

## *A Draft of Shadows*

*Wesley York is a composer, theorist and artist. He studied music, literature and the visual arts at Clark University and composition at the New England Conservatory of Music. His analytical work with the music of such contemporary composers as Philip Glass constitutes a remarkable exploration into the nature of structure and perception. In addition, as a result of his expertise in both the aural and visual media, he has a rather unique approach to both instrumental and electronic composition. His most recent work has been in the area of computer music. Wesley York's compositions have been performed throughout the United States. He is also a highly respected visual artist currently working in the Boston area.*

*Thomas DeLio is a noted composer and theorist. He studied at the New England Conservatory and Brown University where he received a Ph.D. in an interdisciplinary studies program combining mathematics, music and the visual arts. His articles on the music of Luigi Dallapiccola, Elliott Carter, Iannis Xenakis, John Cage, Philip Glass, Robert Ashley and Alvin Lucier have appeared in The Musical Quarterly, Perspectives of New Music, The Journal of Music Theory, Artforum and Interface. He is the author of two books on contemporary music: Circumscribing the Open Universe and Contiguous Lines: Issues and Ideas in the Music of the '60s and '70s. In addition, he is co-founder and co-editor of Sonus, an interdisciplinary journal devoted to the most progressive ideas in the arts today. As a composer he has distinguished himself in the area of computer aided composition and as the creator of a series of live electronic sound installations. His music is published by Dorn Publications and recorded on the Spectrum label. Dr. DeLio is a member of the faculty of the Department of Music at the University of Maryland at College Park.*

In Thomas DeLio's *A Draft of Shadows*, both text and music evolve, simultaneously, toward a re-evaluation and redefinition of some of our most basic notions of being in the world. In so doing, the work points toward a new vision of sonic discourse: one based upon the integration of two radically different concepts of musical structure. The piece is in three movements and

is scored for soprano and percussion ensemble. The percussion is divided into non-pitched instruments (three players; instrumentation including maracas, bongos, tom-toms, snares, cymbals, high tam-tam, wood block, slap-stick and iron pipe) and one pitched instrument, the piano. Over the course of the piece, there is a

general shift from non-pitched to pitched sounds; from crescendos of very loud dynamics (*fff* in Movement I) toward an extended presentation of very soft sounds (*ppppp* in Movement III); and from what I will call a gestural type of music toward a more non-gestural kind:

Chart 1

Movement I (Prelude)	Movement II (Pueblo)	Movement III (Postlude)
Non-pitched percussion	Non-pitched percussion Piano Voice	Piano
Non-pitched instruments	Pitched and non-pitched instruments	Pitched instrument
Movement toward and away from very loud sounds	Incorporation of both loud and soft sounds	Very soft sounds
Gestural music	Transitional	Non-gestural music

One of the achievements of *A Draft of Shadows* is that it successfully integrates two very different stances toward the use of materials, and over the course of its unfolding, evolves from one of these positions toward the other. A compositional framework is built not only for the articulation of these two different stances, but also for their incorporation into a unified whole. That is to say, though the piece concerns itself with two different ideas of structure, it does not itself become two structures.

The most significant dichotomy present in the work is that of the “gestural” versus the “non-gestural.” In Movement I, form is derived from the organization of musical materials into specific shapes or gestures. In contrast, in Movement III there are no such shapes; the materials are simply presented as raw matter, untouched by any specific organizational schemes. Over the course of the piece, the gestural music of Movement I is gradually transformed into the non-gestural music of Movement III. Clearly, then, Movement II is transitional: the non-pitched percussion here reflect back upon the music of Movement I while

the piano hints at the essence of Movement III. Throughout, the soprano mediates between these two poles.

It is in fact these very poles of opposition which seem to reflect the central thematic opposition of the text by Octavio Paz, the poem “Epitaph for no stone” from the collection, *A Draft of Shadows*:

*Mixcoac was my village. Three nocturnal syllables,  
a half-mask of shadow across a solar face.  
Clouds of dust came and ate it.  
I escaped and walked through the world.  
My words were my house, air my tomb.*

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The composer has written: *The opening of the poem refers to the dissipation of the external structures of life, those complexes which have appeared to nurture and support one’s being in the world. The final line finds security in the pure state of presence, knowledge that being is its own support. Also, lines 1 through 4 acknowledge the transience of things*

while line 5 comes to terms with this transience and from it synthesizes a new sense of order.<sup>1</sup>

In the poem, an initial focus upon place and other externals is gradually superseded by a more internal focus. The reorientation implicit in the text is reflected in the reorientation of the music itself; from the gestural character of Movement I (a localized music of specifics) to the music of Movement III (the generalized, non-gestural music). Thus, mirroring the poem's reorientation vis-a-vis the structures of the world, the composer infuses a quality of transience into his musical structure. Of crucial importance is the fact that these dramatic oppositions in attitude toward form are integrated into an organic, unified musical statement. To understand how this is achieved, I

now present a more detailed analysis of some of the intricacies of the piece, movement by movement.

### Movement I

Movement I is in two sections, each section characterized by a significant gesture. Throughout the movement, a variety of relationships shape materials into a unified design. Three aspects of its structure are considered here: first, its temporal proportions; second, the correspondence between its two principal gestures and the sound of the tam-tam; and finally, the derivation of one of the two principal gestures from the other.

Time in Movement I is proportioned on three different levels, into two sections as follows:

Chart 2

♩ = 60    △ = silences

	SECTION 1				SECTION 2	
Level 1: Sections	40 Seconds				19 Seconds	
Level 2: Phrases	11" phrase 1		18" phrase 2		11" phrase 1	8" phrase 2
Level 3: Component measures of the phrase	5 4	3 4	8 4	5 4	5 4	3 4
	meas. 1		meas. 5		meas. 10	
					meas. 14	
					meas. 17	

Referring to Chart 2, one sees that at the highest level, level 1, the two major sections reveal the overall proportion of 40:19 or approximately 2:1, significantly, the first two numbers of the Fibonacci sequence. Looking first at Section 1, we note, at level 2, three phrases (beginning at measures 1, 5, and 10) each ending in a period of silence. The forty beats of Section 1 are thus articulated by a symmetrical organization: 11:18:11. It is important to note here that the 11:18 proportion of this middle level, level 2, relates *both* to level 1 and level 3. More specifically, 11:18 is similar to the 2:1 proportion present in level 1, but it is just noticeably<sup>2</sup> different. In fact, the 11:18 propor-

tion equals .611 – extremely close to the Golden Section – thereby relating to level 3, which is formed by numbers from the Fibonacci series. Still another correspondence between the levels should be noted: the entirety of Section 2 (level 1) is essentially the same duration as phrase 2, level 2 in Section 1. Thus, Section 2 as a whole is derived from a component of Section 1. Further, we will see this same relationship (i.e. the whole of the later event derived from part of the earlier event) in the significant gestures of Sections 1 and 2 as well as in their temporal correspondence.

