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The songs of Violet Archer: tracing the evolution of one of Canada's most influential composers

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Thesis

**THE SONGS OF VIOLET ARCHER:
TRACING THE EVOLUTION OF ONE OF CANADA'S
MOST PROMINENT COMPOSERS**

by

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For Mom and Dad

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ABSTRACT

In this study, four sets of songs composed by Violet Archer are examined, all of which were written at different points in her career. Archer studied with Paul Hindemith in 1948 – 49, and his teachings had a tremendous impact on the young composer. The first set of songs to be analyzed, *Moon Songs*, was written before her time with Hindemith, and will provide a baseline from which her later, post-Hindemith, works can be compared. Following her studies with Hindemith, Archer wrote three songs, “Cradle Song,” “April Weather,” and “First Snow,” all of which show evidence of Hindemith’s influence. Her later, more mature works, *Northern Landscape* and *Caleidoscopio Quatro*, demonstrate a refined compositional technique; one in which Archer has created her own style, while maintaining aspects of the approach taught by Hindemith at Yale. This study will elaborate on the aspects of Archer’s music that evolved throughout her compositional career.

PREFACE

I was first introduced to the music of Violet Archer in my youth: when taking the piano exams, it was required that we performed at least one piece by a Canadian composer. I never became too familiar with her work, until I began my post-secondary education and discovered that one of my professors had studied with Archer before her passing in 2000. I then gained an appreciation for her work, and heard many stories of her compositional advice, which was passed down via my professor at the time. I chose to study her songs for my thesis, as I had yet not heard them, and because they were recommended to me by my aforementioned professor as interesting pieces, worthy of study. There was also a patriotic aspect to my decision to pursue the study of her pieces: she and I are both Canadian, and she was also a long time professor at the University of Alberta, where I completed my undergraduate studies. It was this connection that led me to choose Violet Archer's works as the topic of my study.

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Chapter 1: Biography

Born in Montréal in 1913, Violet Archer (née Balestreri) grew up surrounded by music. Her parents, though not professional musicians, were talented amateurs. Her father, César, played the clarinet, and her mother, Beatrice (née Azzi), was a singer, fond of operatic arias.¹ Her parents, native Italians, had moved to Canada before Archer was born, intending to send for their older sons shortly after their arrival in Montréal. However, due to financial troubles, they were forced to return to Italy while Archer was still a baby; because of this, Archer's first language was Italian. They returned to Montréal in 1920, when Archer was to begin school. She learned both English and French at school, and spoke Italian at home; thus she was fluent in all three languages by the time she had finished grade school,² and maintained fluency in all three languages for the rest of her life.

Archer's musical education began in 1922, when her parents brought home a piano, and she began taking lessons from a local French Canadian teacher.³ She continued lessons throughout grade school, and upon graduating in 1939, enrolled in McGill University's music program. While Archer's musical exposure had to this point largely been piano repertoire, she now took lessons in composition at McGill, where she

¹ Betty Nygaard King, Helmut Kallmann, Elaine Keillor, Rev. Andrew McIntosh. "Violet Archer." *Canadian Encyclopedia online*.

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/violet-archer/>. Accessed 4/5/16.

² Banfield, Emma. "Violet Archer: A Canadian Woman in Composition." DMA Diss. Northwestern University. 2008. (5)

³ Ibid. The name of the teacher is not given; Banfield cites her source as an audio interview given by Archer, discussing her youth, titled *Violet Archer – Interview with Libby Smith*. A recording of the interview was not found for this project.

was able to sit in on rehearsals for the Montréal Symphony, which was conducted at the time by the Dean of Music at McGill, Douglas Clarke (1893 – 1962)⁴. Her time spent with Clarke and the Montréal Symphony inspired her to write many orchestral pieces, many of which were premiered there by the orchestra. Though she enjoyed her time at McGill, Archer's relationship with her first composition teacher, Claude Champagne (1891- 1965) was strained, as she alleged that he sought to thwart her success.⁵ Due to financial difficulties, her undergraduate studies took six years to complete, as she had to work full time as an accompanist to fund her studies. She was offered a scholarship to remain at McGill as a graduate student, but declined, and sought instead to study with the renowned Hungarian composer, Béla Bartók (1881 – 1945) in New York, where he lived⁶. He agreed to teach her, so in the summer of 1942, she left for New York, and studied with Bartók for one month. This experience proved a revelation for Archer; in particular, she learned of Bartók's affinity for folk music, an aspect of composition that would remain with her.⁷ She was determined to return the following summer to study again with Bartók; however, due to health concerns, he was unable to teach any longer.⁸ Despite this setback, Archer continued to visit New York during the summers, studying at Columbia and Juilliard, obliged to return to Montréal each fall to work as an accompanist, and teacher of music theory⁹. During the early 1940s, Archer's family

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ King, Kallmann, Keilor. *Canadian Encyclopedia online*.

⁸ Banfield, 11.

⁹ King, Kallmann, Keilor. *Canadian Encyclopedia online*.

changed their last name from Balestreri to Archer, the English translation of their Italian name; Archer used this name in publishing all of her works.

In 1945, Archer was introduced to the music of Paul Hindemith (1895 – 1963), who was currently a professor at Yale University, and she determined to study with him.¹⁰ In 1947, she applied to Yale, and was accepted to begin study for the Master of Music Composition in the fall. Much to her chagrin, Archer did not study with Hindemith for her first year at Yale; rather, she was placed in the studio of Richard Donovan (1892 – 1970), a professor with whom she did not get along with due to perceived slights against her and her music.¹¹ However frustrated she may have been with her assigned professor, Archer attended every lecture of Hindemith's, even those for which she was not enrolled, and was invited to study with him privately in the following year.

In the interim, during the summer of 1948, Archer was invited to Edmonton by Richard Eaton (1914 – 1968) to teach at the University of Alberta. She returned to New Haven in the fall of 1948 to begin her second year of study at Yale, finally allowed to study with Hindemith. Banfield states that Archer flourished under Hindemith's influence, and that her correspondence with her sister, Carolyn, shows this (correspondence from the University of Alberta archives)¹². Under Hindemith's tutelage,

¹⁰ Banfield, 11.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

and employing his system of composition, Archer won many awards, including the Woods Chandler Prize for Composition upon her graduation from Yale in 1949¹³.

Following her time at Yale, Archer moved to London, England, to search for a new job, as her position at McGill had been filled, and she had yet to be offered a full time professorship at the University of Alberta. Archer never found employment while in London, but worked hard during her year there, both on her composition and on potential jobs, applying to positions both in North America and Europe.¹⁴ Eventually she was accepted to the post of Resident Composer at North Texas State College (now University of North Texas) and worked there for three years as a teacher and composer.¹⁵ Archer's time at North Texas was a mixed bag: she enjoyed her teaching and composition but found that her colleagues attempted to undermine her career, and that she was easily dismissed due to her being an unmarried woman.¹⁶ Due to budget cuts, Archer was let go from her position at North Texas State, and in the fall of 1953, began working at the University of Oklahoma. According to her letters sent to her sister, Archer's time in Norman, Oklahoma was not much better than that spent in Texas: her colleagues were disrespectful, and she eventually sought medical help, through which she was prescribed medication for anxiety and depression.¹⁷ In spite of the difficult situation she found herself to be in, Archer still found outlets for her creativity. She spent some of her

¹³ King, Kallmann, Keilor. *Canadian Encyclopedia online*.

¹⁴ Banfield, 16.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

summers in Peterborough, New Hampshire, at the MacDowell colony, a place where artists active in many different media meet to work in an undisturbed environment and discuss their art. Archer had begun planning to complete a doctorate at the University of Toronto, going so far as to submit an application to study at the institution. In the summer of 1958, Archer received a sizeable grant from the Canadian government, which allowed her to take a sabbatical from the University of Oklahoma. She returned home to Montréal to spend time with her ailing father, who passed away in December of that year¹⁸, and her mother began to fall ill as well. Because of her family issues, the time spent on sabbatical was not as productive as she had hoped. By the end of her sabbatical, Archer had decided not to pursue her doctorate, telling her sister, “I doubt that I could stand ‘studying’ composition – in fact I know it to be ridiculous at my stage of the game. My only purpose is to better my professional status – though from what I have observed the Yale Master of Music degree is hard to beat anywhere.”¹⁹

Archer reluctantly returned to her position at the University of Oklahoma, and was soon contacted again by Richard Eaton, who offered her a full time position at the University of Alberta for the following year. In 1962, Archer moved to Edmonton and started her new position as Chair of Theory and Composition for the music program at the University of Alberta²⁰. At this time, the program was small: the first graduates had

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

only completed their degrees in 1961,²¹ and the music program was still a division of the larger Arts department. Though Archer enjoyed her new position, she still suffered from health problems, complaining of intestinal discomfort and arthritis as early as 1966.²² She collapsed in January 1968, was instructed to take medical leave from her position, and was again prescribed medication to treat anxiety and depression, which she stayed on for the rest of her life.

She recovered from her collapse and found the next five years to be some of the most productive of her career. She was made a full professor at the University of Alberta, and in 1972, took a sabbatical during which she wrote her opera, *Sganarelle*. But in 1975, she was devastated to learn of the death of her sister, Carolyn, who had been her closest friend and confidant.²³ Archer retired from the University of Alberta in 1978, but continued to teach there until 1990. In 1983, she was named to the Order of Canada, the highest honour for a Canadian citizen. In 1998, she moved to Ottawa to be with her remaining family, and passed away in a nursing home on February 21st, 2000.²⁴ Archer had become an icon of Canadian music, and her death was met with many concerts of her music.

Archer was a deeply religious woman, who credited her success to her faith: “I believe we are guided in what we do. Without my faith I wouldn’t be able to do what I’m

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

doing and, of course, I always feel that each new piece should be better than the last one²⁵.” Archer’s notion that her pieces of music improved over time is interesting, not only for the fact that it would seem to diminish her early works, but because it serves to focus analytic inquiry.

There will be four songs analyzed in depth in Chapter 3: two of which occur relatively early in Archer’s compositional output, and two of which are from her mid-to-late years as a composer.

Moon Songs, which contains the first song to be considered here, is a song cycle written in 1940, well before Archer began her studies with Hindemith. The songs are settings of Vachel Lindsay’s *Moon Poems*, a set of poems that were meant to be sung, rather than spoken, a style of poetry for which Lindsay became well known. The first song, “The Haughty Snail King,” tells the story of a group of snails that roam the outdoors during the night. They slowly wander around, led by their leader, called the Snail King. They revere the moon, and the way it glows in the sky, with the king wishing for a crown “as glistening as the moon.” Archer set the poem to text by using glissandos to imitate the snails sliding slowly around, along with many dissonant non-chord tones to create a feeling of unease. The second song, “The Beggar Speaks,” is written from the point of view of a lonely person, who yearns for someone to pay him attention as he sits below the moon. It is replete with references to loneliness and idleness, and Archer’s

²⁵ Violet Archer. *Caleidoscopio Quatro*, Ed. Brian McDonagh. Plangere Editions, Toronto, 2013. Archer’s quote is taken from her biography in the edition.

setting reflects the very melancholy text. The next song, “What Grandpa Mouse Said,” tells the story of a family of mice who fear the moon, for they believe it to be a sentient being who releases the owls that prey upon the mice. The song is written mostly in the upper register of the piano, with many staccato articulations, imitating the light, quick mice depicted in the text. The last song, “The Rose of Midnight,” compares the moon to a blossoming flower, whose “pollen is the mist that swings / across her face of dreams.” Archer sets the text to dreamy, ethereal music, which features a slow melody over rising accompaniment. *Moon Songs* were written early in Archer’s compositional output, when she was still developing her style. As will be shown in Chapter 3, many elements that were present in her early music were no longer seen in her mature works.

