary a half step above and a lower auxiliary a whole step below. In this inverted form, the central pitch is complemented by an upper auxiliary a whole step above and a lower auxiliary a half step below (Example 3.11). Here, the central pitch is C and the two auxiliary notes are D and B.

Example 3.11 (*East Wind*, P3/L6)



Ran precedes this *insistent* and *deliberate* theme with a sixteenth-note rest placed within two dotted bar lines. In the performance notes, Ran describes the intent of this sort of notation found throughout the work:

Though notated without meter or bar lines, it is possible to play the work while internally observing a quarter-note pulse (of varying tempi, of course) as a yardstick throughout. Whenever a deviation from this quarter-note pulse occurs, the extra time value has been placed within dotted bar lines. This must not be interpreted as an interruption of the flow of the music.¹⁰

This note is critical for performers to observe. The music sounds extremely free and improvisatory but the performer should be careful to not add too much of their own rubato throughout the work. Ran carefully and precisely notes the rhythmic values and durations she desires in order to create the effect of rubato. Throughout many of her compositions, it is evident that Ran is very meticulous and notates the smallest of details including exact tempo markings, slight differences in articulations, and expressive adjectives describing the mood she desires.

¹⁰ Shulamit Ran. *East Wind*. Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania: Theodore Presser, 1988.



Toward the end of this section of music, Ran gradually de-escalates the tension and enters a very poignant and mysterious world (Example 3.12). The *Più lento* at the end of P4/L1 is deeply expressive and reaches the lowest and most haunting tessitura of the flute's voice. Ran carefully marks all extended techniques including the lip and finger glissandi of P4/L3 and the key clicks and popping sounds made by spitting with the tongue without a tone at the end of P4/L4.

Example 3.12 (*East Wind*, P4/L1-L5)

The musical score for Example 3.12, *East Wind*, P4/L1-L5, is written for flute. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a tempo of 4 and includes markings for *sfz* (sforzando) and *molto*. A phrase is marked *like wind* and *Più lento (♩=56)*. The second staff features a *Quasi cadenza* with *accel. poco a poco molto* and a *poco sfz* marking. The third staff includes *rit. subito . . . molto*, *lethargic*, *a tempo*, and *mf cantabile*. The fourth staff has *Più lento (♩=50)*, *rit.*, *♩=56*, *rit.*, *a tempo*, and *molto rit.*. The fifth staff is marked *♩=63* and *f excitedly*, featuring triplets of 11 notes. The score includes various dynamic markings such as *sfz*, *molto*, *mf*, *cantabile*, and *f*.

At the start of P4/L4 (Example 3.12, p. 72) Ran again uses her central three-note motive, this time centering on the pitch of G-sharp with the auxiliary notes of A and F-sharp. The end of this line with the E-flat key clicks and alternating popping sounds marks the end of this section and also foreshadows the new pitch center of E-flat for the final section beginning on P4/L5. Ran again uses her principal motive in a similar fashion to the beginning but with a few important variants. This time the principal motive is centered on E-flat rather than A, a transposition at the diminished fifth (T6). In addition to the central pitch of E-flat, this motive uses the auxiliary pitches of E-natural and D-flat. Normally, Ran holds the central pitch before beginning the octave embellishment on the upper auxiliary but here she begins immediately with the octave embellishment on E-natural. She also expands the fanciful turn by going up another half step to F. This expansion from three notes to four adds further variety to this important musical idea.

Figure 2 (*East Wind*, variant form of the principal motive)

<p>Principal motive (P2/L1)</p> 	<p>T6, transposition at the dim. fifth (P4/L5)</p> 
<p>Central Pitch A</p> <p>$\frac{1}{2}$ step \nearrow B-flat upper auxiliary</p> <p>whole step \searrow G lower auxiliary</p>	<p>Central Pitch E-flat</p> <p>$\frac{1}{2}$ step \nearrow E-natural upper auxiliary</p> <p>$\frac{1}{2}$ step \nearrow F added pitch</p> <p>whole step \searrow D-flat lower auxiliary</p>

Throughout this final section, Ran builds the tension through angular runs, rapidly changing tessitura and dynamics, and inserting increasingly aggressive articulations. Eventually the music arrives at its pinnacle at P5/L3-L4 (Example 3.13). The music reaches the highest range of the work, which is especially pronounced by use of longer note values. After the caesura in P5/L4, Ran again utilizes her principal motive with the central pitch being an F, rising a half step to a G-flat, returning to the central pitch, and descending a whole step to an E-flat. This triumphant moment is markedly pronounced by the augmented rhythmic values.

Example 3.13 (*East Wind*, P5/L3-L5)

The musical score for Example 3.13 consists of three staves. The first staff begins with a quintuplet of eighth notes, followed by a triplet of eighth notes, and then a series of quarter notes with slurs. A *ff* dynamic marking is present. The second staff continues with quarter notes and includes a *poco allargando* instruction. The third staff starts with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by quarter notes, and includes a *Tempo I* marking with a tempo of 69. The score concludes with a *ff sempre with exaltation* instruction and a final note marked *emphatic*. Other markings include *rit.*, *accel.*, and *Poco più animato* with a tempo of 80.

The last three lines of the work, marked *Meno mosso* are much calmer and gently fade away *al niente* on a sighing low C-sharp to C-natural lip glissando (Example 3.14, p. 75). These last three lines comprise two phrases, each built from the principal motive. The first phrase begins at P5/L6 and contains the central note B and auxiliary notes C and A; the last phrase

begins in the middle of P5/L6, marked *Largo*, and contains the central note C-sharp and auxiliary notes D and B. The last few notes of the work beginning with the triplet's sixteenth notes, contain the principal motive with the notes C-sharp, D, and B. Ending this way brings the musical journey full circle.

Example 3.14 (*East Wind*, P5/L6-L8)

The musical score for 'East Wind' (P5/L6-L8) is presented in three staves. The first staff is marked 'Meno mosso (♩=56)' and features dynamics *sfz pp* and *mf* with the instruction 'much calmer'. It includes a triplet of eighth notes and a slur over a group of notes. The second staff is marked 'Largo (♩=44 or slower)' and includes the instruction 'warm, yet calm' and the marking 'espr.'. It features a triplet of eighth notes and a slur. The third staff includes the instruction '(Do not finger C♯)' and ends with the marking 'al niente'. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#).

Through the process of creating *East Wind*, Shulamit Ran discovered the elements of what she believes to be the flute's voice and has used these elements in other flute works in the decades that followed. When writing for the flute, she is able to exploit the full expressive range of the instrument. At times the music is explosive and virtuosic and at others, it is contrasted by subtle and intricate nuance. In this work, Ran's background and Middle Eastern stylistic influence comes unrestrainedly to the foreground. After three decades of existence this work is undoubtedly a staple in the solo flute repertoire, yet more importantly, it stands out in the progression of Ran's own catalogue of compositions.

Moon Songs: A Song Cycle in Four Acts for Soprano, Flute, Cello, and Piano

Flutist Mimi Stillman, the founder and artistic director of Dolce Suono Ensemble, commissioned Shulamit Ran to write a piece for their “Mahler 100 / Schoenberg 60” project in 2011. This project marked the anniversaries of the two great composers and included performances of their chamber and vocal works in addition to the commissioning and premiering of six new works over the course of two seasons. The world premiere of *Moon Songs* occurred on February 3, 2012 in Marshall Auditorium of Haverford College in Haverford, PA with Lucy Shelton, soprano and the Dolce Suono Trio comprised of Mimi Stillman, flute; Yumi Kendall, cello; and Charles Abramovic, piano. The premiere recording was released in February of 2018 by Innova Recordings, the label of the American Composers Forum.¹¹ Mimi Stillman recalls how this particular commission transpired.

I knew Shulamit Ran by reputation from a very young age. As my exposure to new music grew during my studies at the Curtis Institute of Music, and when I had begun commissioning and premiering new works with my Dolce Suono Ensemble (DSE), I knew that I would want to ask Shulamit for a new piece . . . I first contacted Shulamit Ran about the possibility of her writing for us in 2008. I was delighted and honored she agreed to write a large-scale work featuring the flute because she had already written solo and chamber works for the instrument, and told me she had not necessarily thought she would write another one. As we discussed the project and the new work, our talks encompassed music in general and topics beyond music. Shulamit was DSE’s first season-long composer-in-residence in 2011-2012, during which time she participated as co-curator of three programs and attended to speak about her works.¹²

This project initiated an important relationship between Stillman and Ran. Soon after the premiere, Ran joined Dolce Suono Ensemble’s Board of Advisors and has served as a judge for their young composers’ competition. Stillman has continued to explore and perform many of

¹¹ Shulamit Ran, *Moon Songs: A Song Cycle in Four Acts for Soprano, Flute, Cello, and Piano* (2011). Dolce Suono Trio: Lucy Shelton, sop; Mimi Stillman, fl; Alexis Pia Gerlach, vlc; Charles Abramovic, pno, on *American Canvas*. Innova Recordings (CD, 2018).