At level 3 of Section 1 we see a further proliferation of the Golden Mean with the use of



durations derived from the Fibonacci series. These durations are articulated through an opposition of sound and silence:

Two durations of non-pitched percussion sounds: 5:3 Adjacent numbers from the Fibonacci Series (numerals represent beats per measure).  
 Two durations of silence: 2:1

**Example 1**  
Measures 1-4

This level 3 organization is continued in phrases 2 and 3, with some variation. In phrase 2, each of the durations from phrase 1 has been increased along the Fibonacci series:

**PHRASE 2:**  
 Two durations of non-pitched percussion 8:5  
 Two durations of silence 3:2  
 From the Fibonacci series

Completing the overall symmetry of Section 1, phrase 3 then returns to the lower numbers of the Fibonacci series. However, in phrase 3 there is only one period of silence. (It will

be seen that, in several ways, phrase 3 is transitional.)

**PHRASE 3:**  
 Three durations of non-pitched percussion 5:2:3  
 One duration of silence 1  
 From the Fibonacci series

Section 2 of Movement 1 begins at measure 14. Regarding formal relationships between Section 1 and Section 2, at least two units are repeated (see Chart 3), thereby achieving a sense of formal continuity concurrent with the diversity and change heard at more detailed levels:

**Chart 3**

	SECTION 1											SECTION 2		
Level 1: Sections	40 Seconds											19 Seconds		
Level 2: Phrases	11				18			11				11	8	
Level 3: Components of the phrase:	5	2	3	1	8	3	5	2	5	2	3	1		
	meas.													
	14													

As seen in Chart 3, there are only two levels of formal articulation in Section 2. As such, in this new section, the music is already beginning to move from constructs of intricate shaping



and relating of materials toward a more global, more undifferentiated presentation of the materials themselves. Perhaps, in hindsight, we can now see phrase 3 of Section 1 as also part of this same motion away from highly articulated constructs. In any event, with the absence of the anticipated two beat silence there, level 3 becomes less articulated.

Turning to the events occurring within this temporal framework we find two gestures which are utilized quite extensively. Section 1 is characterized by Gesture 1, which might be described as an attack-swell-decay gesture, while Section 2 is characterized by an accelerando accompanied by a crescendo.

**Example 2**

Gesture 1 – Section 1, measure 1, measure 3 – Attack-Swell-Decay Measure 1

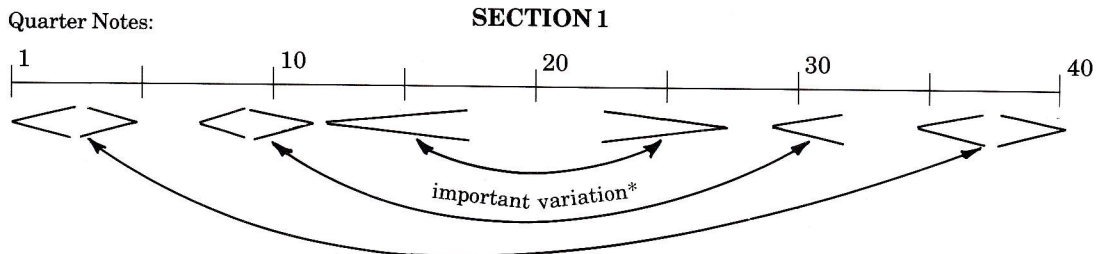
**Example 3**

Gesture 2 – Section 2, measure 14, measure 17 (also found in Section 1, measure 10) Accelerando, Crescendo of attacks Measures 14-16

Interestingly, it seems that in Section 1, a symmetry of gesture supports the general symmetry of form mentioned above (11 beats – 18

beats – 11 beats). The gestures are in general symmetrical around the three beats of silence at the midpoint of Section 1:

**Chart 4**



Looking at Chart 4, one might note the place marked by an asterisk, which indicates an exception to the symmetrical format. As we shall see, it is precisely this non-symmetrical element in the otherwise symmetrical scheme which provides a point of ambiguity and foreshadows the new gesture. This in turn propels the movement onward.

Having noted certain basic relationships of form with gesture, we now focus more closely upon the two gestures themselves. Gesture 1, along with its evolution through Section 1, is fairly complex and yet completely integrated into the fabric of the movement. As described above, Gesture 1 is comprised of three distinct components: attack, swell, and decay. It arises from the magnification, or sonic expansion, of the sound of a tam-tam being struck: an attack (noise-filled), a swell of sound and, finally, a long decay. In a process similar to that of Varèse in *Ionization*<sup>3</sup>, Gesture 1 magnifies this sound. As the composer has written:

*The clearest example occurs in measure 12. Here*

*the tam-tam is struck, mp, in Percussion 3. The metallic attack component is amplified by the stroke of the iron pipe in Percussion 2 on the downbeat. The swell is articulated by the bongo crescendo in Percussion 1 and the decay is produced by the snare and bongo decrescendo. Note that the decay is on the snare while the swell is on the bongo. Again this models the tam-tam decay which leaves upper partials ringing longer than lower ones. Thus the decay appears to move up in register.<sup>4</sup>*

Such pseudo-tam-tam sounds occur seven times over the course of the movement: in measures 1, 3, 5-6, 8, 10, 11, 12. Throughout Section 1, each of these sounds can be heard as part of a progression gradually pulling the listener closer to the actual sound of the tam-tam, which does, in fact, occur at the end of the section. The attack component becomes sharper, higher, and at times more metallic. For example, when one compares measure 1 (Percussion 1) with measure 8 (Percussion 1):

Example 4

Measure 1

Measure 8

one finds a more focused attack being produced in measure 8 not only through the use of sticks instead of the former mallets, but also through the use of only one bongo. Moreover, the culminating entrance of the tam-tam is heard as a rather fresh event since it reverses an ongoing pattern. Up to measures 10 and 11 the swell-decay components are made more complex. In

measure 12 then, with the entrance of the tam-tam, these components are made dramatically simpler.