“Cradle Song” is a piece that was published individually in 1954, but was composed four years previously, in 1950²⁶. This makes it one of the earliest pieces, and the first of two songs (along with “April Weather,” which was published in 1976, and “First Snow,” published in 1954) to be composed after she had completed her studies with Hindemith in 1949. The text of “Cradle Song,” taken from a poem by Amy Bissett England, describes an infant being put to bed, as the birds outside stop singing, and the child’s mother sings as the baby falls asleep. “Cradle Song” uses Hindemith’s compositional system rather simplistically; this was likely an aesthetic choice, as Archer would not have wanted to use novel and dissonant sounds in a song about a child falling asleep peacefully, but the fact remains that she did not use many facets of the system she

²⁶ Banfield. 140.

had been taught at Yale. Notably, this song does not contain any tritones, a significant component of Hindemith's system, which will be presented in Chapter 2. Written at the same time as "Cradle Song," although not published together, are the songs "April Weather" and "First Snow." Like "Cradle Song," these two are relatively simple, reflective of Archer's recent study with Hindemith. "First Snow" describes an idyllic evening: the snow outside falls softly to the ground, but at the same time a mother tucks her child into bed, ensuring that she is protected from the cold outside. The text from "First Snow" was written by Arthur S. Bourinot (1893 – 1969), a renowned Canadian poet, born in Ottawa. "First Snow" presents a stark contrast from "Cradle Song:" though they both tell the story of a mother putting her child to bed, Archer has set them in different ways. The texts differ in the details surrounding the mother and child: "Cradle Song" features birds who presumptively sing before the evening, and a soft wind blowing, while "First Snow" describes a much colder atmosphere, as the first snow of the season falls outside. Reflecting this difference, Archer composed "First Snow" to be much more melancholy than "Cradle Song, is in a slower tempo, and featuring many more dissonant harmonies. "April Weather" is a quick, upbeat song describing a rainy day; the sun pokes out between the clouds, as the warm rain falls on the narrator. The piano maintains a steady sixteenth note pulse, usually playing broken chords. The voice has a usually stepwise melody, with occasional leaps. The text of "April Weather" was written by Amy Bissett England. These three songs are representative of Archer's body of work from her time immediately following her studies with Hindemith at Yale. They are examples of her work that do not deviate too far from his compositional method.

They are significantly different from *Moon Songs*, written eight years previously, but do not yet represent her mature style, as will be shown in Chapter 3.

In 1978, Archer was commissioned to compose a set of songs for the final round of the Canadian Music Competition, and for this purpose she wrote *Northern Landscape*, a set of three songs that reflect the varied Canadian countryside. The texts, by Arthur James Marshall Smith (1902 – 1980), were also written to reflect the Canadian landscape: Smith, also born in Montréal, was a patriotic Canadian, though his employment led him to spend much of his time in Lansing, Michigan²⁷. Each of the three songs – in order, “The Lonely Land,” “Swift Current,” and “Sea Cliff” – present Archer’s interpretation of the natural landscape described in the title. All of the poems are written in free verse, with no strict rhyming pattern. However, there is a somewhat regular meter to the verses, which no doubt aided in setting the text to music. The first song of the set, “The Lonely Land,” describes a barren, unpopulated landscape. Archer created the image of this desolate landscape through dissonant *forte* chords in the piano, evoking the vast, expansive wilderness that permeates much of the Canadian territory. Second is “Swift Current,” a short song, written about a fast-moving stream of water. Its rapid sixteenth notes clearly represent the water flowing downstream. The song is very short, lasting for less than a minute. The last song, the one that will be analyzed in Chapter 3, is “Sea Cliff.” The text evokes a scene where the ocean meets the land, surrounded by jagged rocks; where the waves crash ashore. Just as with the previous two songs, sound painting

²⁷ Banfield. 114.

is used to great effect: the accompaniment is played in triplets, creating a feeling of rocking back and forth, similar to the waves at sea. *Northern Landscape* is the first example among her songs of Archer's mature style. They show a much more refined composer, who has developed her own style, separate from that of Hindemith.

Caleidoscopio Quattro is a set of four songs composed in 1981. The text is taken from a group of poems written by the Italian poet Gisella Azzi (1912 – 2002). Of note is that Azzi is also the maiden name of Archer's mother; it is possible that Azzi and Archer were related, but it cannot be definitively stated here. The texts are all in Italian, reflecting Archer's Italian heritage and the affinity she felt for the language of her upbringing. Each of the poems describes warm, colorful, and peaceful settings. The first song, "Il Sole" ("The Sun") will be analyzed in depth in Chapter 3. It tells of the narrator walking down to a town at sunset, and describes the way the sun's rays reflect off the houses below. The sound painting in Archer's style has become more pronounced, as she uses fast gestures in the piano to imitate the shimmering windows and the glowing rooftops. The second song, "Valzer Musette" ("Waltz-Musette") describes the sun low in the sky, illuminating the rooftops, but not reaching into the street below. As the title of the song suggests, the piece is a waltz, in triple meter. The text is written in very short verses, many of which contain only a single word, creating a disjointed narrative. Archer uses this aspect to great effect, breaking up the melodic passages in a manner similar to the text. The third song of the set, "Corsetta Contoniera" (Roadman's Bower), tells of a traveler taking refuge from the sun under a tree, who sees a beautiful woman. The

Roadman sees her for only an instant, but is so taken by her that he spends the entire poem describing her ethereal appearance. Most of the song is written in a high register, creating a feeling of lightness and buoyancy. The piano moves in rapid ascending gestures, indicating the almost dreamlike qualities of the woman seen by the roadman. Once more, Archer's affinity for sound painting is put on full display. The final song of the set, titled "Pulviscolo" ("Efflorescence" or "flowering"), personifies the growth of springtime flora. The flowers dance around, contrasting the dirt floor beneath, as birds return, happy for the arrival of spring. Archer set the music to to be dance-like, with a staccato bass representing the "feather light slippers." *Caleidoscopio Quatro* represents some of the most mature works written by Archer.²⁸ By this point in her life, she had refined a compositional method that was entirely her own, developed from that of Hindemith, her most influential teacher.

²⁸ *Northern Landscape* is significantly more challenging, but that is due to the fact that it was commissioned to be performed at the finals of a competition.

Chapter 2: Hindemith's Compositional Technique

As mentioned above, Archer's time spent studying with Hindemith proved to be a fruitful venture for her. A clear distinction can be made between her works before and after her time spent studying with Hindemith, as will be shown in Chapter 3. For this reason, Hindemith's system, which he outlined in detail in his book *The Craft of Musical Composition*,²⁹ will be explained as succinctly and efficiently as possible in this chapter. Not all aspects of Hindemith's system will be discussed, only those that are pertinent to the analysis of Archer's music.

Hindemith's system of composition represents an essentially tonal technique, but it is not diatonic: it assigns tonal centers, but the pitches used both melodically and harmonically need not be related to the tonal center. The background for his system consists of two series of pitches. The first, appropriately called 'Series 1,' comprises a list of all twelve pitch classes, in order from the most closely related to a given fundamental pitch to the most distantly related. Hindemith's Series 1 is shown in Figure 1.

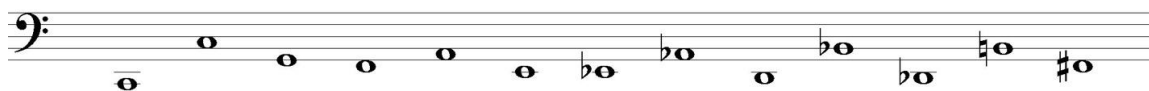


Figure 1: Hindemith's Series 1

²⁹ Paul Hindemith, *The Craft of Musical Composition*, trans. Arthur Mendel (Associated Music Publishers, Inc. 1945)

The last tone, which is a tritone away from the given root, is not included in Hindemith's Series 1, but is included here, so as to create an exhaustive list of all twelve tones.

Hindemith's method of deriving the order of tones comes from the overtone series:^{30 31}

Each pitch in Series 1 is related to the fundamental as either an overtone, an undertone, an overtone of an overtone, or as a virtual fundamental.³² For example, the pitch F2 is achieved as the virtual fundamental of C4, which is the fourth overtone of the fundamental, C2. The pitch D ♭ is also a virtual fundamental to F, which is its fifth overtone. Table 1 shows how each pitch was derived, in just intonation.

Similar to Series 1 is Hindemith's Series 2, which details his ordering of intervals. They are used to evaluate the level of consonance within a chord or interval, and also to identify the root of the harmony. Series 2 is shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Hindemith's Series 2

³⁰ Hindemith, *Craft of Musical Composition*, 34 - 37. A complete explanation of Hindemith's divisions can be found here. The tritone is not included in his Series I because he did not achieve it through divisions of frequencies, indicating that it is the most distantly related pitch class.

³¹ Pitches, not pitch classes: once a desired pitch has been achieved, Hindemith alters it to fit within a specific octave.

³² Virtual fundamental meaning a pitch of whose overtone(s) already belong to Series 1

Pitch	Frequency (Hz)	Method of Derivation (O = Overtone, O of O = Overtone of Overtone, VF = Virtual Fundamental)
C2	64	Fundamental pitch
D \flat 2	68.27	VF, F as fifth overtone
D2	72	O of O, third overtone of G
E \flat 2	76.8	VF, G as fifth overtone
E2	80	O, fifth overtone of fundamental pitch
F2	85.33	VF, C as third overtone
F \sharp 2	N/A	F \sharp and G \flat can be achieved, but are too far out of tune to be used
G2	96	O, second overtone of fundamental pitch
A \flat 2	102.4	VF, C as fifth overtone
A2	106.66	VF, E as third overtone
B \flat 2	113.78	VF, F as third overtone
B2	120	O of O, third overtone of E
C3	128	O, second overtone of fundamental

Table 1: Hindemith's derivation of pitches, using overtones from fundamental pitch C2

As can be seen in Figure 2, Hindemith's Series 2 moves through the all of different intervals: first is the octave, which serves no purpose within a chord except to emphasize a tone, as it is a double of the fundamental pitch. Second is the fifth, which governs all chord roots according to Hindemith, and creates the most stable harmonies. This is

followed by the fourth, the major sixth and third and the minor sixth and third, all of which create traditional major and minor triads when combined. Next are the major second and minor seventh, which are used in the creation of either dominant or minor seventh chords, and the minor second and major seventh, which according to Hindemith are not seen very often in traditional harmony, as they do not serve a purpose within usual triadic harmony. The intervals in Series 2 are arranged according to a descending level of consonance: the octave, which is the leftmost interval, is the most consonant, and the tritone, which is the least consonant (or most dissonant), is furthest to the right. As before, Hindemith does not include the tritone in his presentation in the *Craft*, but it is included here for the sake of completeness. The root of the interval is not necessarily the lowest pitch: for seconds, fourths, and sixths, Hindemith states that the root is the *higher* pitch, while the root of thirds, fifths, and sevenths is the lower pitch. This indicates that Hindemith thought of seconds, fourths, and sixths as inversions of sevenths, fifths, and thirds, respectively.