¹² Mimi Stillman, interview by Aaron Perdue, February 28, 2018.

Ran's works and has written about her in the *Flutist Quarterly*.¹³ Stillman's appreciation for Ran goes beyond a professional level.

I have the greatest admiration for Shulamit Ran as a person as well as a musician. I've felt a closeness to her as a fellow woman musician, and one who balances family with her busy career, which is also very important to me. In addition, I identify with her as a Jewish musician, because, like her, I have explored my Jewish identity through music. One of our concerts during her season as Composer-in-Residence with Dolce Suono Ensemble was "A Place and a Name: Remembering the Holocaust" (2011), on which we performed her compelling piece *O the Chimneys*. Lucy Shelton sang it on the program – it was a strong, inspired team. We programmed music by composers who were victims of the Nazis as well as later composers reflecting on the Holocaust in their works. It was deeply moving to explore this theme and to perform Shulamit's work as it is a very personal statement on the Holocaust which also resonated with me. Two aspects of Shulamit as artist are very close to who I am – her intellectual approach to her music, often integrating other art forms such as literature, and her desire to communicate with her audiences. I share her view of music as a powerful, transformative force in people's lives, and I find our personal interactions about music thought-provoking and inspiring.¹⁴

Moon Songs was written to serve as a companion piece to Arnold Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*, one of the twentieth century's seminal compositions. The two pieces serve well as complementary works on a program, but they vary so much in style and mood that a listener would not necessarily know the connection apart from the choice of textual theme. Ran's choice of instrumentation for soprano, flute (doubling piccolo), cello, and piano is a slightly pared down version of Schoenberg's instrumentation which comprises voice, flute (doubling piccolo), clarinet (doubling bass clarinet), violin (doubling viola), cello, and piano. In the performance notes to the work, Shulamit Ran speaks about her intrigue with this undertaking.

It would seem almost natural to make the work's critical position in music history a central preoccupation in approaching such a task. And yet, the real homage to this masterpiece lies in the fact that nearly every one of its once revolutionary, genre-defining innovations has been absorbed into the mainstream of much of the music of the hundred years that followed since its creation. Thus, I had opted to make this work a nod in *Pierrot*'s direction – it is a work that has profoundly influenced my music in so many

¹³ Mimi Stillman, "The Dynamic Voice of Shulamit Ran." *Flutist Quarterly* 37, no.1 (Fall 2011): 24-26.

¹⁴ Mimi Stillman, interview by Aaron Perdue, February 28, 2018.

ways – yet without necessarily forcing myself into a deliberate *a priori* attempt to comment musically on it, except for the important fact that *Moon Songs* uses as its point of departure and inspiration a selection of texts – in some cases just fragments of poems – all of which, in various ways, refer to the moon. The text settings are in Hebrew and English, the two languages that have been dominant in my life. The Hebrew texts span the gamut from the Bible, to medieval Hebrew poetry, to modern Israeli poetry. The English-language texts go from English Renaissance to contemporary American.¹⁵

Similar to Ran's other works, *Moon Songs* is dramatically expressive, maintains a balance between fantasy and rigor, and is replete with Middle Eastern stylistic influence. The very nature of the work lends itself well to Ran's compositional voice. Ran considers the musicians in the ensemble to be types of actors in a musical drama, calling the singer, flutist, and pianist the principal protagonists. Ran intentionally gives the cello a lesser role at times, and "when it is not blended with the other instruments, often allows for a notably contrasting color—perhaps a metaphor for the other side of the moon."¹⁶ The vocal part is incredibly challenging, not just musically, but also dramatically. In addition to singing atonal melodies across a large tessitura with incredibly detailed expressive instructions, and in the languages of both Hebrew and English, the singer is called on to be an actress. "She mostly sings, but also speaks, shouts, intones, and acts out—embodying some of the myriad of ways in which, through poetry, myth, and fantasy, we as people have been struck by that gleaming, fantastical, mysterious vision we call the moon."¹⁷ In dramatic fashion, Ran organizes the work as a song cycle with four acts:

Act I: Creation

Act II: *Li Bai Ve'Hayare'akh Hareik* (Li Bai and the Vacant Moon)

Entr'acte I

Act III: Star-crossed

Entr'acte II: Prayer to Pierrot

Act IV: Medley

¹⁵ Shulamit Ran, program notes by the composer. *Moon Songs: A Song Cycle in Four Acts*. Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania: Theodore Presser, 2011.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

The texts are organized in a way that directly affects the structure of the work (Table 4, p. 98).

Ran discusses the organizational aspect of the work and how it relates to her choice of text.

Each “Act” uses different devices, both textually and musically, to create coherence and continuity. With the full blessing of the three living poets whose poetry I have set here, Haim Gouri and Almog Behar (both Israeli poets), and Samuel Mensahe of New York (Mr. Menashe sadly passed away in the summer of 2011, after the work was already completed), I have taken some unusual liberties with their texts. Their poems act as the foundation as well as the glue that hold together the larger entities I have aimed to create (the “Acts”), and in the case of Behar and Menashe, the selected poetry also becomes the “shell”, the larger structure, into which fragments from other poems are interjected.¹⁸

Act I is organized into three distinct sections relating to the three different texts used throughout this movement: a fragment of Haim Gouri’s *Li’heyot Akher*, a scripture from the book of Psalms, and a medieval Hebrew poem by Solomon Ibn Gabirol. The first section corresponding to Gouri’s text is fantastical and improvisatory, musically depicting the enigmatic moment when the moon was created. The English translation of Gouri’s Hebrew poem is provided here by David Stillman, Mimi Stillman’s father.

If he hadn’t had a night like this one out of his nights
Without maybe and woe is me.
About the streets. About those scrolls of fire.
And all the dreams were and were created. You go from her and to her.
Adding mighty rain, creating for yourself a moon.

This evocative text creates the perfect ambiance for the opening of the work. Just as the universe was without form and void before creation, the work begins in an improvisatory manner, without a grounding in meter or any perceptible tonality (Example 3.15, p. 80).

¹⁸ Shulamit Ran, program notes by the composer. *Moon Songs: A Song Cycle in Four Acts*. Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania: Theodore Presser, 2011.

Example 3.15 (*Moon Songs*, Act I, mm. 1-2)

Act I: Creation

**Excitedly, fantastical, each performer independent in tempo
as though improvising ♩ = c. 96**

Soprano
Lu lo ha-ya lo lai-la mi-ley-lo t ka-e-le le-lo u-lai v'-a-le-lai.
(in lower speaking range)

Flute
(doubling Piccolo)

Violoncello
(tacet until m. 57)

Piano
(depress keys silently; hold with
sostenuto pedal until canceled.)
Sost. Ped. →
(hold until m. 13)

**Excitedly, fantastical, each performer independent in tempo
as though improvising ♩ = c. 96**

Sop. ♩ = c. 76
Lu lo ha-ya lo lai-la mi-ley-lo t ka-e-le

Fl. *mf* with abandon and ecstasy
decisive

Pno. ♩ = c. 76
(Sost. Ped.) →

The first section builds with an increasing amount of rhythmic and melodic structure until the climactic arrival of the second text at m. 61, a Biblical verse found in Psalm 104:19, “He made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows when to set.”¹⁹ This particular text is sung in

¹⁹ Translation from the Jewish Publication Society Hebrew-English Tanakh, 2nd ed, 2003.

an embellished manner against a simple accompaniment. This moment evokes the sound of a Jewish cantor singing a psalm as part of a sacred and ancient liturgy. The change of text corresponds to a very distinct change in musical atmosphere as well, shifting from fantastical to incantational.

Example 3.16 (*Moon Songs*, Act I, mm. 61-64)

The musical score for Example 3.16, *Moon Songs*, Act I, measures 61-64, is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 59-61, and the second system covers measures 62-64. The score includes parts for Soprano (Sop.), Flute (Fl.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.).

Measure 59: The Soprano part begins with the lyrics "bo - re le-ma-an-kha ya-re - y akh". The Flute part is marked "inside the piano". The Violoncello part has a melodic line. The Piano part has a bass line with a "grandly" marking.

Measure 60: The Soprano part continues with "a - sa - a". The Flute part has a rest. The Violoncello part continues its melodic line. The Piano part has a bass line with a "grandly" marking.

Measure 61: The Soprano part continues with "a - sa - a". The Flute part has a rest. The Violoncello part continues its melodic line. The Piano part has a bass line with a "grandly" marking.

Measure 62: The Soprano part begins with the lyrics "sa ya-re - (y) akh". The Flute part has a rest. The Violoncello part has a melodic line marked "soaring". The Piano part has a bass line with a "warm" marking.

Measure 63: The Soprano part continues with "a - sa - ya - re - akh le - mo - a-dim". The Flute part has a rest. The Violoncello part continues its melodic line. The Piano part has a bass line with a "warm" marking.