The composer's observations of the subtleties of a tam-tam sound become apparent when one considers some of the details included in his sonic magnifications. For example, in measure 1:

Example 5

the attack is exemplified in the downbeat of Percussion 1. The swell and decay are modeled in the crescendos and diminuendos in Percussion 2 and 3. Also, the *attack* itself swells and decays (as played by Percussion 1), though this is softer than the rolls accompanying it and, by design, is *almost covered*. The resulting sonic conglomerate is like an inner vibration within

the sound; as though the attack resonates through the sound.

Turning now to Gesture 2, we find a more straightforward situation. It consists of a general crescendo and accelerando rising from low instruments to higher ones and occurs twice in Section 2 (measures 14-16, 17-18):

### Example 6

Measures 14-16

The second statement is a more concise, more concentrated restatement of the first. In the first statement, alternating attacks and rolls proceed to an intermingling of these components. In the second statement, however, we find only the simultaneous sounding of rolls and attacks leading up to an *expansion* of the *end* of the first statement. Thus, Section 2 (and Movement I as a whole) seems to be concluding with an echo of the idea of *magnification* which played a central role in Section I. It is featured

here in Section 2 in a new guise.

In addition to this concept of magnification, there is another, and perhaps more essential, relationship between the two principal gestures. Gesture 2 is derived from one of the components, the swell, of Gesture 1. Specifically, note that measures 10 and 11 are reminiscent of measure 1 in that the attack of measure 10 is almost identical (sticks are used instead of mallets) and that the attack is prolonged throughout the measure:

### Example 7

Measures 10 and 11 (compare with Example 5)



Here, however, the attack swells to an *accelerando*, *crescendo*, and becomes, in effect, the *first statement of Gesture 2*. Thus, if we consider only the components of the swell of Gesture 1 in phrase 3, we find the first statement of Gesture 2. This reconfirms previous observations concerning the transitional nature of this third phrase.

Parenthetically, one might note that just as this important gestural link with Section 2 exists at the end of Section 1, propelling the music onward, so also a further link is made. When initially heard, the first attack of Section 2 seems to be a punctuation to what has gone before when, in fact, one discovers as the music progresses that it is a component of the next gesture as well. Thus, in at least two dynamic ways, an elegant transition is made between the two sections of Movement I.

In summary, then, Movement I is a music of gestures, of materials given specific shapes integrated into a large-scale formal context. Moreover, we have seen how Movement I is derived from the sound of the tam-tam. The *shape* of this sound informs the movement in several ways: first, the sonic components are magnified to become the details of the movement; second, the actual sound of the tam-tam itself is then used as both the culmination and cadence of each section. Further, one might speculate on ways in which this significant shape provides a prototype for the shape and sense of the entire piece, as I shall later in this article.

## Movement II

The central movement, Movement II, is reproduced in its entirety on pages 53 through 61. In Movement II, the sound world from Movement I (non-pitched percussion) is joined with, and opposed by, that of Movement III (piano). Mediating between these, the soprano part is set to music based on a three-note cell, from which all twelve chromatic pitches are eventually derived. I will first discuss the form of the movement and how it organizes the three principal sounds: the non-pitched percussion, the piano, and the delivery of the text. Then, a discussion of each of these three elements will follow.

The movement is organized around three *crescendos* which gradually change color, become louder and more noise-filled. They partition the movement into three progressively expanding temporal units, a reflection of the three successively longer movements of the piece as a whole. The first *crescendo*, using maracas, occurs in measures 1 through 4. This is answered by a piano statement and ushers in the first two vocal phrases (lines one and two of the poem). Similarly, the second *crescendo* beginning Section 2 in measure 7 mixes the higher, brighter color of the cymbals with the maracas. This is answered by the second piano statement and is followed by the next two vocal phrases (lines three and four of the poem). Beginning in measure 16, the third *crescendo* progresses from maracas to snares to tam-tam. (Note the minimal use of the tam-tam, though. As in Movement I, it sounds at the climactic moment of the design.) Again, a third piano statement responds in opposition to the *crescendo*, followed by the final two vocal phrases (line 5 of the poem).

Consider first the *crescendos* of non-pitched percussion. In addition to the crucial role they play in formal articulation, they also seem to echo the two *crescendos* which constitute the two phrases of Section 2 of Movement I, thus providing a link back to Movement I. Moreover, this is not only an echo of the shape of the first movement, but also of relative dynamics (loud) and instrumentation. In reference to instrumentation, however, one notes that the first use of maracas occurs at the opening of Movement II, providing a fresh color. This new sound, closely followed by the first piano statement, heralds the opening of the new movement.

Each of the three *crescendos* seems to have an individual character, especially when one considers the relative location of the players on stage:

	Percussion 2	
Percussion 1		Percussion 3
Soprano		Piano

In the first *crescendo*, all three percussionists play maracas, with each player's sound segueing in and out of the composite sound. Then in the second *crescendo*, we hear a *tutti crescendo*

with two players on maracas and one on high cymbal followed by a shorter crescendo on solo high cymbal; again the overall motion toward a brighter color. Finally, in the third instance, the crescendo passes from player to player (i.e. from location to location) each on a different instrument (maracas, snare drum, tam-tam). Once again, the sound moves toward brighter color and this time culminates in the grand crescendo of the tam-tam sound which, of course, was the essence of Movement I. Thus, although we are given three bold statements of this significant musical shape, it is continually revitalized.

