When a composer has well-defined and expressed theories these form a convenient basis for discussion of his music, if only to recall how little it matters whether or not he practises what he preaches. It is doubtful whether Harris is aware of the exact nature of the most expressive and telling qualities in his music. The slightly uncouth awkwardness, the nervous restlessness, he would undoubtedly consider defects rather than qualities. If these characteristics are due, as some think, to a lack of technic, let us hope the man can in some way be prevented from acquiring a technic which would rob his musical language of some of its most valuable attributes.

Melodically, Harris has two pet aversions. They are the sequence and the regular rhythmic pulse, both elements of symmetry. He is more successful in avoiding the second than the first, it being a simple matter to add or subtract a beat here and there. Sequences, that is to say the repetition of patterns, have a way of making their presence felt in spite of extensive variations of the original pattern. Be that as it may, one cannot help thinking that it is a needless limitation of resources to exclude any particular element of expression, there being a place for everything, as the saying goes. The continual change in length of the rhythmic units making up a melodic line imparts a sense of wandering and seeking which may account in part for the attempts to describe Harris' music in terms of the great open spaces of the West, the American pioneer spirit, and even the distant outline of a mountain range. References to elements not considered characteristic of the "good old U.S.A." are carefully avoided in this connection, for Harris is, above all, the accepted one hundred per cent American composer.

The nervous shifting from duple to triple rhythm and vice versa is well suited to the driving, energetic type of music familiar in the works of Harris. The procedure is less successful when applied to calmer and more serene moments. What seems to the cynical observer to be anxiety or fear on the part of the composer that his music may not be interesting enough rhythmically has led Harris into a complexity of notation which

metty first, it Demo there. Sequences, a way of making their P tions of the original pattern. thinking that it is a needless unmand any particular element of expression man representations any paruculas the saying goes. The continued in important and particular the saying goes. The continued in important in a melodic line important everything, as the saying goes. everything, as units making up a melodic line imparts a sense of the rhythmic units making which may account in part for the of the rhythmic and seeking which may account in part for the condering and seeking which may account in part for the condering and seeking which may account in part for the condering and seeking which may account in part for the condering and seeking which may account in part for the condering and seeking which may account in part for the condering and seeking which may account in part for the condering and seeking which may account in part for the condering and seeking which may account in part for the condering and seeking which may account in part for the condering and seeking which may account in part for the condering and seeking which may account in part for the condering and seeking which may account in part for the condering and seeking which may account in part for the condering and seeking which may account in part for the condering and seeking which may account in part for the condering and seeking which may account in part for the condering and seeking which may account in part for the condering and seeking which may account in part for the condering account in the c of the rhythmic units making which may account in Part for the of Wandering and seeking which music in terms of the great account of Wandering and Harris' music in terms of the great account in Part for the great acc of Wandering and seeking which may account in part for the great open attempts to describe Harris' music in terms of the great open attempts to describe the American pioneer spirit, and even attempts to describe the American pioneer spirit. attempts to describe Harris music in terms of the great open and even the American pioneer spirit, and even the spaces of the West, mountain range. References to element mountain range. spaces of the West, the American pioneer spirit, and even the References to elements not distant outline of a mountain range. References to are corrected the residence of the "good old U.S.A." are corrected to the residence of distant outline of a mountain range. References to elements not a mountain range. References to elements not the "good old U.S.A." are carefully considered characteristic of the Harris is. above all the accommendation for Harris is. considered characteristic or the Harris is, above all, the accepted avoided in this connection, for Harris is, above all, the accepted avoided in this connection, american composer. ne nundred per cent American composer.
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Roy Harris

A Portrait by

Walter Pach

nificance of the bar-line and the attempt to make meter and rhythm synonymous should perhaps be laid to the influence of Stravinsky and Bela Bartok. After the Sacre most of our young composers fell under a tyranny of the bar and measure quite in strict as that which held sway during the nineteenth century forgetting that the bar-line in music is only a convenience for keeping time and that it indicates rhythmic stress only by accident and coincidence. The impracticability of this means of indicating rhythm is seen at once when more than one contrapuntal voice is employed. If the counterpoint is good, the independent and opposing rhythms involved obviously can not be shown by the same barring. In the Scherzo of the Piano Sonata Harris makes a desperate and amusing attempt to solve the problem by the use of accents and the connection of the stems in groups of eighth and sixteenth notes. The result is needlessly complex to the eye and not half as "contrapuntal" to the ear as many a bit of two-part writing in conventional notation by Bach.