Measure 64: The Soprano part continues with "a - sa - ya - re - akh le - mo - a-dim". The Flute part has a rest. The Violoncello part continues its melodic line. The Piano part has a bass line with a "warm" marking and a "cello-like" marking.

* String gliss. with mallet; aim for great resonance.

After the psalm, Ran transitions to the third and final section of Act I, using a medieval Hebrew poem by Solomon Ibn Gabirol praising the Lord for creating the moon and determining days, years, seasons, and holidays. This section beginning in m. 72 is a brisk and folk-like dance. The singer, pianist, and now piccolo player are all in unison. This simple melody is in C-sharp harmonic minor, sometimes borrowing a major third from the parallel major mode.

Example 3.17 (*Moon Songs*, Act I, mm. 72-78)

Example 3.17 (*Moon Songs*, Act I, mm. 72-78)

4/4 Scherzo-like, delightedly ♩ = c. 120

Sop. *mp*
mi yaz - kir — te - hi - la te - kha va - a(s) - sot - kha ha - ya -

Picc. *mp*
bubbly

Ve. *mp*

Pno. *mp*
bubbly

72 73 74

Sop.
re - y akh ri - shon le-khesh-ben mo - a - dim - u - zma-nim ut - ku - fot v' - o - tot

Picc.

Ve.

Pno.
Sing

75 76 77 78

Act II is the longest and most fantastical of all four acts. The primary text for this act comes from Israeli poet Almog Behar's *Li Bai Ve'Hayare'akh Hareik*, Li Bai and the Vacant Moon. In this act, Shulamit Ran translates various excerpts of the poem into English and also interjects this primary text with passages from *Dover Beach*, a classic poem by Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), and also a line from Li Bai's own poem on drinking alone under the full moon. This act is divided into two sections, the first being a fairly brief, straightforward presentation of Behar's poem and the second being a much more embellished presentation with various musical and textual interjections. "These interjections, with their own moon-inspired images, are intended to serve as a stream-of-consciousness elaborations and enhancements of the "mother poem", by Behar, also expanding the expressive palette of the music."²⁰

Beginning with a two-bar *very free, story-telling* introduction, Act II opens with a section which comprises a straightforward, almost folk-like melody in mixed meter that flows with the natural cadence of the words. The pianist is tacet during this section while the flute and cello provide a sparse and almost percussive accompaniment. The enigmatic words allow Ran the opportunity to develop an increasingly fantastical setting throughout the course of the act. Although most of the text of this act is sung in English, Ran emphasizes the last line of the poem by repeating it in the original Hebrew.

Li Bai tried to embrace the full moon
 And fell into the river. And he died...
 ...The world spoke to him, intoxicated, he drank to understand
 and he knew there's no time for philosophy.
 I, too, like him, the full moon I love, but I have no courage
 To encircle it. I embrace the vacant moon, and my heart,
 So it won't fall, so we won't fall
 [She'lo yipol, she'lo nipol]

²⁰ Shulamit Ran, program notes by the composer. *Moon Songs: A Song Cycle in Four Acts*. Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania: Theodore Presser, 2011.

Example 3.18 (*Moon Songs*, Act II, mm. 3-7)

In time, measured
 ♩ = 96

Sop. *mp*
 Li Bai tried to embrace the full moon and fell in to the river.

Fl. *marcato*
 "percussion"

Vc. *pizz.* *maximum "twang"*

Pno. 3 4 5 6 7

The first section gives way to a *wildly energetic* instrumental interlude that leads to the second section of the act beginning in m. 53 (Example 3.19, p. 85). This section is remarkably more free and uninhibited. The absence of meter and lack of a clear tonal center create a dreamlike atmosphere. In the score, Ran describes the music as being *leisurely, as under a spell*. The music creatively paints a picture of Li Bai, the 8th century Chinese poet in awestruck wonder of a glowing moon. Throughout this section, Ran calls upon not only the singer, but also the flutist, cellist, and pianist to interject with spoken comments. Mimi Stillman recalls a fond memory of recording this particular section.

Shulamit attended our recording sessions for *Moon Songs*, held over two days at Temple University in Philadelphia. One section took longer than expected to perfect on the recording, and that's where I have to speak a few words (the instrumentalists all comment on what the singer is singing/saying in part of Act II). Shulamit asked me to change my delivery of "encircle, surround, hug," and Lucy Shelton joined in coaching me. We actually had to do several takes for me to say the three words with the desired inflection!²¹

²¹ Mimi Stillman, interview by Aaron Perdue, February 28, 2018.

the first time in m. 69, the music becomes less fantastical and more grand, projecting the noble and majestic character of the words, “The tide is full, the moon lies fair, the sea is calm tonight.”

Example 3.20 (*Moon Songs*, Act II, mm. 69-71)

3/4 ♩ = c. 63

mf (Li Bai singing, entranced)

mp with delicacy, warmth

Sop. *ossia:* The tide is full, the moon lies fair, the sea is calm to -

Fl. *mp*

Vc. *p* *mf*

3/4 ♩ = c. 63

Pno. *mp* lyrical, legato, bring out top line *mf* *p* echo-like

69 70 71

Ped.

* If singer chooses the ossia line, play this line, matching the voice's presence.

Toward the end of this section, the music becomes less whimsical and more grounded rhythmically. Beginning in m. 125, the tempo becomes steady with a stream of eighth notes in the piano accompaniment while the singer uses *sprechstimme* for Li Ba's line, "I drink alone beneath the bright moonshine." A final coda section marked *raucous* (mm. 138-145) has a driving sensation, with pounding sixteenth notes by the singer, cellist, and pianist and virtuosic flashes of color provided by the flutist. The singer repeats the Hebrew words *she'lo yipol, she'lo nipol* (so it won't fall, so we won't fall), until the cellist ferociously tumbles down into a dramatic thud with the pianist (Example 3.21, p. 87).

Example 3.21 (*Moon Songs*, Act II, mm. 141-145)

The musical score for Example 3.21, Act II, mm. 141-145, is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 141 and 142, and the second system covers measures 143 and 144. The score is for Soprano (Sop.), Flute (Fl.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.).

System 1 (mm. 141-142):

- Sop.**: Measures 141 and 142. The time signature changes from 5/4 to 4/4. The lyrics are "sh'lo yi-pol lo ni-pol shi-lo".
- Fl.**: Measures 141 and 142. The flute plays a melodic line with a "7" marking above it.
- Vc.**: Measures 141 and 142. The cello plays a melodic line.
- Pno.**: Measures 141 and 142. The piano plays a complex accompaniment with a "gliss." marking.

System 2 (mm. 143-144):

- Sop.**: Measures 143 and 144. The lyrics are "sh'lo ni-pol sh'lo ni-pol sh'lo ni-pol". The instruction "Broaden molto" is written above the staff.
- Fl.**: Measures 143 and 144. The flute plays a melodic line with a "gliss." marking.
- Vc.**: Measures 143 and 144. The cello plays a melodic line with a "gliss." marking. The instruction "ard." is written below the staff.
- Pno.**: Measures 143 and 144. The piano plays a complex accompaniment with a "gliss." marking. The instruction "Broaden molto" is written above the staff.

A pensive solo cello entr'acte leads *attacca* into Act III: Star-crossed. Poetry from Samuel Menashe's *Star-crossed* and *She who saw the moon last night* is framed by passages of Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* and William Wordsworth's *An Evening Walk*. In Ran's

mind, she creates a “super-poem” in this act by subtly combining passages from these different works of poetry. This act has a much more somber and mysterious quality than any of the previous music. The opening lines from Sidney’s poem set the tone for the entire act.

With how sad steps, O Moon,
Thou climb’st the skies,
How silently, and how wan a face!

In similar fashion to the previous two acts, Ran begins this act in a very free, non-metrical manner. The flute provides a simple, percussive accompaniment against this opening line and then has a mournful and Middle Eastern stylistic flourish leading into Menashe’s *Star-Crossed* in m. 3. This section has a dirge-like quality that is maintained by a consistent pulse throughout.

Example 3.22 (*Moon Songs*, Act III, mm. 1-4)

Act III: Star-crossed

Free
mp observe words' natural flow ♩ = c. 56

Sop. With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the skies, how si - - lent - ly, and how wan a face!