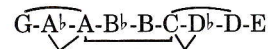
The three piano statements seem to answer the three crescendos discussed above, and also to act as polar opposites to them:

<b>Percussion</b>	<b>Piano</b>
Non-pitched	Pitched
Loud	Soft
Mostly rolls	Single attacks
Mostly crescendo	Diminuendo
High registers only	Low, mid and high registers

Significantly, as the percussion crescendos of Movement II form a sonic link with Movement I, the three piano statements anticipate the sound world of Movement III with its non-gestural music. Concurrent with this sense that the percussion and piano sounds define opposite worlds, at times, they also seem to be working together as components of a larger envelope of sound, which acts as a sonic opposition to the precise syllabic vocal setting of the text. Further, one might speculate on one additional aspect of this envelope. After each of the non-pitched percussion crescendos, the piano begins its diminuendo. Accompanying each of these, there is always a simultaneous diminuendo in the non-pitched percussion. The listener has the sense that the massive noise conglomerate has an internal pitch focus. This recalls the magnification construct which was so central to the form of Movement I, and, as a variation of that construct, it provides another subtle link between Movement I and the end of the piece (in which just the pitch elements, the "interior" of the percussion sound, if you will, stand alone). Moreover, not only does this larger en-

velope of percussion and piano sound mirror the evolution of the percussion sound over the entire piece, but also, in this sense of "turning inward," reflects the meaning of the text.

Turning now to the pitch organization of the piano music, we find an interesting development. The piano part begins to expand out toward the complete twelve-note collection of Movement III, but does *not* achieve this goal. More specifically, it is the *third* piano statement which reveals the core of its material: the chromatic tetrachord  $\underline{A-B^b-B-C}$  in measures 19-22. The first statement (mm. 1-3) presents this tetrachord plus two whole steps in the symmetrical configuration  $\underline{G-A-B^b-B-C-D}$ . Then, in the second statement, the collection is further expanded and filled in to form a nine-note aggregate of semitones:



Thus, the piano part begins with the tetrachord already expanded by two notes. It then proceeds to expand further and to integrate these two extra notes into a larger chromatic collection, seemingly in a movement toward the twelve-note set of Movement III. However, in the third statement, this movement outward is thwarted for, as mentioned, only the original four note aggregate is heard. Three notes, E, F, and F<sup>♯</sup> are withheld from the piano until Movement III.

While the musical language of the voice part reflects that of the piano, their evolutions are very different indeed. In both, for example, there is a gradual outward expansion of pitches toward the entire twelve-note collection. As we have seen, the piano does not achieve this in Movement II. The voice, however, does. From an initial structural core, a ②-③ cell,<sup>5</sup> the entire voice part is generated from, on the one hand, the use of the ③ as a stable, unifying element, and on the other hand, ① and ② as agents of change through which expanded structures are derived. Furthermore, the linguistic expansion which forms the basis of the vocal part supports the meaning of the text itself.

In each of the three sections of Movement II, there are two phrases for the voice. Looking first at Section 1 (measures 1-8), we find that



each of these two phrases is about three measures in length. In the first two phrases the structural core (cell) is exposed, a reproduction of that cell is generated, and the intervallic focus

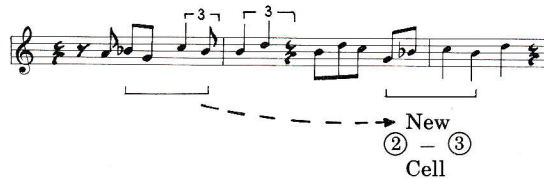
of the entire vocal part is suggested. More specifically, in phrase 1, a ②-③ cell, the pitches A, B<sup>b</sup>, C, is introduced:



**Example 8**

Phrase 1 – meas. 3-5

The B<sup>b</sup> introduces ① and acts as a link to the next phrase:



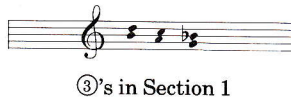
**Example 9**

Phrase 2 – meas. 6-8

The ① between A and B<sup>b</sup> shifts focus and ushers in a new ②-③ cell (CB<sup>b</sup>G). Thus, in phrase 1, when the listener hears A and B<sup>b</sup>, A is the cell tone, while in phrase 2, B<sup>b</sup> is the cell tone. Significantly, phrase 2 opens with this ① and draws attention to the imminent change. Also supporting this change, the B<sup>b</sup> now receives metric stress. More important, this new emphasis is clarified with the first three notes where we find A-B<sup>b</sup> followed by G (③ from B<sup>b</sup>) rather than the expected C (③ from A). This

denial of expectation occurs on the word “antifaz” – halfmask. In addition, the new ②-③ cell (G-B<sup>b</sup>-C) shares a note, C, with the old cell, allowing for a smooth link between the two. Finally, in phrase 2, new connections are made. On the last three notes there is a return to the ①, but it is a *new* ①: B-C (not A-B<sup>b</sup>). Also, a new ③ is generated from the B, i.e. B-D – all suggestive of further linguistic transformations.

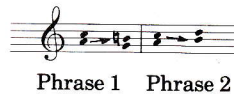
Summarizing then, in the first section we find that three ③'s are generated:



This suggests, as will be the case, that the ③ is the intervallic focus of the piece, and that its generation will occur in various related ways. Significantly, the ① appears with the first ③

(A-C) via B<sup>b</sup> and in the second ③ (G-B<sup>b</sup>) via B, the relation between B<sup>b</sup> and B itself, of course, being ①.

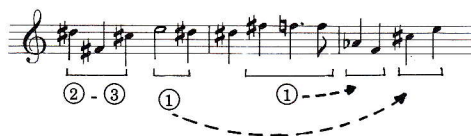
③'s generated from ①'s:





In Section 2 there are also two phrases, each three measures long (m. 10-13; m. 14-17). Here the procedure established in Section 1 is continued, generating new ③'s. The six dyads thus

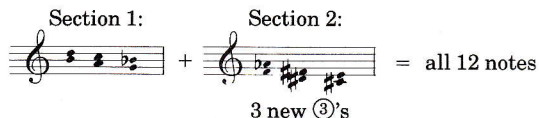
formed complete a chromatic scale. Turning to the details of this process, we find in phrase 1 more new ③'s:



**Example 10**  
Section 2, Phrase 1

Again, then, as in Section 1, the ① changes the focus of the initial ②-③ cell (C#D#F#) and, in so doing, generates two new ③'s. The ②-③ cell C#-D#-F#, is exposed in a new spatial formation and order. Immediately following this, the E with its ① relationship to D# introduces an element of instability. This is left unresolved until the end of the phrase, when the E is more

emphatically paired with the C# in a new ③ and a new cell, D#C#E. A similar process occurs when F# is introduced with the E of the cell, in another ①. This in turn becomes the link to a new ③, F-A and another new cell F#A#F. Again, we have three new ③'s, which, together with those from Section 1, complete the twelve-note collection:

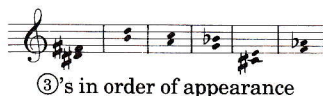


And again, these new ③'s were generated via ①:



Also, it might be noted that the process of exposing three ③'s has been quickened. The first three ③'s were introduced during the entirety of Section 1; here they are generated in only the first phrase of Section 2.