(Vivace . ] = 126)

EXAMPLE 1. PIANO SONATA. Scherzo.

In the Andante of the same piece are to be found the following time signatures in rapid succession: 5:4, 11:4, 4:2, 3:4, 10:4, 9:4, 11:4, 14:4, 16:4, 13:4, 5:4, 9:4, 11:4. An added difficulty in reading a measure like 16:4 is remembering the accidental especially if the composer sometimes repeats an accidental and sometimes does not.

On the whole, one ought not to refer to Harris as a contrapuntal composer. The combination of individual lines is not an outstanding feature of his idiom. Instances in which this happens are the exception rather than the rule (see the fugal exposition in the last movement of the Sextet). This is surprising, because Harris has often declared himself as interested in contrapuntal writing and is constantly pointing out some ingenious contrapuntal bit in his own work. But the movement of parts in similar rhythm does not constitute counterpoint and this is the procedure that occurs most often in his music. Frequently what appears to be a combination of melodies turns out to be one or two lines divided among several voices. The fugal exposition in the finale of the Concerto for Clarinet, Piano and Strings seems to become alarmed at the prospect of a fourth entry of the subject and takes refuge in two harmonic sequences.

If it were important to determine origins of the harmonic element in Harris, we should perhaps conclude that the French school represents its nearest counterpart, realizing, however, that it has already become a mild sort of blasphemy to find influences in the music of this most original figure. In slow, impressive movements the chromatic alterations and cadences sometimes tend toward a Strauss-Mahler sentimentalism and even (as in the choral of the Sextet for Strings) get as far as what used to be called "barber-shop" harmonies.

EXAMPLE 2. SEXTET FOR STRINGS. Choral.

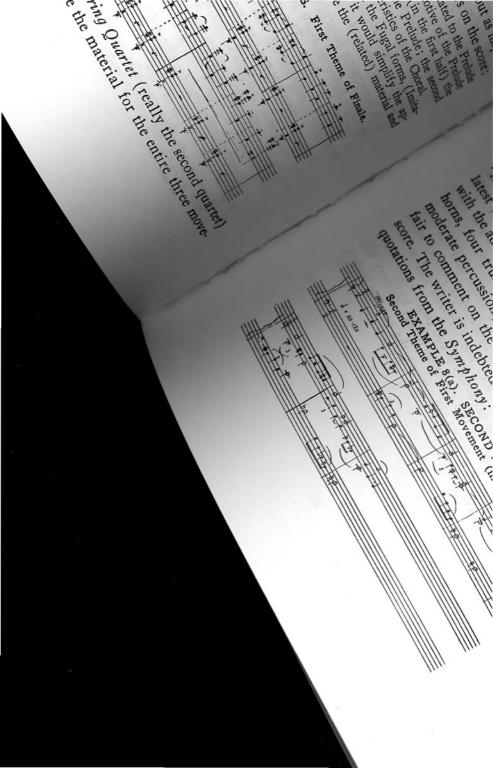


This is not to say that Harris does not employ these harmonies advantageously and convincingly. Some of Harris' best harmonic writing (see the beautiful Andante of the Piano Sonata) has been alluded to as having a polytonal basis, but while it is true that a combination of two different chords may have been used, it is equally true that it takes more than one chord to establish a tonality. In listening to this music one is practically