Fl. fl. + (perc.) ord.

mournful
mf ♩ = c. 48 3

Sop. This lu - nar air draws me to you, the

Fl. *p* ♩ = c. 48 3

♩ = c. 96, maintain a strong pulse throughout

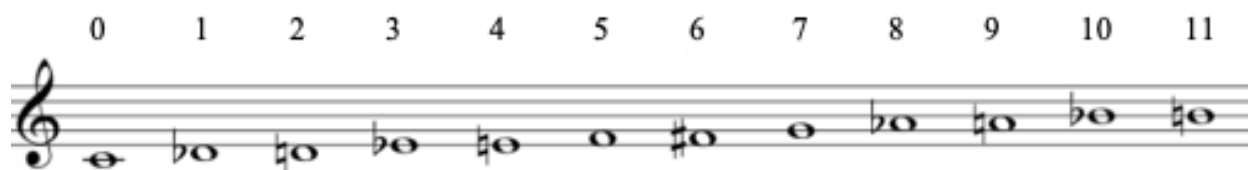
Pno. 2 3 4

Ran employs an interesting compositional technique with her setting of *Star-Crossed*. She presents the poem phrase-by-phrase as Menashe originally wrote it in mm. 3-9 and then, following a transitory flute solo in m. 10 (Example 3.23, p. 90), each phrase of Menashe's original poem is presented in reverse order in mm. 11-18. Correlating with the reverse order of phrases, Ran takes the original set of pitches and organizes them in retrograde.

Figure 3 (*Moon Songs*, Act III, use of retrograde)

First Presentation: mm. 3-9	Second Presentation: mm. 11-18
Text: This lunar air Draws me to you, The moon's magnet Aligns that pair Whom dragons slew, Whose course was set Before they knew.	Text: Before they knew Whose course was set Whom dragons slew, Aligns that pair The moon's magnet Draws me to you, This lunar air.
*Prime pitch collection: 7, 6, 8, 5, 9, 4, 10, 0, 4, 2, 5, 1, 6, 0, 9, 3, 4, 2, 5, 1, 11, 8, 0, 6, 7, 2, 11, 3	Retrograde pitch collection: 3, 11, 2, 7, 6, 0, 8, 11, 1, 5, 2, 4, 3, 9, 0, 6, 1, 5, 2, 4, 0, 10, 4, 9, 5, 8, 6, 7

* For the purposes of this analysis, each pitch class is designated by a number as follows:



Example 3.23 (*Moon Songs*, Act III, mm. 8-11, use of retrograde)

Although this section does not adhere to a strict twelve-tone serial technique, the pitches are organized in such a manner that there is no clear tonal center or pull in the direction of any particular pitch. An interesting pattern emerges from the first seven pitches of the prime pitch collection (7, 6, 8, 5, 9, 4, 10). Each of the six prime forms of intervals are used sequentially to move to the next pitch, by alternating the mathematic functions of subtraction and addition:

Example 3.24 (*Moon Songs*, Act III, mm. 3-4, soprano)

$$7 (-1) \rightarrow 6 (+2) \rightarrow 8 (-3) \rightarrow 5 (+4) \rightarrow 9 (-5) \rightarrow 4 (+6) \rightarrow 10$$

Toward the end of the act, Ran utilizes text from William Wordsworth's *An Evening Walk*. The last line, "all light is mute amid the glom, the interlunar Cavern of the Tomb," provides Ran the perfect opportunity to employ a text painting compositional technique. The singer descends first by whole step, tritone, perfect fourth, and then by tritone again toward the lower end of the soprano tessitura.

Example 3.25 (*Moon Songs*, Act III, soprano, mm. 53-55)



The segue into the last act, the second of two solo instrumental entr'actes, is a melancholy piccolo solo with an optional spoken vocal line, an English translation of the ninth poem of *Pierrot Lunaire*. This is the one poem in Schoenberg's cycle that begins by directly calling out the name "Pierrot." Ran's Entr'acte II, titled *Prayer to Pierrot*, is an excellent example of a soliloquy vocal line being reflected in a soliloquy instrumental line. The *sprechstimme* approach of the vocal line is also reminiscent of Schoenberg's seminal work. The instrumental "soul" of the piccolo is presented as a protagonist in a dramatic soliloquy. The combination of the haunting lower tessitura of the piccolo and the poignant words from Albert Giraud's poem inspire an incredibly moving moment. This minute-long instrumental gem contains much of the Middle Eastern style ornamentation and improvisatory qualities that are prominent in *East Wind* (Example 3.26, p.92).

Example 3.26 (*Moon Songs*, Entr-acte II, opening line)

The musical score for Example 3.26 is presented on two staves. The top staff is for the Soprano, marked with a double bar line and a key signature of one flat. The tempo is indicated as $\text{♩} = 66$. The Soprano part is labeled "Spoken:*" and contains the text "Pierrot! my laughter—" followed by "I have forgotten how to laugh." The bottom staff is for the Piccolo, marked with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The Piccolo part begins with a "gently" marking and a mp dynamic, followed by a "poco" marking. The melody is characterized by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, with a final measure marked with a "7" and a p dynamic.

Act IV, titled *Medley*, blends together selected passages from several Hebrew medieval poets including Yehuda Halevi (1075-1141), Shmuel Hanagid (993-1056), and a recap of the Solomon Ibn Gabirol (1021-1070) poem and its music from Act I. Throughout this movement, Ran utilizes a more popular style influenced by traditional Jewish song and dance music. Her original tunes create a celebratory ending. Since this music is based on a more traditional and accessible style of music, the form is more easily identified than in the more improvisatory and fantastical acts. Drawing upon her Jewish roots, Ran creates an appealing tune for four passages of poetry and places them in a type of Rondo: ABACADABABA.

Section A and its various repetitions are based on a Halevi poem speaking of the moon's doe-like loveliness, putting even daylight to shame (Example 3.27, p. 93). The melody is primarily in E minor with a few borrowed accidentals from the parallel major. The eight-bar phrase is clear and elegantly symmetric. Although much of Ran's music is stylistically modern, she excels at composing melodies that are perhaps reminiscent of her childhood. These folk-like tunes are similar in style to the *Sonatina* for two flutes she composed fifty years prior. Ran's compositional style has definitely shifted and evolved overtime, but there are unique threads that run throughout all her compositions. This movement reflects her individual voice as a composer and looks back on the entirety of her life.

Example 3.27 (*Moon Songs*, Act IV, mm. 13-20, Section A)

Delightedly

Sop. *mf*
Ya-a-lat khen, v' - khe - tem o - fir bim - o - rah m' - or - yom takh-pir

Delightedly

Pno.
13 14 15 16

Sop.
u - le - va - na k' - liv - nat sa - fir u - khe - e - tzem ha - sha - ma - yim

Picc.
Vc.

Pno.
17 18 19 20

Section B contains a single line drawn from another Halevi poem, “*She’mesh v’ya’re’akh l’o’lam sher’tu*” – the sun and the moon perform their role forever. (Example 3.28, p. 94). This *full-bodied* and husky melody is rich with exotic-sounding chromaticism. The miniature and intricate intervals of this section contrast with larger leaps found in the previous section. The lower vocal color in this section also creates a contrast with the higher and more sprightly singing of Section A.

Example 3.28 (*Moon Songs*, Act IV, mm. 24-28, Section B)

The musical score is for Example 3.28, Act IV, mm. 24-28, Section B. It is written in 6/4 time. The score includes parts for Soprano (Sop.), Piccolo (Picc.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Piano (Pno.).

Measures 24-26:

- Sop.:** *poco f full-bodied*. Lyrics: She[m] - mesh v' - ya - re - akh l' - o - lam sher - tu.
- Picc.:** *to Flute*. The part is marked *mf*.
- Vc.:** *(harmonic opt.)*. The part is marked *mf*.
- Pno.:** The part is marked *mf* and *p*.

Measures 27-28:

- Sop.:** Lyrics: she - mesh, she-mesh v' - ya - re - akh l' - o - lam, sher - tu.
- Picc.:** The part is marked *mf*.
- Vc.:** *(opt.)*. The part is marked *mf*.
- Pno.:** The part is marked *mf* and *p*.

Ran writes a beautiful love song for Hanagid's poetry found in Section C. The words express a willingness to give all in return for the love of this gazelle, who, waking up at night to the sound of musical instruments, says, upon seeing the cup in the singer's hand, "drink the blood of grapes [wine] from my lips, as the moon, in the shape of a yod [tenth letter of the Jewish alphabet] watches at dawn while the golden water flows." Ran sets this vivid text in a

slightly more fantastical manner than the previous two sections. She uses mixed meter and a more colorful accompaniment, with cello harmonics and dissonant intervals in the piano.

Example 3.29 (*Moon Songs*, Act IV, mm. 43-47, Section C in partiality)

The musical score for Example 3.29 is presented in four staves. The top staff is for the Soprano (Sop.) voice, with lyrics: "E - hi ko - fer l' - o - fer", "kam ba - leil", and "l' - kol ki - nor v' - u - ga -". The second staff is for the Flute (Fl.), with a "p" dynamic marking. The third staff is for the Violoncello (Vc.), with an "arco" marking. The bottom staff is for the Piano (Pno.), with a "mp" dynamic marking. The tempo is marked "A bit slower" with a metronome marking of 92-100. The meter is mixed, with measures of 3/4, 3/8, 2/4, 3/8, and 3/4. The piano part features dissonant intervals and cello harmonics. The measure numbers 43, 44, 45, 46, and 47 are indicated at the bottom of the piano staff.