Proceeding to phrase 2 of Section 2 (measures 14-17), the music seems to sum up all the materials introduced thus far and to further integrate them. The phrase unites all six ③'s within one melodic unit:



The result is an intensification of the ②-③ cell now expanded to cover the entire chromatic collection:



**Pages 53-61** in published essay contain the score of one movement of *A Draft of Shadows*. A copy of the full score is appended to the end of the essay in lieu of these pages.

The structural core (the ②-③ cell) expands into a series of ③'s linked by ②'s which reach out to encompass all twelve pitches.

Since this music completes the first section of the poem (the first four lines), we now consider the unique relationship between music and text. The music, in a sense, reaches down into the text as opposed to "painting" each word at the moment at which it is sung. The speaker's village (his past, his place, his external life) is being swept away; and, he escapes. As the text describes dissipation, the music *counters* with the formulation of a new order (the total chromatic collection shaped by ②'s and ③'s).

In Section 3, this new musical structure will be equated with the new personal structure referred to in the final line of the poem – the inner being which is to emerge with assurance. Here, however, the crucial point is that while the text sweeps away the village, the music begins and completes a new construction; one which anticipates the text which remains unsung. This, it seems to me, serves to emphasize the essentially positive nature of the poem by allowing the words to speak of the past while the music

prepares for, and anticipates the essence of, the final statement.

One might briefly note several examples of how new events both herald the new section, and also, serve to reiterate aforementioned processes as they are further extended. Section 2 begins with two new pitches: D# and F#. Moreover, these two pitches are spaced in the widest leap so far in this vocal line which has principally been comprised of small steps. Further, the D# and F# extend the overall musical space achieved in Section 1 in both directions by a ①, (from D up to D# and from G down to F#), further emphasizing the structural importance of that interval.

The vocal part of Section 3 begins at measure 21 and is in two phrases, the first phrase being slightly truncated (about two measures) while the second phrase is of the more typical three-measure duration. Section 3 repeats, with variations, the entire process presented in Sections 1 and 2.

Concerning phrase 1, one immediately perceives a link with Sections 1 and 2 through the predominance of ③'s:



Example 11

The only other repeated interval is the ①, which has previously been so crucial to the motion of the vocal line. The structural signifi-

cance of these two intervals comes into sharper focus when one rearranges the ③'s:



Here we find a series of six ③'s linked by ①'s. It must be noted, however, that the result here is an *incomplete* chromatic collection. Three pitches are missing: E, F, and F#, the same three pitches which were absent from the piano music of this movement. Several other aspects of the music here support the sense of instability which accompanies this incomplete statement

of the pitch collection in this phrase. First, the relative brevity of this phrase; as mentioned, it is only two measures instead of three. In addition, there is a contraction of musical space (relative again to the previous vocal music). Not only are all the intervals in this phrase in close spacing, but also the entire range of the line is contracted from the previous



phrase. Hence, we find an ③ (G-E<sup>b</sup>) as compared to a ①<sup>4</sup> (D-E) in Section 2, phrase 2. Moreover, this smaller spatial deployment suggests that this phrase is also echoing the vocal music which opened the movement.

In phrase 2 of Section 3, the final vocal phrase, we arrive at a more stable pitch structure, once again involving all twelve pitches. As usual, there is a predominance of ③'s:



**Example 12.**

\*All intervals named as if in close position.

Curiously, all intervals are present on the surface of the line, *except* 2, the interval which is, in fact, generating the ③'s:



Thus, we have arrived back again at the same structural expansion of the initial ②-③ core which was heard in phrase 2, Section 2. This time, however, the text has, in a sense, “caught up” with the music as the two reflect a new order of being. In summary, the third section: first, in phrase 1, moves back to a less stable state in which ③'s and ①'s dominate the structural background as well as the surface foreground (the structure here does *not* generate all twelve tones); and then, in phrase 2, completes the entire chromatic collection in a final synthesis and integration of all previously unstable elements. In this way, Section 3 repeats the progression of events which occurred in Sections 1 and 2 though, of course, it does so much more rapidly.

We can now relate this entire process to the text itself. Previously, it was noted that as the text affirms the dissipation of the external dimensions of life, the vocal music, instead of reflecting that dissipation, proceeds to do quite the opposite. In Sections 1 and 2 one finds the gradual formation of a new structure which serves as a preparation for the structure of the music of Section 3. When in Section 3 the text boldly affirms its own new sense of order

and being, it can do so, musically, with the greatest security, since the new musical structure has already been formed. Moreover, in the text one finds a movement away from the specifics of place to an embracing of a more all-encompassing sensibility. This movement, too, is echoed in the vocal music which extends from a specific core of three pitches to the more generalized, wider scope of all twelve pitches. Moreover, we have already noted, this is one of the most significant transformations in the piece as a whole, in the evolution from the music of specifics in Movement I to that of the unhindered presentation of materials in Movement III.

Concerning the integration of the three major sound sources in Movement II, it seems clear that the music of the percussion and piano parts does not simply support the voice as in a more traditional text setting. Rather, the percussion and piano seem to follow the general sense of dissipation of time and place which is found in lines 1-4 of the text. In fact, they seem to vaporize more and more until, in bars 25-31, they are absent almost completely. The voice, in contrast, makes its final synthesizing statement in precisely these same bars. The non-

pitched percussion then return in a brief reminiscence of earlier music. This is only an echo, and in no way a "return" or "recapitulation" of the opening (note the soft dynamics, for example.) Also heightening the sense of dissipation is the fact that the three percussionists are spread-out spatially around the stage so that the sound "travels."