AMPLE 3. CONCERTO FOR PIANO, CLEARER. In dealing with problems of form, Harris keeps the idea of In dealing with problems of form, Harris keeps the idea of the ide growth constantly in mind. He likes to allow a theme of memory to evolve as a stage in development of a motive. to evolve as a stage in development of a motive. The idea is of course, not new by any means, but is sound, and much superior of course, not new by any means, but is sound, and much superior of course, not new by any means, but is sound, and much superior of course, not new by any means, but is sound, and much superior of course, not new by any means, but is sound, and much superior of course, not new by any means, but is sound, and much superior of course, not new by any means, but is sound, and much superior of course, not new by any means, but is sound, and much superior of course, not new by any means, but is sound, and much superior of course, not new by any means, but is sound, and much superior of course, not new by any means, and into the course of the c or course, not new by any means, but 18 sound, and much superior to the concept of form as a mold into which one pours material to the concept of form as a mold into which or concept of form as a mold into the concept of the c to the concept of form as a mold into which one pours material into music to the concept of form as a mold into which of projecting it into music to be expected that the difficulty of projecting it into music to be expected that the difficulty of projecting it into music to be expected that the difficulty of projecting it into music to be expected that the difficulty of projecting it into music to the concept of form as a mold into which of projecting it into music to the concept of form as a mold into which of projecting it into music to the concept of form as a mold into which of projecting it into music to the concept of form as a mold into which of projecting it into music to the concept of form as a mold into which of projecting it into music to the concept of form as a mold into which of projecting it into music to the concept of the concept o It is to be expected that the difficulty of projecting it into muse too great. The articulations of may in some instances prove too always improve one mith the infinite in Harrie's music do not always in Harrie's music do may in some instances prove too great. The afficulations or joints in Harris' music do not always impress one with the interior of a later Reathories are recommendated. Joints in Harris' music do not always impress one with the her is apt to he evitability of a later Beethoven. evitability of a later Beethoven. The new member 18 april 18 at an awkward angle. Of rivers is of encouraging significant from the grant from at an awkward angle. But his pre-occupation with format tions from this point of view is of encouraging significant tions from this point in a constitution to account the state of the sta tions from this point of view is of encouraging signment in a position to exert a salutary infinal well put him in a position to exert a salutary infinal well put him in a position of contament of con may went put min in a position to exert a samtary in this very weak department of contemporary technic. S very weak department of contemporary recurred.

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or not the composer cause of peculiar. nent of the Con-A-minor, but BXAMPLE 4. CONCERTO FOR PIANO, CLARINET AND STA STRINGS. The movement is in three-part form, the middle or contrasting of very slow twelve-two section consisting of three part form, the middle or contemplative, is joined the The third of but one measure of wery slow twelve-two its mind whether to the finale, which cannot quiet and contemplative, a sort of limping Czerny exercise and so to become a fugue or cannot seem to make up its mind whether work exercise and so onds a bit unconvincingly and violently. This work contains much fine writing, but one might reasonably work contains. The three movements of the Piano Sonata are The three movements of the Piano Sonnesse. lude Andante Ostinato, and Scherzo. Sonata a free free



ments is based on the motive E-flat, C, Willow in Ocalist ments to hence E.C.S., Elizabeth Sprague Councilled to will be specified is dedicated PROTECT, AS WELL AS THE DENIET, 13 GRULLALCH.

EXAMPLE 7. VARIATIONS FOR STRING QUARTET.

EXAMPLE 7. VARIATIONS FOR STRING OF Quartet, as well as the Sextet, is dedicated. The work is not as successful as the Sextet and seemed rather aimless on one hearing.

The variation form and the demands aimless on one hearing. upon the theme to furnish material for three movements form a sextet for two probably responsible for The quarter was warmly received on and a lack of continuity ree movements st significant work and a lack of continuity. The quartet was warmly the Dro Arts the occasion of the magnificent performance by the Dro Arts ibtedly prove to be the occasion of the magnificent performances by the Pro Arte of modern chamber ement is so decidedly Although he has written several works for symphony orchesvariations, the choral tra, Harris has been singularly unlucky in getting performances derived from the Ger-(See Example 2.) Of Symphony, Which is scheduled for performance hearing his treatly it is a gospel hymnt football song. The Teuthis season. One looks forward with interest to hearing his treatment of the probability Quartet in various cities. ned by the composer's harment of the orchestra. He is trying to secure an orchestral style "indigenous to the line and formall to use his own words." be surprised to hear of any "indigenous to the line and form" to use his own wind by threes, latest work he is a server and form and form to use his own wind by threes, latest work he is a server and form to use his own wind by threes, latest work he is a server and ser is Work, but more than one latest work he is using a large orchestra: Woodwind by threes, Wooden-shoe dance toward work he is using a large orchestra: woodwing bassoon; six that the addition of an E-flat clarinet and an extra bassoon; shas: formidable edifice of fugal three trombones, tenor and bass tubas; pest themes. It is not quite as Johane and strings. It would be unfrom the markings on the score, George Reeting glimpse of the shomatic is about as imporover for the following crears on the score: A to the Prelude