In the middle of this final act, Ran integrates a reprisal of the music and poetry of Gabirol from Act I (see Example 3.17, p. 82), Section D. This reiteration is certainly recognizable but expounded upon, transposed up a minor third and with a more dissonant piano part. The meter is also altered and less predictable. The Gabirol text directed to the Lord asks, “Who will declare your praises for having made the moon?” This inspired passage and its music bring the entirety of the work full circle (Example 3.30, p. 96).

Ran returns to the music of sections A and B to conclude the movement. On the premiere recording, the Dolce Suono Trio adds tambourine throughout the last minute of music, starting in m. 114. The composer was present during the recording process and in agreement with the

decorative tambourine. In dramatic fashion, the dance music gets faster and faster until a sudden drop in tempo in the last three measures for a grand finale.

Example 3.30 (*Moon Songs*, Act IV, mm. 79-84, Section D in partiality)

Example 3.30 (Moon Songs, Act IV, mm. 79-84, Section D in partiality)

Measures 79-81:

- Tempo:** Festive, as in Act I ♩ = c. 120
- Key Signature:** One sharp (F#)
- Meter:** 4/4, 5/8 (3+2), 7/8
- Vocal Line (Sop.):** Mi yaz - - kir - - te - hi - la - te - kha
- Instrumental Parts:** Picc., Ve., Pno.

Measures 82-84:

- Tempo:** Festive, as in Act I ♩ = c. 120
- Key Signature:** One sharp (F#)
- Meter:** 7/8 (2+2+3), 4/4, 3/4
- Vocal Line (Sop.):** va - a - (s) sot - kha ha - ya - re - y - akh
- Instrumental Parts:** Picc., Ve., Pno.

This recent chamber work demonstrates Shulamit Ran's affinity for the dramatic. By utilizing Hebrew and English poetry spanning many centuries in a collage-type setting, Ran creates a work that is unique to her own background and individual voice as a composer. In many of her works, her idea of instrumental "souls" is evident, but it is especially noticeable in chamber works when these individual "souls" come alive as protagonists in an instrumental drama. Over the course of fifty years of composition Ran's style has evolved, but the individuality of her compositional voice has always been prominent and profound.

TABLE 4

Moon Songs: structural analysis

<u>Act I: Creation</u>	<u>Act II: Li Bai & the Vacant Moon</u>	<u>Act III: Star-crossed</u>	<u>Act IV: Medley</u>
<p>Primary Poetry: GOURI</p> <p>3 sections relating to 3 texts (each text in Hebrew)</p> <p>1) GOURI, mm. 1-60</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Excitedly, fantastical, each performer independent in tempo as though improvising -opening in a hushed lower speaking voice -<i>sprechstimme</i> woven in and out of vocal line -builds with increasing amount of rhythmic and melodic structure <p>2) PSALM, mm. 61-71</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -statuesque & incantational -embellished, cantor-like vocal line <p>3) GABIROL, mm. 72-89</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Scherzo-like, delightedly -popular, folk style -voice and instruments often in unison, simple accompaniment 	<p>Primary Poetry: BEHAR</p> <p>2 sections relating to 2 presentations of BEHAR's poetry (majority of text in English)</p> <p>intro, mm. 1-2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Very free, story telling style <p>1) BEHAR only, mm. 3-46</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -straightforward, simple melody with sparse accompaniment -changing meter fluctuating with natural cadence of words <p>Instrumental bridge, mm. 47-52</p> <p>2) BEHAR with interjections of ARNOLD and LI BAI, mm. 53-145</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -stream of conscious elaborations -additional poetry added to enhance the expressive impact of BEHAR, the "mother poem" -instrumentalists have spoken lines, commenting on the soprano's text -surrealistic atmosphere <p>Entr'acte I: cello solo</p>	<p>Primary Poetry: MENASHE</p> <p>MENASHE framed by 2 other poets</p> <p>Most dark & mysterious Act</p> <p>1) Free introduction based on poetry by SIDNEY, mm. 1-2</p> <p>2) MENASHE poem #1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -mm. 3-9, phrases presented in normal order -mm 11-19, phrases in reverse order, melody in retrograde <p>-mm. 20-27, MENASHE poem #2</p> <p>3) mm. 28-55, WORDSWORTH poem, same melody as MENASHE mm. 3-9</p> <p>Instrumental coda, mm. 58-64</p> <p>Entr'acte II: Prayer to Pierrot piccolo solo with spoken voice</p>	<p>Medley of Poetry: HALEVY, HANAGID, and GABIROL</p> <p>Rondo: ABACADABABA</p> <p>Popular Jewish folk style</p> <p>Section A- HALEVI poem #1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -upbeat and jaunty -8 bar phrases in 4/4 meter <p>Section B- HALEVI poem #2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -low, husky vocal color -arabesque melodic line with smooth contour <p>Section C- HANAGID</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -more fantastical than previous sections, a bit slower as well -more colorful accompaniment with cello harmonics and dissonant piano chords <p>Section D- GABIROL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -recap of poetry and music from Act I, Section 3

CHAPTER FOUR: COMPOSER AND PERFORMER INTERVIEWS

Shulamit Ran has featured the flute in her compositions for over five decades. As a result, she has developed close connections with flutists who have not only helped premiere her works, but have also gone on to promote her works within the larger flute community. She has always valued the relationships with those performing her works and considers them to be her closest collaborators.

Having been immersed as I was in performance was one of the most valuable lessons life had given me towards my work as a composer. I have a deep respect for performers. I never think they are just there to execute what I'm putting down on the paper. I see them as my closest collaborators. There is great intimacy in the whole process. I've composed something, and it's on paper in the form of dots and lines. It is very much alive in my mind, and yet it needs the performer so that it won't just live in my mind or on paper. It becomes a reality. And so performers are my closest allies, and it's an extraordinary relationship. For me, it's the greatest compliment and fulfillment to know that there are people out there who are waiting for a certain date when I will be delivering a new work for them, and they will delve into it and turn it into the reality of sound. The performers are the ones who make the biggest leap in terms of a work becoming something of meaning that will have a life. And if the performer brings conviction and passion to the performance of a work, then the audience will come along—I am convinced.¹

When studying and performing contemporary works, it is beneficial to not only analyze the theoretical aspects of the work, but also to examine the interaction between the composer and musician. This approach often reveals important insights into the interpretation of a composition and helps with the process of learning a new and technically challenging work. This chapter includes first-hand interviews with Shulamit Ran and two of her closest flutist collaborators: Mimi Stillman and Mary Stolper.

¹ Jennifer Kelly, *In Her Own Words: Conversations with Composers in the United States* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 30-31.

Interview with Shulamit Ran²

AP: In the program notes for *Birds of Paradise*, you mentioned that the work was based on “the imagined vision of a fantastical bird of many bright and amazing colors and the ability to soar high and in different speeds.” Do you often have a visual image as a source of inspiration for a new work?

SR: A concrete visual image is rarely my point of departure as I begin a new composition. More often I start with a musical idea that I think is distinctive, and that my intuition tells me would lend itself well to extended development. Such an idea does not always come about quickly or easily, but finding it is an essential first step for me. Indeed, I did not start the process of composing *Birds of Paradise* with any specific image; but as I became immersed in the composing process an image began to crystallize, leading eventually also to the title I chose for this work. What is critical for me, though, as I start the actual process of putting down notes on paper, is to have *some* fairly specific feel for the type of music that I want to compose. You could think of it as an abstract image, that in some way has everything to do with the essence of the work as I envision it. It is hard to explain. In the case of *Birds of Paradise* I knew quite early on that I wanted this particular work to be boldly colorful, filled with motion, as well as (and this was a function of the commission) to be something of a showcase for the flute. “...many bright and amazing colors and the ability to soar high and in different speeds” is certainly an apt description of that image that I had in my mind almost as soon as I began composing this work.

AP: What are other sources of inspiration that you draw upon?

SR: The range of my sources of inspiration is almost limitless. Everything about the life I live has the potential of being a source of inspiration, sometimes indirectly, and often in ways I may not even be aware of. Images, poetry, history, nature, architecture, as well as other music and sound in general, can all be fertile ground. Nearly every work I have written for many decades now has been by commission, and often the terms of the commission – its performance forces and anything else that is associated with the specific circumstances of the work (and those have varied greatly over time) – will eventually lead to that creative spark that is essential in order to get started. My catalogue of works also includes various works that are based on texts that I have found meaningful and inspiring. I choose texts that move me – clear and simple, texts that evoke imagery that, I feel, would translate powerfully into music. At times I choose texts because I want to speak to topics that are important for me, and consider it a great privilege to be able to do so through my art. Whenever setting texts, it is important for me that the music, in addition to being a construct of sound and time with its own logic and coherence, bring to life the words, and the ideas behind these words. Texts I have set so far have spanned a wide gamut, and not a small portion of these reflects my desire to draw on the riches of my own heritage. Being a Jew and an Israeli has certainly impacted on my choice of texts and subject matters, sometimes in purely instrumental works as well.