In a sense, Movement II is a conduit through which the music of Movement I passes and is transformed into the music of Movement III. One senses an evolution from the music in which *time is measured* with intricate devices (Movement I) to a music in which *space is explored* without the aid of maps (Movement III). On the largest scale, there seems to be an opening outward – a direction of which we have noted several examples in the music of Movement II, a movement which, at its conclusion, is almost as diffuse as is the entirety of Movement III.

### Movement III

In the piano music of Movement III, the intimations of an "opening outward" reach an explicit culmination. Moreover, the drive in Movement II toward the use of all twelve tones (achieved only by the voice) is here finally fulfilled in the piano part in which all twelve tones are present in equal distribution. This includes equal distribution of both the twelve pitch classes over time as well as equal distribution of each pitch class over all registers.

In Movement III, we dispense with the notion of "gesture," for there are no musical gestures as there were in Movements I and II. Nor are gestures ordered into any "form." Form is reduced to a simple identification with raw materials. In this movement there is no architecture. Here, materials *are* structure. Relating this to the text, one senses the appropriation of a new sensibility; one which has focused upon a new perception of presence. One finds the twelve tones which were generated by the voice in the previous movement now transferred to the pitched percussion and cast out, as it were, into the air ("the air is my tomb").

Movement III is linked to its predecessors in significant ways, as a concept of magnification

helps integrate all three movements. This concept was first heard in Movement I with the magnification of the tam-tam sound and its use throughout that movement. Linking Movement I with Movement II, the three crescendos of the latter were heard as magnifications of those in Movement I, Section 2. Finally, in Movement III, a similar connection is made. In Movement II, we spoke of the three crescendos as each being part of an envelope of sound which was the composite shape of the opposing elements of non-pitched percussion (crescendo) and piano (diminuendo). Linking Movement II with Movement III, then, the entirety of Movement III seems to be a sonic expansion of the piano diminuendos of Movement II.

One final word, appropriately enough, about the ending of Movement III, before moving on to some conclusions concerning the piece as a whole. As in other works by DeLio, silence is conceived as an active presence and as such is particularly significant. Throughout *A Draft of Shadows*, silence is a positive, formally critical force. The many examples of its use include the silence at the end of each of the three phrases of Movement I, Section 1 (see Chart 2), as well as the silence before and after the culminating final vocal statement in Movement II. Consequently, after the final pitch is struck in Movement III and this evanescent continuum moves toward silence, not only the fading pitches, but also the *silence itself* seems part of the very fabric of the piece.

### The Piece as a Whole: Some Conclusions

Having taken a close look at the local events of *A Draft of Shadows*, it is now possible for us to consider several aspects of the piece as a whole from a new perspective. Immediately apparent is the economy with which the musical forces are deployed; a complex musical context evolves with refreshing clarity. Further, while one initially senses a deceptive simplicity, this ultimately opens out onto a richness of suggestion not unlike Zen brush and ink works<sup>6</sup>. It might also now be noted that in the working out of the piece, certain compositional dangers implicit in the musical concept were avoided,



namely the problematical nature of the use of the tam-tam in a Western work, and the formidable difficulty of marrying in one piece two attitudes toward, two definitions of, structure. It seems to have been the same characteristics by which these problems were avoided which eventually led to the achievement of the above mentioned economy and clarity; the organic integrity in the unfolding of the musical fabric as well as a subtle and multidimensional correspondence between music and text.

By way of summary, then, we can review some of the essential elements of each of these two overriding concerns in an attempt to integrate them into a greater understanding of the entire piece. First, regarding the structural network, we find the same constructs working to crystallize both the local details and the largest elements of the structure. Three of these constructs, with examples of each, are presented below:

### A. Construct of magnification and expansion

#### Movement I:

1. Gesture 1 as magnification of the tam-tam sound
2. Gesture 2 as magnified component of Gesture 1

#### Movement II:

1. Voice: expansion of 3-note cell, eventually encompassing all 12 pitches
2. Voice: initial construct of “new ③’s generated by ①’s” expanded in final phrase
3. Voice: expansion of musical space
4. Piano: expansion (followed by contraction) of pitch collection
5. Piano: pointillism as magnification of the components of noise conglomerate of the non-pitched instruments
6. Percussion: repetition (expansion over time) of the crescendo from Movement I

#### Movement III:

1. Expansion of piano part from Movement II:
  - a. Expansion of time
  - b. Expansion of musical space, and consequently,
  - c. Expansion of timbral “palette”
  - d. Expansion of musical language (first use of all 12 pitches)

### Piece as a Whole

1. Three movements of entire piece as magnification of temporal proportions of central movement – i.e., 3 progressively expanding units
2. Entire piece as magnification of the “larger envelope” of the central movement

### B. Movement from intricate shapes to more global, undifferentiated presentations

#### Movement I:

1. Movement from three levels of temporal organization in Section 1 to two levels in Section 2
2. Initial featuring of an intricate magnification of the tam-tam sound followed by the tam-tam sound itself

#### Movement II:

Vocal pitches: from specific core to more generalized wider scope of all 12 pitches

#### Movement III:

Transition from specific shaping of a core tetrachord in the previous movement to the wider inclusion of all 12 pitches in Movement III

#### Piece as a Whole:

Large-scale evolution from a gestural music to non-gestural



### C. Integration of the tam-tam sound

The sonic shape of the tam-tam becomes not only a prototype for Movement I, but also on a

larger scale, an encapsulation of the form of the entire piece and, thus, is integral to the meaning of the piece as a whole:

#### Integration of the Tam-Tam Sound

<b>Sound of Tam-Tam</b>	Attack	Swell, with echoes of attack	Decay
<b>Magnification in Mvt. I</b>	Attack	Attacks, with rolls	Rolls
<b>Form of Entire Piece</b>	Mvt. I as definitive, articulated form	Movement II as combination of both Mvt. I and Mvt. III, and a leading-through from one to the other.	Mvt. III as more global, less articulated form
<b>The Text</b>	The definite, "hard", external structures	"I escaped": the journey from one pole to another	The internal, the evanescent, that which continues mysteriously into strength and silence.