Hindemith defines a chord as “a group of at least three different tones sounding simultaneously,”³³ but also makes three distinctions between his definition of a chord and what is known as the “traditional” definition of a chord. First, he states that in his system thirds are no longer the basis for the construction of chords. This means that, for example, a chord consisting of only seconds would still be a valid harmony, as opposed to the traditional harmonic practice, which would interpret the seconds as non-chord

³³ Hindemith, *Craft of musical composition*

tones. Second, he states that inversions of chords no longer carry individual harmonic meaning in his system; the only differentiation between chords of the same group is the location of the root. Any chord whose root is not the lowest note is subordinate to a chord of the same group whose root and lowest note are the same. And last, he states that a chord can only be understood in one way; that is, that a single chord can not have any ambiguity. To accomplish this, Hindemith has divided all possible chords into six groups, a classification system which he states will never lead to an ambiguous situation. There are exceptions, however, being certain superposed thirds and fourths, which are used to create tonal uncertainty in his music.

Within his system, Hindemith divides all chords into two larger groups, which he calls Group A and Group B. All chords within Group A do not contain a tritone, while all chords within Group B contain at least one tritone.³⁴ These groups are further divided into three subgroups, which are based on the rest of the interval content in the chord. Hindemith uses Roman numerals to classify the chord subgroups (hereafter referred to simply as groups, the terminology used by Hindemith): Groups I, III, and V belong to Group A; Groups II, IV, and VI belong to Group B. Group I chords do not contain seconds or sevenths, and so are limited only to fifths and major or minor thirds, meaning

³⁴ Hindemith introduces the tritone on page 81 of the *Craft*, but its derivation is not covered – he only explains it as three superposed tritones. In his explanation of the derivation of other intervals (see Table 1), he offers suggestions for how a tritone might be achieved, but dismisses them for being out of tune. Contrary to how seconds and sevenths are grouped together (as are fourths and fifths, and thirds and sixths), Hindemith calls the tritone the counterpart to the octave – the octave being “the proudest, the noblest of the intervals ... the tritone is the distant relative, the eccentric ... like Loki among the Gods of Valhalla.”

that the only chords belonging to Group I are major and minor triads, (augmented and diminished triads, which consist solely of major and minor thirds, belong to Groups V and VI, respectively). Group II chords must contain at least one tritone, so it is not possible for them to contain solely fifths and thirds, because of this, Group II is expanded to allow major seconds and minor sevenths. Group III chords build on Group I chords to allow all seconds and sevenths. This group of chords contains the greatest variety of chords and thus is seen often in analyses of Archer's works. This allows for the inclusion of dominant seventh chords in Group II (see Table 1). Group IV chords are expanded slightly from Group II, allowing minor seconds and major sevenths. Groups V and VI are tonally indeterminate: these chords consist of superposed intervals of equal size, which makes it impossible to label a root of the chord. Group V consists of superposed major thirds (creating an augmented triad) and superposed fourths. Group VI consists solely of superposed minor thirds (which create diminished chords, either triads or seventh chords). It is important to note that superposed fifths do not belong to Group V; rather Hindemith placed them in Group III, as he considers the fifth to be the strongest interval, and that it does suggest a root. Table 2 shows the chart presented in Hindemith's *Craft of Musical Composition*, which shows the divisions of chords into groups along with with many examples.













A Chords without Tritone	B Chords containing Tritone
<p>I <u>Without seconds or sevenths</u></p> <p>1. Root and bass tone are identical</p>  <p>2. Root lies above the bass tone</p> 	<p>II <u>Without minor seconds or major sevenths</u> <u>The tritone subordinate</u></p> <p>a. With minor seventh only (no major second) Root and bass tone are identical</p>  <p>b. Containing major seconds or minor sevenths or both</p> <p>1. Root and bass tone are identical</p>  <p>2. Root lies above the bass tone</p>  <p>3. Containing more than one tritone</p> 
<p>III <u>Containing seconds or sevenths or both</u></p> <p>1. Root and bass tone are identical</p>  <p>2. Root lies above the bass tone</p> 	<p>IV <u>Containing minor seconds or major sevenths or both</u> <u>One or more tritones subordinate</u></p> <p>1. Root and bass tone are identical</p>  <p>2. Root lies above the bass tone</p> 
<p>V <u>Indeterminate</u></p> 	<p>VI <u>Indeterminate. Tritone predominating</u></p> 

Table 2: Hindemith's Table of Chord Groups

A major aspect of Hindemith's system of composition is the property that he calls "harmonic fluctuation." In short, he explains that a piece of music should move from stability to instability and back to stability, based on his groups of chords - Group I being the most stable, Group IV the least stable. A special case is made for Groups V and VI, those with indeterminate chord roots. Generally, these chords create a decrease in stability and thus an increase in tension – Hindemith argues that careful usage of these chords can be pleasant, but caution must be taken to avoid losing all sense of direction. Harmonic fluctuation within a piece is indicated analytically by writing the corresponding chord group below it in the score, and then writing the root of the chord on a separate staff below. This sequence of chord roots creates what Hindemith calls the degree-progression.

Tonality remains a major aspect of music in Hindemith's *Craft of Musical Composition*. According to him, tonality is derived from the degree-progression, in a manner similar to which we understand his chords. Hindemith states that any Group B chord that precedes a Group A chord creates a tonal center, which is the root of the chord of resolution, always be the Group A chord. This is contrary to traditional harmonic practice, which requires dissonances to resolve in specific ways (for instance, a tritone of B – F would resolve to a third whose lowest note would be either C or F#. In Hindemith's system, it would be appropriate for a harmony containing this tritone to resolve to any Group A chord.) In the absence of Group B chords, a tonal center can also be achieved by a succession of three Group A chords. The tonal center in this case would

be the principal tone of the group formed by the chord roots of all Group A chords in question.

Harmony and tonality as defined in Hindemith's system can be summarized in the following manner: Series 1 is derived from the overtone series; Series 2 is derived from Series 1; the chord groupings are derived from Series 2; harmonic fluctuation and degree progression are derived from the chord groups; and tonality results from the degree progression.

The last element of Hindemith's system that will be discussed here is his theory of melody, which is rather straightforward. In short, Hindemith advocates for melodies that move principally by step and do not outline triadic harmonies when leaping. This avoids any implication of key.

As will be shown, Archer breaks many of these norms in her songs, especially in her more mature works. She goes so far as to devote entire sections to tonal indeterminacy by using only Group V chords, something that Hindemith argues should not occur.

Chapter 3: Analysis

In this section, four groups of songs written over the course of Archer's career will be analyzed. The focus will primarily be on form and harmony, but close attention will also be paid to melody and to any textual relationship between the music and text. These groups of songs are not cyclic; there are no motivic or thematic elements that tie them together, though the text of the songs often share the same poet. The first set of songs that will be analyzed, *Moon Songs*, was written in 1940, well before she studied with Hindemith. After that, "Cradle Song," "April Weather," and "First Snow" will be analyzed. They were written at approximately the same time, but were not published together. *Northern Landscape* is the third collection of songs to be looked at in this chapter; they were written for the finals of a Canadian Music Competition, and are thus significantly more challenging to perform than any other songs analyzed in this study. Finally, a set of Italian songs, titled *Caleidoscopio Quattro* will be analyzed.³⁵ The purpose of this study is to analyze Archer's change in compositional technique, from her early years before she studied with Hindemith, to her mature years as a prominent Canadian composer.

³⁵ The songs to be analyzed here do not represent the entirety of Archer's song output. In total, Archer composed twelve songs or collections of songs, totaling twenty-five individual songs. As a young composer, she tended to write single compositions, rather than large collections, *Moon Songs* (1942) being the lone exception. In her early years, she composed two other songs: "Agnus Dei" (1936) and "Silver" (1938). Composed around the time of "First Snow," "Cradle Song," and "April Weather" were two songs, "Someone" (1949), and "Under the Sun" (1949), which were composed just before completion of her studies with Hindemith, and one collection of songs, *Songs of Prayer and Praise* (1953). In her later years, Archer composed *Northern Landscape* (1978) and *Caleidoscopio* (1981), as well as another collection of songs, *Four Newfoundland Songs* (1975). The songs analyzed here are meant to show a wide breadth of songs, spanning Archer's career.

Moon Songs

Because the first collection of songs that will be analyzed were written before Archer's studies with Hindemith, these analyses will not use the system outlined in Chapter 2, but will instead use a more traditional analytical processes. The first song, "The Haughty Snail King," is written in a pseudo-bar form: AA'B. The piece is in the key of D minor, but Archer has tritones as non-chord tones to the triads, creating a dissonant harmonic texture. Harmony in this song is fairly straightforward, but Archer's use of non-chord tones obfuscates much of it. For example, all three notes of the D minor triad are played in m. 1, but the G# creates a tritone with the root note D, shown in Figure 3. This dissonance makes it difficult to hear the chord as a minor triad, but it remains so nonetheless.

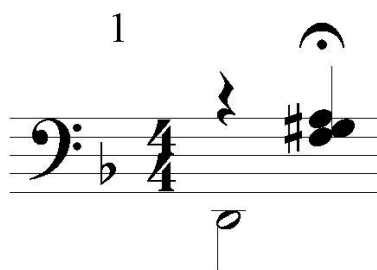


Figure 3: "The Haughty Snail King" m. 1

The A and A' sections break into four measure phrases, according to the textual divisions put forth by Lindsay. Tonally, the A section is in the key of D minor, but also spends time in the relative key of F major. The B section is much looser in terms of

phrase length and structure: the first phrase of the section at m. 34 is marked “freely, like recitative.” The most striking part of the song occurs at mm. 52 – 56: the piano plays *fortissimo* tremolando chords, while the voice, marked “passionately,” sings, “I wish / I had a yellow crown.” These measures stand out because they contrast the beginning of the song in dramatic fashion: the opening A section has a slow, quiet, plodding characteristic, while mm. 52 – 56, shown in Figure 4, are loud and br

52

ff I wish I had a yel-low crown

ff

molto dim. e rit.

Figure 4: "The Haughty Snail King" mm. 52 - 55

The B section maintains a similar harmonic texture as the A and A' sections, using non-chord tones to blur the otherwise clear harmonies. The song slides down to D \flat major briefly at m. 37, but returns to D minor at m. 45. Table 3 shows the formal plan of “The Haughty Snail King.”