AP: When sitting down at a blank piece of staff paper, do you ever feel intimidated by the process of creating something new?

² Shulamit Ran, interview by Aaron Perdue, May 25, 2017.

SR: Absolutely. Every work is a completely new invention. The question “can I do it?” comes up every time I set out to compose something new. Tabula rasa, time and again. It is both intimidating but also incredibly exciting.

AP: What are some of your goals when creating a new work? Are you trying to discover something new through exploration? Trying to achieve an ideal of perfection? Are you ever truly satisfied with the end result? Is there a definitive finish line?

SR: I want to create an object of beauty and meaning, always with the hope – perhaps almost a kind of blind faith – that if I succeed in fulfilling my own expectations, the music will have the capacity to speak to others as well. I desire to create music that will truly engage its listener, and transport him or her beyond the here and now. And I want to create music that will have a life – meaning that there will be performers who will draw satisfaction from investing their own precious time and talent to learn the work, and who will want to share it with audiences. Nothing matters more than our time. As a composer, I literally command someone else’s time – whether the performer’s or the listener’s. I care deeply that the music be worthy of that precious gift of time. And yes, I suppose I have an image of perfection that I strive for each and every time. I work very hard in an effort to attain that ideal that’s in my mind, sometimes discarding many drafts. There are certainly times that I will listen to something I have composed in a very fine performance (and I have been fortunate to receive many such) and will feel deep satisfaction, as in “yes, this is what I had in mind”. But such satisfaction is fleeting. And so on to the next piece!

AP: *Birds of Paradise* was written for the Chicago Flute Club’s 25th Anniversary Commission and premiered at the National Flute Association in 2014. Flutists seem to especially love new compositions. Do you believe this to be an accurate statement?

SR: I think there are indeed many flutists out there who realize that the flute repertoire, as well as chamber music that includes flute, has grown exponentially, both in size and in interest since earlier eras. There is of course some splendid flute music of past eras (Bach immediately comes to mind), yet it is in the past 100 years that the flute has really “come of age”, ever so much more so in recent decades. The best flutists want to play exciting, powerful, emotional music. And they often find it in new compositions.

AP: How have your relationships with larger groups such as the N.F.A. and individuals like Mary Stolper impacted you?

SR: The N.F.A. commissioned *East Wind*, my solo flute work – I owe this to flute virtuoso and composer Robert Dick who heard an ensemble work of mine in a New York concert and subsequently encouraged the N.F.A. to commission me for a work to be played by the six semi-finalists in the Young Artists Competition at the 1988 N.F.A. annual convention. In retrospect, *East Wind* was an important work for me, opening new vistas that I continued to explore in several later works. I am not sure it would have been composed were it not for this commission. The N.F.A. commissioned me once again, this time to write a flute concerto for its year 2000 convention. And again it was a flutist, or perhaps several flutists, who made this happen. Both Patricia Spencer and Jayne Rosenfeld, two noted New York-based flutists with strong links to contemporary music who had performed works of mine prior to this, were strong advocates for

the commissioning by the N.F.A. of what became *Voices for a flautist with orchestra*. Patricia was subsequently selected to premiere the work at the convention, and in a letter she wrote to me she passionately laid out her thoughts for the “flute voice” she had hoped to see explored in this concerto, all of which were perfectly in accord with my own intent. The connection with Mary Stolper, the superb Chicago-based flutist, has been another powerful flute-link in my life. Mary sat right next to me at the six-pronged premiere of *East Wind* at the N.F.A. convention in San Diego in 1988. Together we marveled at the incredible variety of interpretations by the six brilliant semi-finalists. We remained very close since then, and our various collaborations have included Mary’s superb recording of *East Wind*, *Mirage*, and other works of mine on the Erato label (now-defunct, sadly), performances of *Voices*, and most recently her premiere of *Birds of Paradise*, again at the N.F.A. convention in 2014. Patricia Spencer, too, has been very active in performing and recording my music, and so has Mimi Stillman, who commissioned *Moon Songs* for her Dolce Suono Ensemble. So you can certainly see that these close associations with the N.F.A. and with numerous wonderful flutists have contributed meaningfully to enhancing the presence of the flute in my compositional work.

AP: How much freedom for interpretation do you allow in your compositions? I love your descriptive vernacular in *Birds of Paradise*. I find it inspiring. How much leeway do you allow the performer in terms of interpretive intuition?

SR: Here is what I tell performers time and again, and have, in some cases, indicated in my score: first, one must learn the score faithfully; pay close attention to tempi, rhythm, dynamics, articulation, as well as my frequent verbal descriptions in which I aim to capture something about the spirit of a given passage; ultimately, though, these will serve as a “blue print” only – it is up to the individual performer, once the music is carefully learned, to “take off”, making the music their own. I am not at all interested in a performance that is “metronomic”. My notation, for all its specificity, is only the starting point – ultimately I want the music to sing and dance and sway, have emotion, grandeur, abandon and delicacy. And of course this is where a performer’s intuition must come in. Music is magic, and thankfully there is not just a single way of making it happen.

AP: What is it like hearing a new work performed for the first time? Do you prefer to work with the performers in rehearsals beforehand?

SR: Hearing one’s work for the first time really is an incredible experience. Something that has gestated inside oneself often for a long period of time is finally becoming real. Music is different from other arts in that when you write notes on paper you are hearing it in your mind, but what you see in front of you is merely a symbolic, notational representation. So the moment when you actually get to hear it is truly thrilling. And yes, I absolutely want to work with the performers in rehearsal beforehand, most especially in the case of a new work. For me, that’s a must. That said, it has given me the greatest satisfaction to see my works performed by artists with whom I have not had the opportunity to rehearse, and who simply go to the music and bring it to life without any personal input from me. And it is at those times that I know that my music has a life of its own, independently of me. Ultimately that is what a composer wishes for.

Interview with Mimi Stillman³

AP: What has drawn you to the music of Shulamit Ran?

MS: I knew Shulamit Ran by reputation from a very young age. As my exposure to new music grew during my studies at the Curtis Institute of Music, and when I had begun commissioning and premiering new works with my Dolce Suono Ensemble (DSE), I knew that I would want to ask Shulamit for a new piece. The opportunity presented itself in planning Dolce Suono Ensemble's "Mahler 100 / Schoenberg 60" project marking the 2011 anniversaries of the two masters. This large-scale project included performances of Mahler and Schoenberg chamber and vocal works and the commission and premiere of six new works over two seasons. Our distinguished roster of composers included eminent composers Ran and Steven Stucky (Pulitzer winners), and Steven Mackey (Grammy winner), as well as acclaimed mid-career composers David Ludwig, Fang Man, and Stratis Minakakis. Celebrated singers Lucy Shelton, soprano, and Eric Owens, bass-baritone, joined us to premiere the works with voice. I first contacted Shulamit Ran about the possibility of her writing for us in 2008. I was delighted and honored she agreed to write a large-scale work featuring the flute because she had already written solo and chamber works for the instrument, and told me she had not necessarily thought she would write another one. As we discussed the project and the new work, our talks encompassed music in general and topics beyond music. Shulamit was DSE's first season-long composer-in-residence in 2011-2012, during which time she participated as co-curator of three programs and attended to speak about her works. In February, 2012, we gave the world premiere performances of *Moon Songs* in Philadelphia, Haverford, PA, and New York City. Shulamit also joined DSE's Board of Advisors, in which capacity she has assisted with her input on various projects and served as a judge for DSE's Steven Stucky Young Composers Competition. I am fortunate to consider Shulamit Ran a valued mentor, colleague, and friend.

AP: Over the course of her compositional career, Shulamit Ran has written several prominent works featuring the flute (*Sonatina for two flutes* in 1961, *O the Chimneys* in 1969, *East Wind* in 1987, *Mirage* in 1990, *Voices* in 2000, *Moon Songs* in 2012, and *Birds of Paradise* in 2014). These works vary greatly from one another in terms of style and setting and certainly don't follow a specific formula. Do you believe there are any common threads among these works in terms of how she treats the flute?