We now move from aspects of integration of the parts with the whole to our second topic of overview: the correspondence between music and text. In *A Draft of Shadows*, the listener is involved in a large-scale movement, a journey, between the principal oppositions of the piece. This seems to reflect the spiritual journey, the change in stance which occurs in the text. As the speaker arrives at a new answer for the question, "What provides a personal structure?", so the music reinterprets the notion of musical structure. Moreover, in the details of the piece, one finds a unique correspondence of music and text. Thus, in Movement II, we noted the progressive formation of a secure musical context for the arrival, in the final line of the text, of the new security found by the speaker. Another example was heard in Movement II: the enveloping sounds of the percussion and piano which supported the sense of turning inward in the text.

This concern of turning inward is, in fact, important in other ways. It seems that the music has captured one of the finest ironies of the text. As the text affirms a new being which is an *internal* order freed from the external structures of life, it opens *outward* to a "tomb of air," to a great panorama of space. Likewise, the irony of

this sense of release is reflected in the music itself. Specifically, the quietest, most inward-turning music (Movement III) opens out to the widest registral space of the piece. The musical conception as a whole expands these ironies in another way. With the culminating achievement of a sense of *refinement* of sensibilities in both the text and the music, there exists the concurrent rejection, in the music of the final movement, of the notion of the composer as "skilled, refined craftsman" who imposes intricate shapes on his materials.

Finally, then, it is, in fact, this implicit redefinition of the role of the composer which seems to point to the concerns of DeLio's more recent work. In reference to one of DeLio's sound installations, James Wagoner has written:

...*Thomas DeLio (is) among a number of important American composers who eschew all formal and gestural aspects of traditional music, replacing them with the pure physical presence of sound within an environment. Rather than using sound as a material to be shaped into a personal finite expression, their compositions result from tactile, physical operations. Thus, they create an interactive art that reflects human experience through its sensitivity to its environment and the influence of the participants.*<sup>7</sup>

Accordingly, then, what was true of Duchamps' "readymades" seems to be the case as much in DeLio's recent work as in Movement III of *A Draft of Shadows*: the emphasis is on the artist's *finding* meaning in given materials, not *making* meaning from the materials. One of the principal acts of the artist becomes the identification of context. The resulting work, as visual artist Robert Irwin describes his own art, "...no longer (lends itself) to a literate or even an ar-

ticulate read, but rather maintains (itself) at a more purely perceptual level."<sup>8</sup>

Thus, it seems that the formative literary construct of "opening outward" reflected in the music in *A Draft of Shadows* was perhaps emblematic of a profound re-orientation in the stance of the composer himself. It is that very sense of moving through a crucial turning point which infuses the work with a compelling vitality.

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### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Thomas DeLio, in correspondence with the author, 1983.

<sup>2</sup>In *Sonic Design*, page 241, authors Cogan and Escot note that Creelman's "studies suggest that most humans can discriminate consistently between two durations whose duration difference is approximately 10% (or more)." In this case, then, 1:2 would be a .5 relationship; 11:18 is a .611 relationship, or just over a .1 difference.

<sup>3</sup>Chou Wen Chung on Varèse. "New Worlds of Edgard Varèse," Institute for Studies in American Music, Monograph #11, New York, 1979, pp. 27-74.

<sup>4</sup>Thomas DeLio, in correspondence with the author, 1983.

<sup>5</sup>Intervals are measured here according to the number of semitones spanned by their notes, i.e., ① = ½ step, ② = M2, ③ = m3.

<sup>6</sup>An example is "Six Persimmons," ink on paper, by Mu Ch'i (active 1200-1265), a Ch'an or Zen still life of characteristically deceptive simplicity.

<sup>7</sup>From the program booklet for the Contemporary Music Forum 1982-83, The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

<sup>8</sup>Weschler, Lawrence, *Seeing Is Forgetting the Name of the Thing One Sees*, Berkeley, California, University of California Press, 1982, p. 64.

# ***A Draft of Shadows***

Thomas DeLio

1972



For  
Wes York

Duration: approximately 9 minutes

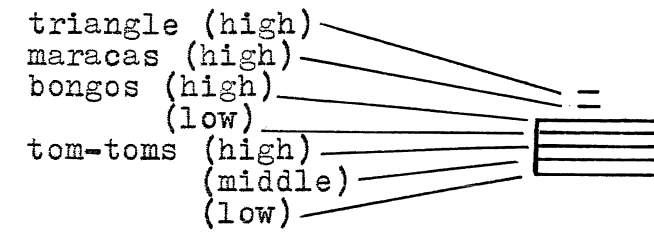
Instrumentation

Soprano

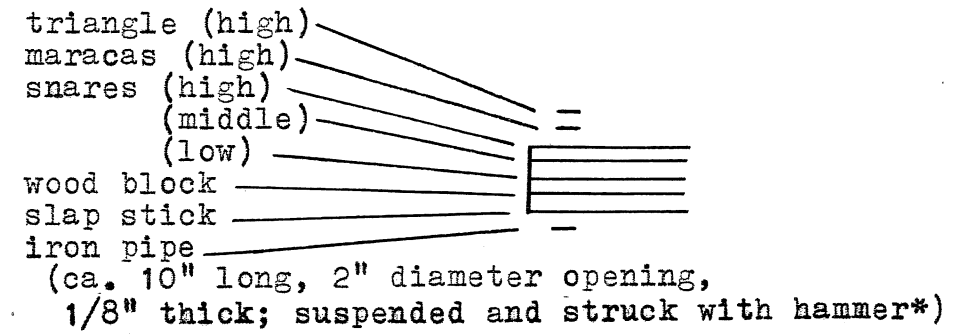
Piano

Percussion  
(3 players)

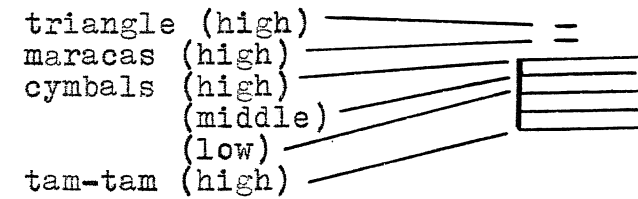
Percussion 1



Percussion 2



Percussion 3



\*Run string through pipe and hold from string.