Section	Measures	Key
Introduction	1 – 5	D minor
A / A'	6 – 19 / 20 – 33	D minor – F major – D minor
B	34 – 64	D minor – D \flat major – D minor

Table 3: Form of "The Haughty Snail King"

The second song of the cycle, "The Beggar Speaks," is in simple binary form, but the A section is divided into ternary form, while the B sections has no underlying structure. Tonally, the song is straightforward: it begins and ends in B minor, and, save for a modulation to the dominant, the entire piece can be read in B minor. Table 4 shows the layout of "The Beggar Speaks:"

Section	Measures	Key
Introduction	1 – 5	B minor
A (a-b-a)	6 – 38 (6 – 15, 16 – 24, 25 – 38)	B minor – F# major
B	39 – 66	B minor

Table 4: Form of "The Beggar Speaks"

"The Beggar Speaks" is a very simple song, but the simplicity is fitting considering the nature of the poem: the narrator wants only for someone to pay him attention; his feelings are not complex, and Archer has written the song to reflect the narrator. The melody moves mainly by step (shown in Figure 5); any leaps are within the

chord. The accompaniment consists solely of ascending arpeggiated triads; there is no variance to the left hand except for mm. 57 – 59, where the piano plays blocks of chords, in a *recitative*-like passage, as seen in Figure 6. “The Beggar Speaks” is an appropriate song to follow “The Haughty Snail King:” it is lyrical and flowing, compared to the disjointed and dissonant song that was “The Haughty Snail King.”

10

mf

Some of the flowers will keep a-wake some of the birds will sing

Figure 5: "The Beggar Speaks" mm. 10 - 14. Note the simplicity in the melody and harmony.

56

mf *slowly* *tempo I*

Come eat the bread of i-dle-ness, Said Mis-ter Moon to me.

slowly *p*

Figure 6: "The Beggar Speaks" mm. 56 - 60, note the blocks of chords in the piano, the only instance of this in the song.

The third song of *Moon Songs*, “What Grandpa Mouse Said,” tells the story of an elder mouse warning the young mice about the moon, as they believe the moon releases the owls that prey upon the mice. The song is in simple binary form, with regular four bar phrases, except for the last phrase of each section, which Archer has extended. Table 5 shows the formal plan of the song, and the keys of each section.

Section	Measures	Key
Introduction	1 – 5	F major
A	6 – 28	F major – G major
B	29 – 48	F major
Coda	48 – 52	F major

Table 5: Formal outline of "What Grandpa Mouse Said"

This song is very simple, along the same lines as “The Beggar Speaks:” the harmonies are straightforward, as is the construction of the melody and the form. Sound painting is evident, as Archer has created a light, bouncy sound, similar to what agitated mice would be associated with.

In “The Rose of Midnight,” the moon is compared to a blossoming flower, which opens at night and illuminates the otherwise dark sky. In terms of formal structure, the piece is in song form: AABA, with an interlude of sorts before the B section. The A sections contain an arpeggiated left hand, while the right hand generally doubles the

voice, deviating from this occasionally. Most noteworthy, however, is the harmony that Archer used. In general, the song can be said to have D minor as a triadic center; the song begins and ends in D but is never really *in* the key of D minor. The lack of key signature supports the notion that there is no key to the piece. The majority of harmonies relate to D minor – A major and minor, as well as G minor are prevalent throughout the song. The remaining harmonies do not conform to any one key, or pitch area, so they must be thought of in another way. Most of the remaining harmonies are common tone relations to the harmonies that preceded them. For example, B minor is a common harmony in the song, first appearing in m. 9, and it relates to the triadic center of D minor via the common tone of D. The same relationship exists for the C# major harmony in m. 11: it is a common tone relation with the preceding A major harmony. Another harmonic relationship used by Archer is that of the tritone, as seen in mm. 14 – 15, where the C# minor chord moves to G major, as seen in Figure 7. The last, and least used harmonic relationship, is the neighboring harmony. This is first seen in m. 7, where D# minor is arpeggiated in between two statements of D minor, shown in Figure 8. One would expect A major to be heard here, cadencing on the tonic, but Archer has replaced it with a harmony related by tritone, weakening the arrival on D minor. The interlude from mm 43 – 57 follows the same harmonic pattern as the A sections; that is, revolving around the D minor triad, but never being in the key of D minor. The B section takes the form of a *recitative*, where the piano plays blocks of chords and the voice, marked “almost as though speaking,” flows above it. The chords in this section seem to foreshadow what

would become a staple of her technique after her time with Hindemith: the harmonies do not conform to a major or minor triad, something that is common in Hindemith's system.

14

C#m GM

Figure 7: "The Rose of Midnight" mm. 14 - 15, showing the tritone relation between the two harmonies

5

mf

The moon is

mf

Figure 8: "The Rose of Midnight" mm. 5 - 8, showing the neighbor relationship between the D minor and D# minor harmonies.

The song returns to the A section at m. 67, and the D minor triad is once more the central aspect around which all the other harmonies revolve. Table 6 shows the formal plan of "The Rose of Midnight."

Section	Measures	Triadic Center
Introduction	1 – 7	D minor
A	8 – 26	D minor
A	27 – 59	D minor
B – “Recitative”	60 – 66	Indeterminate
A	67 – 80	D minor

Table 6: Formal plan of "The Rose of Midnight"

Formally, “The Rose of Midnight” is a very conservative piece. The most ambitious aspect of the song is far and away its harmony, which shows a forward looking composer, for that reason, “The Rose of Midnight” is important to understanding how Archer’s works were already beginning to evolve: the first three songs adhere much more strictly to traditional tonal norms; they don’t show harmonic ingenuity in the way “The Rose of Midnight” does.

“Cradle Song,” “April Weather,” and “First Snow”

“Cradle Song” is the first piece to be analyzed that was written after Archer’s time spent with Hindemith, thus it will use the analytical method detailed in Chapter 2. The song can best be thought of as a “lullaby within a lullaby,” as the narrator describes a mother singing as her child goes to sleep, and the song as a whole is similar to many

traditional lullabies. Formally, “Cradle Song” is in simple ternary, with a four measure introduction. A breakdown of the form of the song can be found in Table 7.

Section	Measures	Tonal Movement
Introduction	1 – 4	E ♭
A	5 – 12	C → A ♭
B	13 – 20	A ♭ → F
A'	21 – 31	E ♭

Table 7: Formal layout of "Cradle Song"

The song begins with a four measure introduction, alternating Group I and III chords every beat for the first three measures with a Group V chord in the fourth measure. The chord roots alternate between E ♭ and B ♭, suggesting E ♭ as a tonal center throughout the first section of the song. The fourth measure is notable for its Group V chord – a feature that renders tonality ambiguous, perhaps attempting to lessen the strength of the E ♭ tonality heard previously before the voice enters with the melody. The Group V chord quickly resolves back to a Group III chord with root E ♭, in preparation for the entrance of the voice. Measures 1 – 4 are shown in Figure 9.

Larghetto, tranquillo e grazioso

Fluctuation: I.2 III.1 1.2 III.1 1.2 III.1 V III.1

Figure 9: "Cradle Song," mm. 1 - 4

The A section is divided neatly in two halves: the first from mm. 5 – 8, and the second from mm. 9 – 12. This structure implies a parallel period, and the melodic similarities of the two halves would seem to support that. The voice enters on what would traditionally be called an E \flat major harmony, but because Hindemith's system necessitates at least three pitches, this harmony is only considered a major third interval, with root E \flat , further substantiating the claim that the tonal center for the opening measures of the song is E \flat . The harmonies begin to change, however, to a series of Group III chords, all of which suggest C as a tonal center, which is reinforced further by the inclusion of the E \flat from m. 5. Figure 10 shows the degree progression suggested by the harmonies in mm. 5 – 6: E \flat , G, C, and B \flat , all of which create a Group III chord of root C, or a C minor seventh chord if considered in traditional analysis terminology.

The image displays a musical score for measures 5-6 of "Cradle Song". It consists of five staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a 2/4 time signature, labeled "2 Voice Framework:". The second staff is a bass clef with a 2/4 time signature, also labeled "2 Voice Framework:". The third staff is labeled "Fluctuation:" and contains the text "N/A - Interval", "III.2", "III.1", and "III.1" aligned with the notes in the staves above. The fourth staff is a bass clef with a 2/4 time signature, labeled "Degree Progression:", and contains notes corresponding to the fluctuation labels. The fifth staff is a bass clef with a 2/4 time signature, labeled "Tonality:", and contains a single note on the second beat of the measure.

Figure 10: “Cradle Song” mm. 5 - 6

Measures 7 – 8 feature two Group V chords surrounding a group I.2 chord, throwing the tonality into flux. Notably, the two Group V chords are built on different tones (F and D, respectively) further reducing the impact of the Group I.2 chord’s F root on the tonality of the section. The second half of the A section, mm. 9 – 12, begin the transition from a tonality of C to $A\flat$. Measure 9 begins with a Group III.2 chord, with root $A\flat$, but $A\flat$ is not strong here because of the $B\flat$ in the chord and its placement in the voice part. The voice and bass lines continue in contrary motion, creating a Group III.1 chord, root $B\flat$, before arriving at a Group I.1 chord, with a root G in m. 10, followed by a Group I.2 chord, root C on the second beat of the measure. The bass notes of these two measures, $C - B\flat - G - E\flat$, spell out a C minor 7 chord, establishing the tonal center from the antecedent phrase. A good example of Archer’s word painting occurs in mm. 9 – 10. The text reads, “In the treetop cradles,” while the melody climbs to its highest point thus far, D5 on the first beat of m. 10, as the voice reads the word

“cradles.” This would be the high note of the song, except for the E \flat on the first beat of m. 15, which could possibly be interpreted as a registral transfer. The second half of the consequent phrase, mm. 11 – 12, completes the transition from C to A \flat . The chords from these measures are, in order: Group V – Group III.1 root C – Group III.1 root A \flat . Measures 9 – 12 are shown in Figure 11.

The musical score for measures 9-12 of "Cradle Song" is presented in two systems. The top system is the vocal line, and the bottom system is the piano accompaniment. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line begins with a fermata over the first two notes of measure 9. The piano accompaniment starts with a dynamic marking of *p* and also has a fermata over the first two notes of measure 9. The lyrics are: "In the tree - top cradles, While a small wind sings."

Figure 11: “Cradle Song,” mm. 9 - 12

The B section of the song is much more lyrical. The voice is constantly moving, reflecting the text: “Mother, too, is crooning / Bedtime lullabies / To her little loved one / Wearing sleepy eyes.” This is a very literal case of word painting: the melody reflects what the mother could be singing to her child. Tonally, the B section begins in A \flat , established at the end of the A section, but moves away from that tonal center towards F. Just as in the A section, the B section is divided in two four-measure phrases, both of which contain pedal tones that are held for the duration of the phrase. The first phrase consists of an inverted dominant pedal, wherein the dominant of A \flat is held, but the root

of the dominant, here $E \flat$, is registrally higher than the lowest note, $B \flat$, both of which are held. This is a notable technique employed by Archer, weakening the harmonic strength of the dominant pedal while still maintaining its presence. The second phrase consists of a pedal tone on C, here also a dominant of the new tonal center, F. Measures 13 – 20 are shown in Figure 12. Harmonically, the chords in the B section serve to reinforce the $A \flat - F$ tonalities of the section. Interestingly, the four principal tonalities seen thus far, $E \flat - C - A \flat - F$, create a pattern of descending thirds. This is shown in Figure 13.

The A' section is a nearly exact repetition of the A section, except for its final tonality, which returns to $E \flat$, rather than venturing into $A \flat$. With respect to long-range tonality, this piece is quite obviously centered around $E \flat$. Notably, there are no Group B chords in the song – meaning that there are no tritones in any of the harmonies. This creates a more passive and calm texture, but prevents any real sense of resolution, as there is no dissonance (at least tritone-related dissonance) that requires resolution, which reinforces the impression of a lullaby.