MS: There are common threads among Shulamit's works featuring the flute despite their different inspirations, configurations, and periods in which they were written. She has written that she thinks "of my instruments as 'characters,' and I like exploring their 'souls.'" Ran's success at capturing an inner character or soul of the instrument in her flute writing is one of the things which initially drew me to her music. In *East Wind*, *Voices*, and *Moon Songs*, there is an organic quality to the flute writing. Her notation is typically very precise, the music often melodically and rhythmically complex, but at all times the lines make musical sense as phrases. The contours of the line and the rhythmic impulse clearly indicate how to shape them. Her interest in exploring timbre is salient, within her writing for C flute and in her use of alto flute and piccolo in *Voices* and piccolo in *Moon Songs* and *O the Chimneys*. In all her flute works I've

³ Mimi Stillman, interview by Aaron Perdue, February 28, 2018.

performed, she writes sinuous or arabesque-like lines, often with feathered barring to indicate an increase or decrease in speed. I have noticed she is often very precise in her concept of weak and strong beats in her music, sometimes indicating an element that must either be felt as a pickup or a downbeat. Whether she's writing in a meter or in unmeasured bars, sometimes within the same piece, her phrases tend to transcend the bar lines. Shulamit's flute writing with an ancient or folk-inspired flavor is prominent in her pieces, and is connected with her earliest memories of hearing recorders growing up in Israel. In an interview I did with her for *Flutist Quarterly*, she said "maybe it was hearing recorders all around me, growing up in Israel, that gave it [the flute] this sense of intimacy and familiarity." To wit, *Moon Songs*, where the melismatic music in the first two acts is paired with Biblical texts and texts evoking Tang dynasty China, and the finale is comprised of original folksong-like music; in the last movement of *Voices*, and in *East Wind*, where her winding lines give the piece a Middle Eastern sound.

AP: *Moon Songs* was composed to complement Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire*. Beyond subject material, do you find any interesting similarities between the two works?

MS: *Moon Songs* in musical language and mood is very different from *Pierrot lunaire*, in fact if you did not know it was written as a companion piece for the Schoenberg you probably would not guess. However, as Shulamit describes in her program note, the links with Schoenberg and influence of Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire* on her as a composer are significant. The role of the singer is similar in that it is dramatic, almost acted, and written for Lucy Shelton, for whom *Pierrot lunaire* is a signature role. The most explicit connection between *Moon Songs* and *Pierrot lunaire* is the use of one of the Albert Giraud poems Schoenberg set in #21 of *Pierrot lunaire*, in English translation in Entr'acte II of *Moon Songs* for spoken voice and piccolo. One of the most emotional parts of the piece, Shulamit brings out the emotion of Giraud's poetry with a *sprechstimme* approach like the Schoenberg, yet completely individual and unique. Also of note is the paired down instrumentation from *Pierrot lunaire* (voice, flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano) to *Moon Songs* (voice, flute, cello, piano). When Shulamit considered instrumentation, I requested voice plus Dolce Suono Trio, the flagship ensemble of DSE and our most active touring and recording group. This most intimate of mixed ensembles is given a rich range of timbre by Shulamit, who expands our configuration with piccolo, with the flutist strumming the piano strings, and with the pianist striking the piano's body.

AP: On a more personal level, how has your relationship with Shulamit Ran influenced your life as a flutist, musician, and artist?

MS: I have the greatest admiration for Shulamit Ran as a person as well as a musician. I've felt a closeness to her as a fellow woman musician, and one who balances family with her busy career, which is also very important to me. In addition, I identify with her as a Jewish musician, because, like her, I have explored my Jewish identity through music. One of our concerts during her season as Composer-in-Residence with Dolce Suono Ensemble was "A Place and a Name: Remembering the Holocaust" (2011), on which we performed her compelling piece *O the Chimneys*. Lucy Shelton sang it on the program – it was a strong, inspired team. We programmed music by composers who were victims of the Nazis as well as later composers reflecting on the Holocaust in their works. It was deeply moving to explore this theme and to perform Shulamit's work as it is a very personal statement on the Holocaust which also

resonated with me. Two aspects of Shulamit as artist are very close to who I am – her intellectual approach to her music, often integrating other art forms such as literature, and her desire to communicate with her audiences. I share her view of music as a powerful, transformative force in people’s lives, and I find our personal interactions about music thought-provoking and inspiring.

AP: Do you have any fond memories or stories from collaborating with Shulamit that you would like to share?

MS: A few anecdotes stand out from the several concerts we’ve shared together for *Moon Songs* and other pieces. I’ll always remember our first in-person meeting when Shulamit was just conceiving of the new piece. We got together in NY at the apartment of a friend of Shulamit’s, and talked about her ideas for *Moon Songs*. Though she had heard me on recordings, I played for her – excerpts from Bach to Paganini to new works to demonstrate various effects and my own way of playing. It was to be a personal piece, because she had a long history of working with Lucy Shelton and knew her artistry very well, but this was to be the first she would write specifically for her. Similarly, I got the sense that Shulamit conceived of writing not just for the flute but for me. I was so excited by the conversation, which ranged from music to family to food to Israel to our shared interest in literature. I told her I had recently discovered the Israeli author A.B. Yehoshua, of whom Shulamit is a fan. The days of rehearsal leading up to the first performances of *Moon Songs* were intense and exciting, as our ensemble was also performing Schoenberg’s *Pierrot lunaire* and Mahler’s piano quartet on two performances, then going to New York for the Composers Now Festival at Symphony Space, where we performed *Moon Songs* with six other DSE-commissioned works. Shulamit attended our recording sessions for *Moon Songs*, held over two days at Temple University in Philadelphia. One section took longer than expected to perfect on the recording, and that’s where I have to speak a few words (the instrumentalists all comment on what the singer is singing/saying in part of Act II). Shulamit asked me to change my delivery of “encircle, surround, hug,” and Lucy Shelton joined in coaching me. We actually had to do several takes for me to say the three words with the desired inflection! We just released *Moon Songs* on our Dolce Suono Trio’s new recording “American Canvas” (Innova Recordings), along with Jennifer Higdon’s *American Canvas*, Zhou Tian’s *Viaje*, and Andrea Clearfield’s *Spirit Island*. They are four excellent works, three of which we commissioned, by great American composers whose contributions span decades. It is a privilege to have made the premiere recording of *Moon Songs* by Shulamit Ran, trend setter, major American composer.

Interview with Mary Stolper⁴

AP: How did you meet Shulamit Ran?

MS: I first met her casually as I was attending a contemporary concert at the University of Chicago, around 1985. I became more familiar with her as I attended more concerts there for the next couple of years. I heard she had been sick in '86, right around that time she wrote *East Wind* and knew she dedicated it to a very dear friend who had died of cancer. It turns out she [Ran] had brain cancer. I always kidded her about the end of *East Wind* when just about six lines from the bottom where you have the repeated high F's [Example 3.13, p. 74, P5/L4], "That must have been the day they told you everything was going to be okay. It is so declamatory!" Ran just looked back and replied, "Nailed it!" With that said, I was at the National Flute Association Convention in San Diego in 1988 and Ran's *East Wind* was commissioned as the new work for the Young Artist Competition. I thought to myself, "I'll just listen to three people then I'll go to another event." I listened to the first and my breath was taken away. I listened to the second one, and I knew by then I was not leaving. I wanted to hear what all six performers did to it. After the third person, I spotted Shulamit about twenty rows ahead of me. There was an empty seat next to her and I went up and sat down next to her. She had the manuscript and we followed along during the performances. There were decidedly very different points of view on that piece. She said some of the people had sent her tapes saying, "Is this what you want?" I knew then and there that day I couldn't live another moment if I didn't record that piece. We later went out to dinner and discussed the recording project. I wanted to record *East Wind* but later I also wanted to record *Mirage* since it was new, was a great piece, and began with a big flute solo. On that recording, you will also hear her flute duet. It was difficult to convince her to let me record it since she was about 12 when she wrote that, but I begged and begged and she allowed it.

AP: What has drawn you toward her music?

MS: It's the power. It's the sheer power of it. The first work I ever played by her was her woodwind quintet. There were parts of it that were incredibly difficult and I remember being very upset during the recording process. I simply could not play the opening of the third movement so I put it on piccolo. So much of it was way up in the stratosphere and I knew this would make it much more possible. I have worked with many composers, and you always do your absolute best, but sometimes they ask for something that goes beyond your capability and you ask them about it. You get to know them well enough that you feel comfortable to ask a question without insulting them. I asked her about changing that part to piccolo and she said, "I don't know why I didn't think of it." She still hasn't published her woodwind quintet. I tried hard to get it published. She still has the manuscript, but there are mistakes all over the place. She simply hasn't had the time to get somebody to go through it, clean it up, typeset it. It's a great piece!

AP: Do you feel that knowing Shulamit Ran on a personal level helps you understand and communicate her music on a deeper level?

⁴ Mary Stolper, interview by Aaron Perdue, June 9, 2017.

MS: If you really know a composer and have worked a lot with them over the years, yes, it helps you understand their music and communicate it on a deep level. With Shulamit, our relationship has been very close and has gone beyond the music. I consider her to be a very close friend and treasure all the projects that we have been able to do together.

AP: What have been some of your favorite projects with her?