Notes

1) With respect to the piano part, placement of notes on page is approximately proportional to their placement in time.

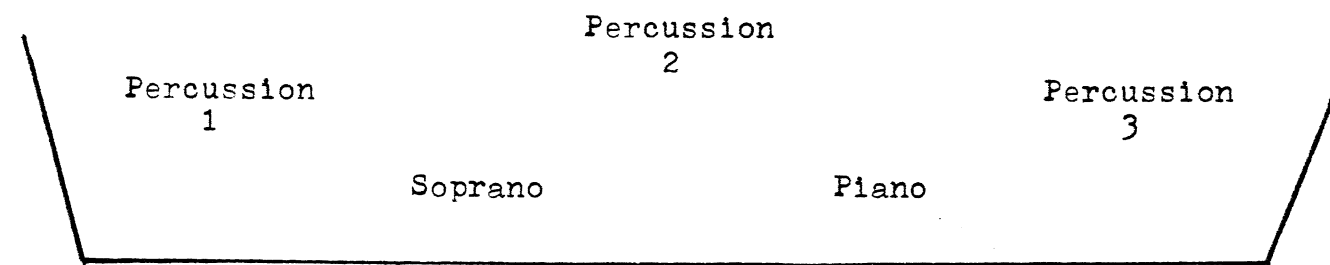
2) With respect to cymbals and tam-tam:

♪ = let ring beyond indicated duration

♪ = choke at the end of indicated duration.



STAGE PLACEMENT



### Epitafio sobre ninguna piedra

Mixcoac fue mi pueblo. Tres sílabas nocturnas,  
un antifaz de sombra sobre un rostro solar.  
Vino y se lo comió la tolvanera.  
Yo me escapé y anduve por el mundo.  
Mi casa fueron mis palabras, mi tumba el aire.

### Epitaph for no stone

Mixcoac was my village. Three nocturnal syllables,  
a half-mask of shadow across a solar face.  
Clouds of dust came and ate it.  
I escaped and walked through the world.  
My words were my house, air my tomb.

Octavio Paz

Performers must be absolutely quiet and still during silences.





# PRELUDE

$\text{♩} = 60$  bongos, tam-toms  
hard mallets

Perc. 1

2

3

snare sticks

cymbals soft mallets

wood block snare wood block

5

sticks

snare

10

wood block

snare

tam-tam

hard mallets

15

ppp cresc....

3

6

7

...fff

ppp < fff

ppp < fff

ppp < fff

sticks

mf

5

6

10

fff

iron pipe

ffff

ffff

Tam-tam

cymbals

ppp

fff

sub ppp

ffff

60"



# PUEBLO I

**Voice**  $\text{♩} = 60$

Mix - co - ac fue mi pue - blo, Tres sí - la - bas

**Perc. 1**

maracas

2

maracas

3

maracas

**Piano**

*mp*

*p*  
*uc*



15

*mf* *pp* *p* *mp* *pp*

Yo me es-ca-pé y an-du-ve por el mun-

20

*mf*

do.

*p* *fff* *ppp* *fff* *ppp* *fff* *f* *ppp*

*p* *uc*



*p* *mf* *ppp*

Mi ca- sa fue- ron mis pa- la bras,

*ppp* *mf*

25 *p* *ff*

mi tum- ba el ? ai-

*ppp* *mf*

Musical score for the first system, measures 1-4. The score is written for a piano and a drum set. The piano part (top staff) begins with a *ppp* dynamic and a *re* marking. The drum set part (middle staves) includes a snare drum part with a *pp* dynamic and a cymbal part with a *ppp* dynamic and a *wire brushes* marking. The piano part has a melodic line with a *b* and a *b* with a *p* and a *p* with a *p*.

Musical score for the second system, measures 5-8. The score is written for a piano and a drum set. The piano part (top staff) features a melodic line with dynamics *ppp*, *mf*, and *ppp*. The drum set part (middle staves) includes a snare drum part with dynamics *ppp*, *mp*, and *ppp*, and a cymbal part with a *mp* dynamic. The piano part has a melodic line with a *p* and a *p* with a *p*.



10

slap stick

tom-toms

PPP

maracas

mf

soft mallet

PPP

sticks

PPP

maracas

mf

niente

mf

cymbal (low) brush

PPP

maracas

f

maracas

mf

niente

brush

PPP

cymbal (low)

cymbal (high)

brush

mf

60"



# PUEBLO II

$\text{♩} = 60$  whisper

**Voice**  
Las pie-dras tiem-son po El vien-to Sig-de to Los ár-  
los vien-

**Perc. 1**  
maracas  
PPP  $\leftarrow$  f

2  
maracas  
PPP

3  
maracas  
PPP

5

ba-son po les tiem- Las tes pie- gen-son dras El vien-to

PPP  $\rightarrow$  mf

mf

PPP

10

Vuel- so- si mo se tier-  
ve bre mis- y en- ra

En el dñ- de dra  
a pie-

*mf* *ppp* *ppp*

15

Non ag- pe- bril- los jos.  
hay ua ro lan o-

*ppp* *f*

Handwritten musical score for a three-staff system. The top staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The middle and bottom staves have bass clefs. The music consists of three measures. The first measure is mostly empty. The second measure contains a piano dynamic marking *ppp* and a half note chord with a slur above it. The third measure contains a mezzo-forte dynamic marking *mf* and a half note chord with a slur above it. The number 20 is written above the second measure. At the end of the system, there is a fermata over a half note chord with a piano dynamic marking *ppp* below it.

Handwritten musical score for a three-staff system. The top staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The middle and bottom staves have bass clefs. The music consists of three measures. The first measure is mostly empty. The second measure contains a piano dynamic marking *ppp* and a half note chord with a slur above it. The third measure contains a piano dynamic marking *ppp* and a half note chord with a slur above it. The number 90'' is written below the second measure.

# POSTLUDE

*10" per measure*

**Piano Solo**

*ppp*

*p*

*uc*

*90"*

Gradually raise pedal after last tone is struck.