13 *mf* *poco f*

Moth - er, too, is croon - ing Bed - time lull - a - bies

17 *poco ritard.*

To her lit - tle loved one, Wear - ing sleep - y eyes.

Figure 12: "Cradle Song," mm. 13 - 20

"First Snow," also written in 1950 immediately following Archer's time with Hindemith, is a good example of strict adherence to Hindemith's system. The song, only seventeen measures long, is divided into two sections, with a four-measure introduction, which demonstrates the principles of harmonic fluctuation very well: the first beat begins with a Group I chord, contrasted by the instability of the Group V chord on the second beat, and returning to stability on the downbeat of m. 2 with a Group I chord. This alternation of stability and instability permeates the piece. "First Snow" is very similar to

“Cradle Song,” it has a similar texture, and their melodies are also comparable, that is, containing simple rhythms, and moving generally by step. The B section features a passage marked “recitativo,” a device used in many other Archer songs (though she didn’t explicitly mark them), particularly “The Rose of Midnight.” “First Snow” also features the use of many Group V chords, an emblematic aspect of Hindemith’s style of composition.

“April Weather,” the final song composed in 1950, still shows Archer’s style from this period: harmony reflects Hindemith’s chord groupings, and the melody reflects the ideals outlined in *The Craft of Musical Composition*. The song, whose text is written by Amy Bissett England,³⁶ describes a rainy day in April. Generally, the chords used belong to Group III, but there are also periods where Archer emphasizes Group I chords, such as mm. 11 – 13, an arpeggiation of B ♭ major. There is very little in the way of harmonic fluctuation in the song: the chords mostly move between Group I to III, which represents little change in stability, contrary to what Hindemith desired. This turns out to be a forward-looking aspect of the song, as will be shown in the analysis of her more mature works.

These three songs, “Cradle Song,” “First Snow,” and “April Weather,” then, demonstrate characteristics of Archer’s style following her time at Yale with Hindemith. There is a very clear differentiation between these works and her earlier *Moon Songs*, namely in her

³⁶ Amy Bissett England (c. 1890 – 1957), was a British-born Canadian poet who lived most of her life in Toronto.

use of harmony, which is representative Hindemith's approach. This is not unsurprising; Archer had sought him out and desired to study to with him, and it would be more striking if her style hadn't changed afterwards. Regardless, these songs represent a middle period of her compositional technique, one that is more concerned with following the technique advocated by Hindemith than with forging her own style.

Northern Landscape

The next set of songs to be analyzed, *Northern Landscape*, is a group of three songs, published in 1978, that were commissioned for the finals of the Canadian Music Competition. The poet, A. J. M. Smith, whose work was used for all three songs, was a prominent Canadian writer, known for his depictions of the Canadian culture and landscape.³⁷ *Northern Landscape* was written much later in Archer's career than the preceding songs, and thus shows traits of a much more refined composer: her style is now very different from that of Hindemith, and the music shows some unique characteristics not seen earlier. Most prominent among these is the use of linear fourths, which proliferate in two of the three songs in *Northern Landscape*. The work is also much more virtuosic than her previous compositions: this is due in part to its purpose as a competition piece, and to the fact that Archer, who had matured as a composer, was writing more complex music.

³⁷ Ruth Whidden-Yates, *A.J.M. Smith: A Chronological Description of His Poetry and Criticism*. Master of Arts Thesis, Simon Fraser University. 1976.

The first song in this set, “The Lonely Land,” tells of the barren tundra in Canada’s north, a land that is sparsely inhabited. The song is through-composed, divided into three sections corresponding to the stanzas of the poem. The sections have been labelled A, B, and C here for ease of reading, but these labels do not denote any motivic or harmonic regularity. The work is atonal: a departure from Hindemith’s system, which advocated for tonality without diatonicism. In lieu of the the structural relationships provided by tonality, structure in “The Lonely Land” is achieved via the linearized fourths, which Archer has adapted from Hindemith’s quintessential quartal harmony. The introduction, mm. 1 – 7, features a succession of dissonant intervals, marked *forte*, which span a wide range of the piano, creating a bleak atmosphere, evoking the cold, desolate land described in the text. The introduction continues with dissonant content until the end of m. 7, when a lone F is held in the right hand of the piano, and the voice enters, beginning the A section. The melody in this section moves principally by steps and leaps of fourths. Any other intervals that are present signify text painting, as in mm. 9 – 10: “uplift sharp barbs” is set to music by an upward leap of a seventh. At this point, the piano plays exclusively fourths, both vertical and horizontal. The left hand plays ascending fourths, which are completely void of tonal associations. Archer occasionally uses augmented fourths rather than perfect fourths, but this is usually done to match the right hand or melodic lines, as is done with the D# in the piano’s right hand in m. 10.

Measures 13 – 18 are built solely on the linearization of fourths. This is most obvious in the left hand, which consists of constantly ascending fourths. Any leaps in the

melody are also fourths.³⁸ The B section of “The Lonely Land” contains a much thinner texture than the previous section. There are fewer fourths in this section, the only instance occurring in the left hand at m. 27, and a leap in the melody from mm. 24 – 25. A piano interlude at mm. 31 – 38 reintroduces the linearized fourths, which begin to appear more often throughout the interlude and the C section.

Generally, then, “The Lonely Land” consists of surface-level construction based on linearized fourths. This is also the basis of composition for the third song of the set, “Sea Cliff,” although the fourths appear in more complex ways, as will be shown later in this chapter.

On the other hand, the second song of *Northern Landscape*, “Swift Current,” contains fewer instances of fourths, both linear and vertical. Its construction is based more on sevenths and ninths, as the piano plays stepwise passages that consistently outline these intervals. The majority of the piece is constructed via stepwise motion, which the piano articulates in very rapid sixteenth notes, while the melody has in slower eighth notes. Text painting is evident at mm. 22 – 23: the piece slows suddenly, as the sixteenth-note rhythmic pulse changes to quarter notes. This change is reflected in the text, “No ragged edge;” Archer has smoothed the texture for these words. “Swift Current” serves as a link between the two more prominent songs that begin and end the set; it does not contain many noteworthy characteristics.

³⁸ The third beat of m. 14 contains a leap of a major third, but the structural notes are the G# and C#, forming the fourth.

The text of the third and final song, “Sea Cliff,” vividly describes a seaside cliff, with the water crashing onto the rocks surrounding the land, “. . . and white between / the splash and black / the crash and hiss / of the feathery fall / the snap and shock / of the water wall / and the wall of rock.” It is worth noting that Archer cut much of the original text from her song: the first half was repeated by Smith, in what would have created a *da capo* aria form (had Archer decided to repeat the first section) but she chose instead to remove the repeated text. It is likely that she chose to do so because the new modified text gives a sense of closure: “after the ebb-flow / wet rock / high over the slapping green, / water sliding away / and the rock abiding / new rock riding / out of the spray.” This section of the text creates the image of the water receding to reveal a new feature not yet seen along the cliff. As will be seen, Archer uses this to great effect in “Sea Cliff.”

“Sea Cliff,” while through-composed, contains two sections based on the divisions of the text. For ease of understanding, these sections have been labelled ‘A’ and ‘B,’ but they do not serve the same formal functions as they would for a song in binary or ternary form. Archer makes use of sound painting to create the image of waves crashing ashore. The first two measures of “Sea Cliff,” which define a motive to be associated with the waves, are shown in Figure 13.



Figure 13: "Sea Cliff" mm. 1 – 2

The motive is first heard in the right hand of the piano, comprising a dotted-eighth note, the following three sixteenth notes, and the dotted-eighth note following – the second dotted-eighth note is elided with the second occurrence of the motive. The motive will henceforth be referred to as the “wave” motive. The motive is composed in such a way that, upon first hearing, it sounds as though it is written in a duple meter: the three sixteenth notes sound like a triplet on the second and fourth beats of the measure, while the left hand articulates the first and third beats. It is not apparent that Archer chose a triple meter until the end of the second measure, when the last eighth note is struck, indicating a 6/8 meter.

The governing harmonic principle governing “Sea Cliff” is the quartal harmony (Group V chord) and its horizontalization. Additionally, the direction in which the horizontal Group V chords move is important to the realization of the text: the A section of the piece features almost exclusively ascending fourths; referencing the rising waters and crashing waves described by Smith, while the B section features receding waters, matched by Archer with descending fourths (which are altered in various ways, as will be shown below.)

Rather than chords moving from one to another, Archer has layered chords both vertically and horizontally, a divergence from Hindemith's system. The arpeggiated Group V chord in mm. 1 – 2 does not prevent the Group I.2 harmony from being understood, though it does interfere slightly. Archer's departure from Hindemith's style shows growth over the years since her time with her former professor, and an idiosyncrasy of her own style.³⁹ As mentioned above, the quartal harmonies are arpeggiated across measures, or played in block chord style. Often where quartal harmonies are present, other pitches surrounding them prevent their classification as Group V chords. As will be seen, it is easier to understand them as tonally indeterminate chords, even though they do not technically qualify as such.

The song begins in B minor (Group I.2), but it is not immediately apparent that this is the case. The first notes heard are just F# and B – not enough to constitute a chord, according to Hindemith. However, the piano's right hand reinforces the B via upper and lower neighbors, creating the “wave” motive. The second measure ends with a B in the upper voice, a held F# in the middle voice, and a D in the bass, creating a first-inversion B minor triad. In m. 3, the right hand maintains its original interval of a fourth, but it is transposed up to create a D major (Group I.2) triad having the F# in the bass. The rest of the wave motive is not transposed at the same level as the fourth interval that begins mm. 1 & 3, which is transposed up a minor third; rather, the rest of the “wave” motive is

³⁹ Other pieces that demonstrate this divergence from Hindemith's style are *Four Bagatelles for Piano* (1977), *Sonata no. 2* (1979), and *String Quartet no. 3* (1981). Each of these pieces shows evidence of Hindemith's influence, but it cannot be traced as easily as the works from her middle period, immediately following her studies with Hindemith.

transposed down a semitone. The left hand remains the same throughout mm. 3 – 4, arpeggiating a descending quartal harmony from F# to G#. Measures 5 – 8 create a motivic parallelism – in the Schenkerian sense - of the “wave” motive, in inversion. The first bass note of each measure from mm. 5 – 7, along with the first two from m. 8 delineate the motive, while the right hand maintains its fourths above the bass. The chromatic line in the right hand leads from one note of the fourth interval to the next, although there is no pattern defining where the next fourth will appear.

The A section begins at m. 9. The bass line continues with the “wave” motive, essentially becoming a pedal bass, while the right hand plays blocks of fourths. The melody is built on linearized fourths, both diminished and augmented: an alteration of the perfect fourths that had been heard to this point. The first note of the melody, F# moves up a diminished fourth to B b (separated by an A passing tone). The melody then rises by whole-step to C, and then leaps an augmented fourth to F# (separated by an E passing tone). The melody rises another step to G#, but then leaps down an augmented fourth to D. These leaps further demonstrate the fact that Archer has used horizontal fourths as the main compositional device in the song: she could have respelled any of the notes enharmonically (especially the F# - B b interval, which would be easier to read as an A#) but consciously chose to keep them a fourth apart, maintaining the principle of linear fourths. While the melody is moving in this way, the right hand of the piano is playing quartal harmonies. The harmonies in mm. 9 – 11 are static, but in mm. 12 – 13 they move so that the highest note of the piano traces parallel sixths below the melody, except

for the second beat of m. 13, in which the top note of the piano is in unison with the voice. Measures 9 – 14 can be seen to represent Archer's branching away from Hindemith's influence, despite the presence of quartal harmonies: the passage is strictly linear; there are no vertical elements linking the voice and piano parts (or even the right and left hand of the piano, as the left hand plays a pedal).