MS: The CD project was done in the early '90s, during a period with a lot of work coming from her. Her university duties were very heavy. I was playing a lot of contemporary music at that time. My favorite thing about that time, for about three or four years, I was able to see Shulamit two or three times a week. I have always seen her and have been able to help her during important times in her life, like when her mom was ill. When she became sick the second time, and her boys were younger, I helped by taking care of her dog for eight weeks. In addition to the CD project, I was able to do lectures with her on *East Wind*. She started doing lectures on this work because people that didn't necessarily like contemporary music seemed to like this piece. The university sent her to do several lectures and I would go with her and she would talk about things that are very characteristic of that work. We were supposed to do a lecture on it at the N.F.A. Convention in Columbus in 2000. Due to the weather in Chicago, she wasn't able to make it, and I ended up doing the entire lecture myself. We had done it so many times that I was able to do it without any issues. Being able to premiere *Birds of Paradise* was one of my favorite projects. Soon after the Chicago Flute Club contacted me about premiering *Birds of Paradise*, Ran became sick again for the third time and this one was not good. Those of us who knew her well were worried that it may not be completed. Her husband is an ear, nose, and throat doctor and knows the medical profession so she ended up with great care. I'll never forget that summer of '13 as I was standing outside at a break during the Grant Park Festival. Somebody came up from behind and put their hands over my eyes – it kind of shocked me. Of course, I knew the voice and turned around and there she was with a scarf on her head and no hair, a little wobbly. It was just a sight to behold. She had just finished it, pretty much while undergoing treatment in Boston. A little later we met and I saw the manuscript for the first time. I looked at her and said, "You could not have written this piece had you not gone through so much physical health issues because there are tender moments in this."

AP: Shulamit said that as you were learning and gaining command over *Birds of Paradise*, you had some good insight about this new work and where it stood in the progression of her flute music. Could you discuss this?

MS: This is a piece that has come well after her children had been born, as she was close to retirement, after her mother had passed, and many things in her life had been accomplished. I expected all the notes. The beginning didn't surprise me one bit. The second page is what surprised me [Example 2.4, p. 28].

AP: To me it seems like some moments of *Birds of Paradise* are grounded in reality but there are other moments that seem to be in a more spiritual, dream-like state. Would you agree?

MS: Shulamit was in and out of life while these treatments were going on. It's interesting that you say two levels of reality. I can imagine that would have been very true. Very true.

AP: Regarding the progression of her music, in *East Wind*, she seems to be trying to chart new territory as a composer, pushing the flute to an extreme in terms of range and an expanded capacity of expression.

MS: After listening to her other works on my CD, you'll realize that she is about pushing the envelope on every level in the extreme registers. That's pretty much her. Her woodwind quintet is full of extremes—volumes, speed, register. Physically and technically it is very difficult. *East Wind* was a change for her. I don't know whether or not it was about her good friend who had died. Shulamit was also ill and her personal life had some rather large changes going on at the time. *East Wind* actually seemed a little tame to me when I heard it. I thought, "Oh, she toned herself down for the N.F.A. kids." But that actually wasn't true. That's just what came out.

AP: Were you able to preview any parts of *Birds of Paradise* before the work was completed?

MS: As she was working on *Birds of Paradise*, she would ask me to play two or three versions of a section, one of them being the cadenza. I remember I was on vacation and she called me asking to play it over the phone for her. She wasn't happy with everything in it yet and was still changing a few of the notes. She was also deciding on what she wanted to do with it dynamically. Notice the tenuto marks at the beginning. She said, "I want that to be spoken and then you take off!" I remember I always pulled back on the A and G-sharp under the *mf* since they are the only two notes slurred together, but she didn't want that. She wanted me to fly like the wind through there. It made it more difficult but I had fun working on that section. I remember working on the last movement with her. Her published part now says *brilliant, articulate, propulsive*. I play off the original score and it is marked *restless*. In the last movement, I was a counting nut case. Shulamit told me, "Mary, this is not working. It's just not working." After trying to figure out why it wasn't working Shulamit said, "React. Don't count." She does not care whether or not you are with the piano at all. She wants it to seem like the pianist is the one that's grounding this whole passage. As she was explaining how she wanted this section to be, her right hand would be jutting out and flinging notes out into the air. I told her, "But you're so meticulous in writing the metronomic markings down." She said, "Yes, I know, but you have to do that." I said, "But you realize the day I record this, people are going to sit with their score and think this woman is so bad at counting." She just looked at me and smiled and said, "Not my problem." I'm glad she later added the performance note [In the forthcoming section through m. 30, although notated with very precise time signatures, the coordination between flute and piano should be approached with a degree of freedom...] so I am not known as a bad counter! When I worked on it with a pianist [Kuang-Hao Huang], we went through it a couple of times before we met with her [Shulamit Ran]. The first time we met we just played through chunks of it, tore it apart, talked about this, talked about that. We got to the end of the third movement and it ended at bar 76. I didn't say anything. I had not said anything to her. Kuang-Hao and I both said in our rehearsals, "This is terrible. It doesn't work." We played it for her and Shulamit was dead silent. She was sitting right next to us. I looked at Kuang-Hao and I looked at her and she said, "It's not finished." We both laughed and said, "Neither one of us wanted to tell you that it is a bad ending." Anyways, about three days later she said, "Okay, this is what I'm going with." She added those last three bars because before it didn't make sense. It was too short.

AP: I read that it was your dream for Shulamit to compose a flute sonata and for you both to play it together. Did *Birds of Paradise* help fulfill some aspects of that dream for you?

MS: We have never performed together but she did play alongside me when we were going over it. While we were working at the condo and discussing articulation, she sat down and played with me. Right there at that moment, I wish somebody had taken a picture, but there was no one else there. I knew then and there, that was my moment. Sometimes you realize that your dream might only last ten minutes, but it did happen. How extraordinary is that?

AP: Do you have any advice to offer for flutists learning *Birds of Paradise*?

MS: When I first looked at *Birds of Paradise*, or when I look at any new contemporary piece, I go through it first with no flute and find the extremes. I look at the extreme tempos from really slow to incredibly fast. For the fast sections, you can always learn them through hard work. Slow sections are up to the regulatory aspect of somebody's human capability under pressure. I believe that this is far more difficult to control. Many of these works go extremely high in range so I start doing long tones. All the way up to high D, with a really good grasp of a piano to a fortissimo. I start building my lip muscle completely different for this kind of work than I would for orchestral music. You need an extreme amount of power for this kind of music. With Shulamit, sometimes she wants a dynamic to be *fff* or even *ffff* and you better play what she asks. I said to her, "Do you know how hard it is to keep this high register stuff with any type of tonal control and decent harmonic structure when you're playing that hard?" She said, "I don't care about that." She wants the rawness and the effect. Any time you get a chance to talk with composers, sometimes they'll ask you to do two or three things on one note and it's not always possible. You might end up asking them, "What is the most important thing to you? Out of these four things you want, I'll give you two. Pick the two that you want the most!" Shulamit does not give you a lot of freedom unless she says you can have it. If there is one word that describes her music, it is contrast. It's clearly written in her music. She doesn't like *rubato* just because you thought it might be nice to stick one in there. She hates that. You better have a really good reason why you changed the tempo on her! She does her homework and is very meticulous.

CONCLUSION

After discussing and analyzing Shulamit Ran's *Birds of Paradise* for Flute and Piano (2014), I knew without a doubt that it is a deeply significant contribution to the flute and piano repertoire. This work is a powerful *tour de force* and brilliantly showcases the multifaceted expressive capabilities of the flute "soul." It goes much beyond simple bird-like music and reflects the inner soul of the composer as well. Ran composed much of the music while undergoing treatments to save her life and this battle can often be heard in the music.

Interviews with the composer and flutists close to her offer pertinent insights into the background and execution of the work. Longtime friend and close collaborator Mary Stolper believes that *Birds of Paradise* has incredibly tender moments that are a result of the life and experiences of the composer. The music seems to alternate between two different dimensions: one being in physical reality and the other in a spiritual, dream-like state. When discussing this idea of *Birds of Paradise* reflecting two levels of reality, Stolper replied, "Shulamit was in and out of life while [her] treatments were going on. It's interesting that you say 'two levels of reality.' I can imagine that would have been very true. Very true."¹

This study also examines three other important works featuring the flute: *Sonatina* for Two Flutes (1961), *East Wind* for Solo Flute (1987), and *Moon Songs: A Song Cycle in Four Acts* for Soprano, Flute, Cello, and Piano (2011). These works span five decades and vary in terms of style and maturity, but they all have characteristic traits that identify Ran's unique voice. Specific compositional elements include an affinity for dramatic expression, a balance

¹ Mary Stolper, interview by Aaron Perdue, June 9, 2017.

between fantasy and structure, and Middle Eastern stylistic influence. After identifying these elements and analyzing the aforementioned additional important works, one can trace the progression of Ran's writing for the flute. She explores the inner "soul" of the instrument, drawing out an incredible amount of expression by using striking contrasts. She naturally writes beautiful melodic arabesques that transcend the bar lines. Having grown up in Israel, Ran often incorporates folk-inspired Middle Eastern flavor in her flute writing as well. Shulamit Ran has made truly meaningful contributions to the flute repertoire that will be cherished and performed for generations to come.

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