The following two measures (mm. 15 – 16) present an interesting transition in terms of analysis. The right hand plays superposed fourths; the quintessential Hindemith harmony, while the left hand alternates between broken and solid superposed fourths, with occasional tritones. Notably, the two hands are not playing the same pitches, creating new chord types between the two hands. Under Hindemith's system, each new chord created by the combination of the two superposed fourths is a Group IV chord, the first of which is Group IV.1, the latter three of which are Group IV.2. However, Archer has created a texture of multiple superposed fourths (Group V chords played in both hands, in different registers of the piano), which further distances the harmony from any one tonal center. One could argue that, because the interval of a fifth is created between the two Group V chords, a root is present, and thus, enough chords like this would create a tonal center. However, because the two chords are arranged so that they do not overlap, the indeterminacy of the Group V chords overpowers the fifth that is created between the two chords, rendering it impossible to hear a chord root in the harmony. The exception is the second half of m. 16, where the left hand leaps into the same register as the right hand, playing its Group V chord a third below the right hand's. The A in the right hand

and the E in the left create a fifth, but it is not possible to hear the harmony as root A, as the pitches are too numerous and too close in register. These chords elaborate on Hindemith's *Craft of Musical Composition*, as Archer has superposed quartal trichords.⁴⁰ The indeterminacy in tonal center is another component of Archer's sound painting. In mm. 15 – 17, the narrator describes the waves crashing into the wall of rock, "... the crash / and hiss of the feathery fall." In mm. 15 – 16, the rising fourths on the first beat in the left hand reflect the approaching waves, and then, on the second beat, they loudly crash into the cliff.

Measure 18 contains a more obvious example of text painting: the text reads, "the snap and shock of the water wall," and on the word "snap," Archer has written a leap of a diminished seventh, followed by an eighth rest. This, along with the pronunciation of the word "snap," creates a feeling of unexpected aggression. Up until now, there had been no rests in either part (except for the opening measures of rest in the voice), and the unexpected leap followed by silence promotes a sudden alertness in the listener, just as the snap created by the water is heard by the narrator. In mm. 18 – 21, Archer shifts from the arpeggiated fourths to arpeggiated tritones; this represents a change in harmonic fluctuation, as the tonal indeterminacy that dictated mm. 15 – 17 has now become slightly more stable with the presence of the tritones. The right hand plays Group I chords, the most stable of all, but because of the tritones in the left hand, they do not achieve a true tonal center. The tonal center for mm. 18 – 21 is F: there is a definite Group I.2 root F

⁴⁰ The superposition of chords is not discussed in *The Craft of Musical Composition*, but Hindemith may have included such a device in his own compositions.

chord on the downbeat of m. 21, and an arpeggiated Group I.2 root F chord that precedes it in m. 20. The A section concludes with a transition of sorts in the piano, with horizontal tritones played in octaves in both hands (the exception being m. 23, which consists of minor seconds.)

Tonally, the entirety of the A section is indeterminate. The constant stream of linear fourths never creates a stable enough harmony capable of sustaining a tonal center. This, in and of itself, is a stark contrast between the works of Archer and Hindemith's system outlined in his *Craft of Musical Composition*, as Hindemith clearly states that too many Group V chords creates an undesirable texture, and yet in "Sea Cliff," Archer has embraced the indeterminacy.

The B section begins at m. 27, following a series of transitional octaves in mm. 23 – 26. Like the beginning of the piece, it does not begin with an authentic Hindemith chord – in this case there is only one distinct pitch class, doubled at the octave. However, given the triple meter and scalar patterns, the harmony of this section can be found on the accented beats of the measure, creating a descending, arpeggiated quartal harmony – the tonally indeterminate Group V chords that have permeated the entirety of the song. In between the chord tones are passing tones, moving from the right hand to the left hand, and becoming neighbor tones on the last beat of the measure. Measures 27 and 28 are identical except for the D in the bass. This should be understood as an incomplete passing tone, from the E in m. 26, implying that a C will be heard in m. 29; rather, a B is played, which is a fourth below the E originally heard in m. 27. Measure 29 follows the

same pattern as mm. 27 & 28, except that rather than a quartal harmony, Archer chose to write superposed major thirds –an augmented triad in traditional harmony – the other Group V chord specified on Hindemith’s chord chart. The pattern repeats once more in m. 30, returning to the superposed fourths that permeate the song. The texture remains the same in mm. 31 – 32, except that the quartal harmonies have been rearranged into vertical chords, rather than the horizontal arpeggiations heard previously.

The text of mm. 27 – 34 reads, “After the ebb flow / wet rock high / high over the slapping green,” describing the landscape after the tide has lowered and calmed the sea, showing more of the rocks protruding from the water. This is in stark contrast to the A section, which described the rising waters crashing into the seaside cliff. To reflect this, Archer changes the direction of the arpeggiated fourths. In the A section, the fourths ascend consistently, while in the B section, they descend. This change of direction a primary compositional idea behind the song. Measures 35 – 36 are similar to mm. 27 – 28, in that they consist of the piano part descending primarily by step; however, Archer has altered the content so that in m. 35, both hands begin the measure with an E – F minor second interval, followed by a more chromatic stepwise descent. The pitches from each beat can be interpreted in two ways. First, that the F on the downbeat is the principal tone, creating an altered quartal harmony with the C# and G# on the second and third beats, respectively. This interpretation only seems valid because of the prevalence of Group V chords in the rest of the song; it wouldn’t make sense otherwise, as the chord sounds as a major triad in second inversion. This brings up the second interpretation, that

of an enharmonically respelled major triad – F (E \sharp), C \sharp , and G \sharp . This also seems to be the most obvious interpretation, as that is the sonority of the chord. Measures 35 – 36 should be interpreted as a linearization of a respelled Group I.2 chord (C \sharp major triad); Archer likely respelled the chord for ease of reading, so that there would not be an E \natural next to an E \sharp .

The remainder of the song focuses on the contrast between Group IV and Group V chords. A Group V chord can be changed to a Group IV chord by raising the highest pitch by one semitone; Archer has utilized this property to great effect in “Sea Cliff,” and it is most prevalent in mm. 38 – 41. In mm. 38-39, the left hand plays a horizontal Group V chord, F \sharp - B – E, while the right hand plays a Group IV, B – F – C, chord that has been linearized so that the chord tones fall on the beats. The voice has the same chord tones as the right hand of the piano, reinforcing the Group IV chord. The most important feature of these measures is the fact that the two linearized chords are moving in different directions: the right hand descends while the left hand ascends. Even though the Group IV chords in mm. 38 – 40 are comprised entirely of fourths, they do not qualify as Group V chords because one of the intervals is an augmented fourth; thus the chord contains a tritone, forcing it automatically into Group B. These measures create a juxtaposition of the previous two sections: in the right hand, the linearized chord continues to descend, as has been done for the entirety of the B section, while the left hand has reverted to the ascending fourths that dominated the A section. This would seem to indicate that a synthesis has been reached, as the two expressive elements work together. The song ends

with blocks of Group V chords in the right hand, as the voice outlines an ascending Group V chord in mm. 44 – 45. The last sonority is a Group V chord played in the low register of the piano, while a linear tritone is played in the high register of the instrument, leaving the end just as vague as the rest of the B section. This combination does not lend itself to the identification of any tonal area, creating an unstable tonality for the second half of the piece, just as had been done for the A section. Tonal indeterminacy is a byproduct of the linear fourths that guide the song, but it also represents a unique characteristic of the piece that transcends Hindemith's system of composition.

Caleidoscopio Quatro

The final group of songs to be analyzed forms the set *Caleidoscopio Quatro*. The text to each song is taken from the Italian poet Gisella Azzi (1912 – 2002, perhaps related to Archer on her mother's side), and demonstrates Archer's affinity for her mother tongue. The four songs of *Caleidoscopio Quatro* are all very similar in terms of their textual imagery: each makes great use of bright, vibrant colors, and Archer has used sound painting to exploit this aspect of the text. Following the stylistic trend represented by "Sea Cliff," the pitch organization of these songs is based completely on the manipulation of fourths, so much so that the identification of Hindemith chord types for analytic purposes becomes superfluous, as the vast majority of chords would fall into Group V. The first song of the set, "Il Sole," describes the narrator walking down a hill into a town during sunset, witnessing the sunlight showering the town with its rays: "I

descend the hill in the sunset, / I behold scarlet flames, / not trees, and the / houses down below / are madly ablaze: / each window a miniature pyre (lively / gnome-like glances!) and the roofs are / scattered blazing red embers. / My footsteps move in the sun and I feel / enveloped in an amber eiderdown, / the whole world is golden. ” (translated by Archer from the original Italian that forms the song text.)

Archer again makes extensive use of text painting: the voice, when singing “Dall’alto nel tramonto scendo” (I descend the hill), literally descends in pitch from F5 to E ♭ 4. For the final two lines of the poem, with their warm images of amber and gold, Archer casts a shimmering sound with the piano, using fast runs spanning three octaves in the high register, imitating the golden landscape.

“Il Sole” is through-composed, divided into three sections, which will be referred to here as Sections A, B, and C. The sectional divisions are based on texture more than anything else, as there are no significant melodic or motivic elements that tie the piece together. The three sections neatly follow the division of the text; each section is defined by a new mood, governed by the rate of harmonic change, the rhythmic pulse, and the overall register of pitches within the section. Table 8 outlines the sections and the characteristics that define them.

Section	Measures	Characteristics
Intro	1 – 5	‘Planing’ of superposed 5ths (Group III chords); harmonic fluctuation does not change except for a single Group IV chord in m. 1. Rhythmic pulse is steady quarter notes.
A	6 – 11	Rhythmic pulse remains relatively unchanged from introduction, with some ornamentation in upper parts. More harmonic fluctuation, with new tonal centers.
B	12 – 23	Rhythmic pulse much faster; now in 16 th notes. Registrally higher than previous section. Harmonic change faster as well; new chord on most beats.
C	23 - 30	Rhythmic pulse slows down. Section is very much like an operatic <i>recitative</i> . Harmonic fluctuation does not change as often; registrally very high – last note is highest note on the piano.

Table 8: Formal outline of "Il Sole"

The song begins with a five-measure piano introduction that consists solely of ‘planing’ or roughly stepwise-moving octaves containing fifths in contrary motion in the two hands – it is not strict planing though, as the intervallic distance between chords is not regular. The chord types of the planed fifths are exclusively III.1, save for one exception, a Group II.3 chord on beat three of m. 1, but they do not function as Hindemith chord types would be expected to, that is, to create tonality. The entirety of the introduction should be thought of as without tonal center: the ‘planed’ fifths function as a device to create texture rather than a tonal center. For this reason, it serves no purpose to identify each new chord by its Hindemith chord group, as mentioned above.

The A section begins at m. 6: the melody moves principally by steps and leaps of a fourth that outline the quartal harmonies in the accompaniment, the same linearized fourths seen in “Sea Cliff.” The A section is notable for its wide registral range of pitches, this is especially noteworthy considering the diminishing range in the B section, and the small range in the C section. This aspect of register is another use of sound painting by Archer: the text describes the narrator descending a hill into a village; as the piece progresses, the narrator becomes closer to the village. The registral changes reflect the distance between the narrator and the village: as the two become closer, so do the pitches in the song.

The B section changes the rhythmic pulse quite dramatically; it is now sixteenth notes compared to the quarter notes from the introduction and A section. There are no textual clues that would indicate a change in rhythmic pulse; it is possible to infer that the narrator is becoming more excited as he nears the village, and thus his pace has quickened. The linearized fourths remain prevalent throughout this section, often separated by passing tones, as shown in Figure 14.

The image displays a musical score for two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with various intervals, including a large leap of an octave (8va) indicated by a dashed line. The lower staff is in bass clef and provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines. The piece is marked with a forte (f) dynamic. The score is divided into two measures, with the second measure featuring a triplet of sixteenth notes.

Figure 14: "Il Sole" mm. 13 – 14

As can be seen, the right hand figuration is built on linear fourths, however, successive fourths are separated by whole step (e.g. F – C, B ♭ - F on the first beat) so that each beat spans an octave. In m. 14, the right hand ascends, the only rising passage in the right hand for the entirety of the second section. Here, the fourths are on the first and third eighth note triplets of each beat, separated by an intervening tone.

The C section once more takes the form of a recitative, marked “quasi parlando.” The linearized fourths are no longer present; they have been reworked to form vertical, superposed fourths in the piano part, but the two hands play separate chords, which together make Group III chords. The song ends with rapid gestures in the piano that descend and then ascend, shown in Figure 15. These represent the shimmering light reflecting off the windows of the houses. The last pitch heard is C8, the highest note on the piano. Clearly, then, the guiding structural aspect behind this song is the use of fourths, both linear and harmonic, similar to what was done in “Sea Cliff,” although the linearized fourths are much more restricted to the surface than they are in “Sea Cliff.”

The image shows a musical score for measure 26 of the piece "Il Sole". It consists of three staves: a vocal line at the top, a piano right-hand part in the middle, and a piano left-hand part at the bottom. The vocal line begins with a whole note on a high pitch. The piano right hand starts with a melodic line marked *mf*, which then transitions to a more active line marked *f*. The piano left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment. A large slur covers the piano right hand's melodic line. Performance markings include *m.s.* and *m.d.* for the piano right hand, and *Ped.* for the piano left hand. The score is set in a key with one sharp (F#) and a common time signature.

Figure 15: The shimmering light gesture, m. 26 of "Il Sole"

The second song of *Caleidoscopio Quatro*, “Valzer Musette,” is an upbeat, dance-like song, as the title implies. The sound evokes the image of a quaint village, full of people walking about. Just as in “Il Sole,” the text describes the sun, and the way it reflects off of various objects, and the resulting colors seen by the narrator. There are fewer instances of structural fourths in the piece; it is much more tonal than the three other songs that make up *Caleidoscopio Quatro*. Tonally, “Valzer Musette” is much more similar to “The Rose of Midnight” and “Cradle Song” than it is to *Northern Landscape* or the other songs of *Caleidoscopio Quatro*: the piece features tonal centers in the way that Hindemith explained, and the harmonies are much more explicit and varied, like in “The Rose of Midnight,” but there is still a significant presence of fourths, the

defining characteristic of *Caleidoscopio Quatro*.⁴¹ “Valzer Musette” begins with a tonal center of C: a C major triad is outlined in the first six measures, with various non chord tones adding color to the texture. The song goes through many harmonies, but as with “The Rose of Midnight,” the most common harmonies are C major (the tonic) and G major (the dominant), with an assortment of harmonies related by common tone, such as the A \flat in m. 25, which resolves to C major, via the common of C.

The third song of the set, “Casetta Cantoniera,” is much more ethereal in character than “Valzer Musette.” The entire song resembles an operatic recitative, with a vocal line that is relatively static. The voice and piano parts are completely independent; and generally the piano part plays fast gestures when the voice is silent; and plays much more slowly when the melody is active. The title of the song references old Italian buildings that housed people who were in charge of maintaining the roads; the houses were painted bright red, continuing the theme of color in the set. The poem tells the story of a man who sees a beautiful woman; he describes her with plant-related imagery, “eyebrows green blue shoots of festive vines” and “on her little face ... a long, evanescent, ethereal veil of poplars.” It can be surmised that the narrator is a blue-collar worker, who immediately is smitten by the beautiful woman he sees, and he uses such words to describe her because he is surrounded by lush florae.

⁴¹ Note that in “Valzer Musette” the fourths exist only at the surface level, they do not serve a harmonic function.

Formally, the song is through-composed, but divides into three sections based on the text. All of the sections are similar in texture that achieves an almost otherworldly quality through rapid ascending passages of filigree in the upper register of the piano. The song is constructed not on perfect fourths, but on the linearization of tritones, which can be spelled as either augmented fourths or diminished fifths. Due to the prevalence of tritones in the song, Hindemith's system is not applicable, as there is no tonal center. The opening gesture outlines the chord that permeates the piece: D, F \sharp , A \sharp , C, and E. Harmony in this piece is achieved via manipulation of this chord – in m. 3, the filigree in the right hand is the same chord from mm. 1 – 2, played in inversion. The melody enters in the second measure, and it creates a tritone between its highest note, E, and the B \flat in m. 3. The melodic line continues down to E in m. 4, completing the descent of an octave via its tritone. At m. 7, the piano plays a recurrence of the principal harmony, altered slightly so that there are two tritones, D – G \sharp and F \sharp - C (the A \sharp from the principal harmony has been changed to G \sharp here), but they are layered to create the ethereal texture that Archer desires. In mm. 4 and 16 there is a secondary harmony that begins with a new tritone, G - C \sharp , but reverts to the original tritone of the piece, C \sharp - F at the end of the filigree. There are only two instances of vertical harmonies being played in the piano: mm. 9 – 10, and m. 15. At mm. 9 – 10, the piano plays a quartal harmony, but the left hand of the piano plays a descending tritone from A – E \flat . Measure 15 also contains a quartal harmony in the left hand, but the first instance of a vertical tritone is created with the right hand. This song is notable for its construction based on tritones, which would at first seem to be in disagreement with Archer's previous method of composition, based on

fourths, however, it would seem that she has simply modified her system at this point to allow for augmented fourths and diminished fifths, which are used interchangeably in this song.

The last song of *Caleidoscopio Quatro*, “Pulviscolo,” returns to composition based on perfect fourths. Quartal harmonies are prevalent throughout the song, beginning in the first measure, each beat consisting of a different quartal harmony in the left hand; beginning in m. 3, the right hand plays ascending fourths, while the left hand maintains its pattern of broken quartal harmonies throughout the first twenty-four measures. This is shown in Figure 16.



Figure 16: "Pulviscolo" mm. 1 - 4

As can be seen, Archer has combined the harmonic and linear fourths in this song: the harmonic fourths in the left hand, the linear fourths in the right hand and melody. In fact, the same linear fourths from mm. 3 – 4 appear in the voice at mm. 26 – 28, albeit in rhythmic augmentation.

An interesting moment occurs at mm. 47 – 48, as the voice and right hand play the same pitches, but the piano plays in eighth notes as the voice has quarter notes, so that the two voices move and sound independently, but the quartal harmony remains the main feature of the passage. Throughout these two measures, the left is playing broken quartal harmonies in the same way as the beginning, but at m. 47, plays the same quartal harmony as the right hand and voice (albeit enharmonically respelled), and then moves up chromatically, continuing the same rhythmic pattern.

Fourths are plentiful in this song, perhaps more so than any other song yet analyzed. For this reason, “Pulviscolo” suggests a line of inquiry into Archer’s other late works that might verify the claim that linearized fourths are a stylistic characteristic to her mature works. This can be clearly seen in each of the four songs of *Caleidoscopio Quatro*, the exception being “Casetta Cantoniera,” which is built around augmented fourths rather than perfect fourths.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

An evolution of compositional style can be traced via the songs of Violet Archer. Her early works demonstrate adherence to traditional methods of composition: that is, harmonic regularity and diatonic relationships. Many of her early works, such as *Moon Songs*, and her first Piano Sonata, show a young composer following the tradition of composition that had been laid down before her. These works are often formulaic, and do not show the creative ingenuity that would be seen in her later works such as *Northern Landscape*, *Divertimento for Piano and Strings*, or her second Piano Sonata. “The Rose of Midnight” shows an ambitious point of departure, though the harmony of that song is still limited to major and minor triads. After her studies with Hindemith in 1949, Archer’s works show attempts to master his system. The songs analyzed from this period are directly influenced by Hindemith’s *Craft of Music Composition*. Archer follows his rules almost to the letter, obeying his construction of tonal centers via degree progression of chords. This is reflected in the fact that after her time with Hindemith, she no longer used key signatures in her works, indicating that diatonicism was no longer a part of her compositional technique, preferring to focus on tonal centers. The three songs analyzed in this study, “Cradle Song,” “April Weather,” and “First Snow” are good representations of this approach, as are her first Piano Trio, and *Theme and Variations on Là-Haut*, both of which were written in the years following her studies with Hindemith. *Northern Landscape* and *Caleidoscopio Quattro* represent the mature output of Archer’s career: these songs are much more complex, both in harmonic and melodic aspects. This

evolution is reflective of Archer's belief that each song should improve upon those that preceded it – this holds true for other genres as well. Perhaps as a result, her later orchestral works are much more popular than her early works, as is the case with her solo piano repertoire. This evolution can be traced to her study with Hindemith, and the extensions she made from his *Craft of Musical Composition*, as suggested by the linearization of chords apparent in her later songs. These later works are often void of tonality; Archer preferred to build her harmonies based on fourths, both linear and vertical. This quartal approach is reflective of her time spent with Hindemith: it is the sound most associated with his work, and Archer adapted it to fit her compositional technique. The use of quartal harmonies first began in her middle period,⁴² strictly as elements of vertical chord progressions. From the foregoing analyses one can hypothesize that a signature aspect of her more mature works is her adaptation of quartal harmony to be used linearly, so as to become their most characteristic feature, as seen in “The Lonely Land,” “Sea Cliff,” “Il Sole,” and “Pulviscolo.” Future research could verify that this trend toward linearization, seen in the four songs listed above, would also be reflected in Archer's other compositional output. See Appendix 1 for a comprehensive list of all of Archer's works according to the period in which they were composed.

The works of Violet Archer can be categorized according to the principles listed in this study. Her works will always have a special place in the hearts of Canadians, for she was the first native Canadian to become known internationally for her compositions.

⁴² See “Cradle Song” and “First Snow.”

Appendix

The following is a list of compositions by Violet Archer, taken from her entry in the Canadian Encyclopedia, and from the Canadian Music Centre. They are arranged chronologically, divided into the three groups outlined in this study: pre-Hindemith, post-Hindemith, and a mature, late period. Dates listed are dates of composition; dates shown in parentheses indicate pieces that have been published, and the year of publication. As can be seen, Archer had a large compositional output that spanned many genres.

Early Period (Pre-Hindemith)

- 1935 Jig for Chamber Orchestra

- 1936 Agnus Dei, for voice
 Mass in Sixteenth-century Style, for voice
 Intermezzo for Chamber Orchestra

- 1937 Original Theme and Variations for Orchestra
 Improvisation for Organ
 Rhapsody for Orchestra

- 1938 Silver, for medium voice and piano
 Scherzo for String Quartet
 Midsummer Apathy for piano
 Argument, for piano
 Choruses from *The Bacchae*, for SSA and orchestra

- 1939 Capriccio Fantastic for Hand Timpani and Orchertra
 Symphonic Suite
 Six Pieces for Piano and Timpani
 Grecian Dance, for piano

- 1940 Capriccio Fantastic
 Chorale Prelude *Aeterna Christi Munera*, for organ
 Lancelot and Guinivere
 God Save the King, for orchestra
 Leaves of Grass, for SATB and orchestra
 String Quartet no. 1
 Variations on *A la Claire Fontaine*
 Scherzo Sinfonico
 Rule Britannica, for orchestra
 Little Fugue in G minor, arranged from JS Bach, for orchestra
- 1941 Brittainia – A Joyful Overture

- Fantasia Concertante, for flute, oboe, clarinet, and strings (1979)
 Ship of Rio, for boys, soprano, and piano
 Psalm 150, for SATB and organ (1965)
 Variations on Canadian Folk Tune *Isabeau s'y promene*, for piano
- 1942 Fantasy for Clarinet and Strings
 Habitant Sketches, for piano (1946)
 Moon Songs, for baritone or mezzo-soprano and piano
 Sonata for Flute, Clarinet in A, and Piano (1973)
 Theme and Variations, for string quartet
- 1944 Sonatina, for organ
- 1945 Quartet for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, and Bassoon
 Sonata No. 1, for piano (1960)
 Sonatina No. 1, for piano
- 1946 Concertino for Clarinet and Orchestra
 Fugue in C# minor, arranged from JS Bach, for piano
 Fantasy for piano
 Fantasy for Violin and Pianoforte
 Fantasy on a Ground, for orchestra (1956)
 Largo Molto, for piano
 Sonatina No. 2 for Piano (1948)
- 1947 Four Vignettes for Piano, Four Hands
 Lamentations of Jeremy, for SATB and orchestra
 Night Sky, for piano
 Six Preludes, for piano (1979)
 Suite for Pianoforte
 Suite, for violin, cello or clarinet, and bassoon
 Three Sketches for Two Pianos (1979)
 Two Pieces for Flute Solo
- 1948 Suite for Violin and Cello
 Two Chorale Preludes (1962)

Middle Period (Works that closely adhere to Hindemith's *Craft*)

- 1948 Chorale Prelude *Dominue Regit Me* (1962)
 Chorale Prelude *Durch Adams Fall*
 Chorale Prelude *Henlein*

Chorale Prelude *Ibant Magi*
 Chorale Prelude *Von Himmel Hoch*
 Chorale Prelude *Rockingham*
 Interlude

- 1949 The Bell: Canata for Mixed Chorus and Orchestra
 Concerto for Organ
 Divertimento for Oboe, Clarinet, and Bassoon (1981)
 Fanfare and Passacaglia for Orchestra (1964)
 Gavotte from Suite V
 The King's Hunt
 Fugue Fantasy
 Pavan
 Ricercare
 Snow Shadows
 Someone (1976)
 String Quartet No. 2
 Under the Sun
- 1950 April Weather (1976)
 Cradle Song (1954)
 Landscapes (1973)
 Three Biblical Songs
- 1951 Fantasy in the Form of a Passacaglia
- 1952 Theme and Variations on *L'a haut sur ces montagnes*
 The Twenty-third Psalm for Medium Voice and Piano (1954)
- 1953 Birthday Theme with Variations
 Proud Horses (1981)
 Songs of Prayer and Praise
 String Trio No. 1
 Ten Folk Songs for Four Hands (1960)
 Three French-Canadian Folk Songs (1962)
- 1954 Prelude and Allegro for Violin and Piano (1958)
 Trio No. 1
 Two Humorous Rounds (1963)
- 1955 Christmas (1972)
 Introduction and Allegro
 The Mater Admirabilis Chapel (1972)
 Rondo for Pianoforte (1964)

- Three Duets for Two Violins (1960)
- 1956 Concerto No.1 for Piano and Orchestra (1979)
Sonata for Cello and Piano
Sonata for Violin and Piano
- 1957 Divertimento for Orchestra (1968)
Divertimento No. 2
Minute Music for Small Hands (1959)
Trio No. 2 (1977)
- 1958 Four Canadian Folk Songs
Two Songs for Mezzo-Soprano and Clarinet
Variations on an Original Theme for Carillon
- 1959 Concerto for Violin and Orchestra (1979)
The Forty-Second Psalm
- 1960 Eleven Short Pieces (1964)
The Souls of the Righteous
- 1961 String Trio No. 2 for Piano, Violin, and Cello
Three Sketches for Orchestra (1966)
- 1962 In Nomine Jesu (1963)
Introit and Choral Prayer (1963)
Two Chorale Preludes for Organ (1962)
Two Latin Motets

Late Period (Works that diverge from Hindemith's *Craft*)

- 1963 Divertimento for Brass Quintet (1975)
Four Little Studies for Piano (1964)
Theme and Variations for Piano (1964)
Three Miniatures for Piano (1965)
- 1964 Klondike Fughetta
Sing, the Muse
- 1965 Sonata for Horn and Piano (1980)
- 1966 Canata Sacra
Life in a Prairie Shack
Three Folk Songs of Old Manitoba

- 1967 Centennial Springtime
I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes (1969)
Sweet Jesu King of Bliss (1967)
- 1968 A La Claire Fontaine (1970)
O Lord Thou Hast Searched Me and Known Me (1969)
O Sing Unto the Lord (1969)
Sinfonietta (1977)
- 1969 Sinfonia (1976)
Simple Song; Bouncing Lightly; Follow the Leader (1969)
- 1970 Dance
Holiday
Sonata for Clarinet and Piano (1973)
Two Miniatures for Piano (1972)
- 1971 Gold Sun
Green Rain
Lydian Mood (1973)
A Quiet Chat (1973)
Suite for Four Violins
- 1972 Little March (1972)
Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano (1974)
- 1973 Sganarelle, a One Act Comedy Opera (1973)
Sonata for Oboe and Piano (1978)
Sonatina No. 2 for Piano (1979)
- 1974 Sing a New Song to the Lord (1974)
- 1975 Four Newfoundland Songs (1975)
Little Suite for Trumpet and Piano (1980)
Three Sailors from Groix
- 1976 Shout With Joy, an Anthem for Mixed Chorus and Organ (1977)
Suite for Solo Flute (1981)
- 1977 Four Bagatelles for Piano (1979)
In Good Company (1984)
In Just Spring
Sonatina for Oboe and Piano (1984)

- 1978 Eight Little Canons
Four Contrapuntal Moods (1981)
Northern Landscape (1981)
Prelude and Little Fantasy
Psalmody (1978)
Someone is Following Me (1984)
Sonatina for Bassoon and Piano (1982)
Sonatina for Clarinet and Piano (1982)
- 1979 Divertimento for Saxophone Quartet (1979)
Festive Fantasy on *Pange Lingua*
Piano Sonata No. 2 (1979)
Six Preludes for Piano (1979)
- 1980 Here and Now, Ten Educational Piano Pieces (1982)
Sonata for Bassoon and Piano (1982)
Whatsoever Things are True
Primeval, Song Cycle for Horn, Baritone, Voice, and Piano
- 1981 Kaleidoscpoio Quatro, Song Cycle for Lyric Soprano and Piano (1981)
Capriccio for Cello and Piano
Sonata for Solo Cello
String Quartet No. 3
To Rest in Thee (1985)
Twelve Miniatures for Violin and Piano (1982)
- 1982 Divertimento for Oboe, Clarinet, and Bassoon
Green Jade, a Song Cycle for C and Alto Flute, Baritoe, Voice, and Piano
Statements for Solo C and G Flute
- 1983 The Cat and the Moon
Celebration, a Fanfare for Brass Quintet
Reflections
- 1984 Ipkakhuag for Violin, Cello, and Piano
Improvisation on *Veni Creator* for Organ (1987)
Signatures for Solo Alto and Flutes
Six Miniatures for Cello (1984)
Six Miniatures for Double Bass (1987)
Six Miniatures for Viola and Piano (1984)
Variations on “Aberystwyth” for Organ (1987)
Where is My Puppy; Waltzing Along (1984)

- 1985 Divertimento for Piano and Strings
Epigrams for Baritone Voice and Piano
Miniatures from the Chinese, for Tenor or Soprano Voice and Piano
- 1986 The Dancing Kitten, for Violin and Piano
Moods, for Clarinet and Alto Saxophone
Six Miniatures for String Bass and Piano (1987)
- 1987 Gay is the Rose
The Great Spirit (1987)
Improvisation on a Name, for Chamber Orchestra
The Moon at Wintertime
Plaff the Giraffe, a Song for Six Year Old Boys and Piano
- 1988 Church Scene (1988)
Jig (1988)
Breezy (1988)
Three Essays, for Soprano and Alto Solo Saxophones
Variations on an Original Theme
- 1989 The Ninety-Eighth Psalm
The Ninety-Second Psalm
The Ninety-Sixth Psalm
The Owl Queen for Soprano or Tenor Voice and Piano (1989)
Surly, Burly, Shirley for Soprano or Tenor voice and Piano (1989)
Two Fanfares for a Festive Day, for Brass Quintet
- 1990 Four Dialogues for Classical Guitar and Chamber Orchestra
God Sings in Praise, for Bass with Piano
Hymn of Praise, for SATB and Piano
Northern Journey, for Piano
- 1991 Dancing on the Seashore for Young Pianists
Four Miniatures for Flute and Piano
Let's Have Fun, for Piano
Little Suite for Solo Snare Drum
March and Jig for one Kettledrum
Prelude and Dance for Solo Timpani
- 1992 Eight Short Songs for Young Singers (1992)
- 1993 Children Singing for Children's Chorus and Piano
Hymn for Today for Choir and Organ

- 1994 Three Christmas Carols of Canada
- 1995 Four Moods for Solo Oboe
Four Short Pieces for B-flat Clarinet
September Nativity for Alto Voice and Piano
- 1996 Songs of North for Soprano and Piano

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VITA

Paul Dauphinais grew up in Edmonton, Alberta, and completed his Royal Conservatory of Music in Piano Performance in 2012. He graduated from Grant MacEwan University in 2010, with a Diploma in Music Composition, studying with Dr. Allan Gilliland. He then enrolled in the combined Bachelor of Music / Bachelor of Education degree at the University of Alberta, where he majored in Piano Performance, studying with Dr. Jacques Després, graduating in 2014. He then travelled to Boston, where he studied with Dr. David Kopp in the Masters of Music in Music Theory program, completing his studies in 2016.